

# ALUMNI BULLETIN Jefferson

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Transforming the Future  
of Healthcare Delivery,  
Research and Education

**An interview with President  
and CEO Stephen K. Klasko, MD, MBA**



**Looking Ahead:**  
What The Future May Be

# Three Things

Stephen Klasko, MD, MBA,  
Wants You to Know About  
the Future of Jefferson

## 1

### The future is now.

How we deliver health care in five years will look nothing like it does today. We will be concentrated on quality and cost. We will be selecting and educating doctors and nurses in a fundamentally different way. And there will be healthcare professions in decision support, cyber-security and healthcare coaching that don't even exist today. We will lead those transformations.

## 2

### Jefferson will champion the entrepreneurial academic model.

I believe in investing in innovation to create an environment in which faculty and staff know they can take chances. I want scientists from other universities to come to Jefferson to be a part of our spirit of innovation. I don't want people to be afraid to fail. By taking Jefferson's history of excellence in academics and adding an entrepreneurial spirit we will build an institution like no other in the country.

## 3

### The clock is ticking on technology and health care.

I love looking at the really leading-edge things out there. Anytime something new is released, whether it's an app or a new operating system, we need to think about how that technology might improve health care at Jefferson. For example, patients who go through their procedures using 'Second Life' before their actual ones have an opportunity to ask questions and ultimately reduce their stress levels. That's using technology and making a difference in the quality of care. Health care has already missed a step in the high-tech revolution. Why can I schedule a flight on my iPhone, but not a doctor's appointment?

To learn more about Second Life and virtual learning, please visit: [connect.jefferson.edu/virtuallearning](http://connect.jefferson.edu/virtuallearning)



In a decade, Thomas Jefferson University will celebrate its 200th anniversary ... and one of President and CEO Stephen Klasko's goals is for Jefferson to become the coolest health sciences university anywhere. The staff of the Bulletin interviewed Klasko about his thoughts on what's needed now to create a unique footprint for Jefferson as a health sciences leader.

### What do you see as the biggest changes ahead for Jefferson?

The first, and one of the most challenging, is to unify Jefferson so we think and act like one institution. We have a tremendous opportunity to offer a robust health sciences education that transcends what's out there today and start to think like a "single college of health." We need to explore our options and challenge ourselves to think outside traditional models and as one integrated organization. The second is to be a national leader in simulation as a means to assess technical and teamwork proficiency. With the Dr. Robert and Dorothy Rector Clinical Skills Center, we have a "virtual space" for teams of students and physicians to simulate clinical experiences, but in the future doctors and nurses will need to have their technical and teamwork skills assessed. We can be that future. The third is increasing our partnerships with local communities and aiding the most vulnerable in need of our help.

My biggest eye-opening moment that affects how I lead today happened when I was getting my MBA from Wharton. Everything we did there was done as a team. Physicians tend to be autonomous, competitive and hierarchical. I learned how to add creativity, self-awareness and flexibility. The most important part of leadership is being able to identify your strengths and weaknesses. I learned you should always have five people around you who think they can do a better job than you — and three who are right! So I encourage, develop and hire people who have skill sets that complement mine. When you create that kind of team, the energy and enthusiasm are intoxicating, and you're in a much better position to do fantastic things.

### What is your vision for taking Jefferson to the next level of both interprofessional collaboration and academic innovation?

Jefferson excels at ensuring the best medical team is providing the best patient care, thanks to our commitment to interprofessional collaboration. When it comes to education, my goal is to push the boundaries even more and have every student take courses in other colleges. For example, our medical students taking at least one nursing course, one public health course and one pharmacy course. Doing so will give them a better appreciation for the many facets of care the patient receives. I also want our deans to attend each other's new-student orientations so all students recognize that everyone, in every school and college, is vested in their success. Also, dual

faculty appointments will foster a positive atmosphere for interprofessional collaboration between schools.

### How will researchers be affected by this model of collaboration and academic innovation?

With the creation of longitudinal institutes — Clinical and Research Integrated Strategic Programs, or CRISPS — Jefferson researchers can easily cross-pollinate ideas and deliver some of the best science and discoveries out there. Science no longer happens just within a department. One of the ways I have done that is through what I call "synergy social hours" to break down silos between researchers working in different groups. Using a speed-dating model, I get them to talk to each other and discuss topics across disciplines like health disparities, sports medicine, Alzheimer's and biomedical engineering. We then provide seed funding for researchers who have never worked together. That approach helps them find commonality among their peers and exchange ideas with colleagues whom they may not have met otherwise.

### How does diversity in the workplace play a role in this transformation, especially when such a high percentage of incoming Jefferson students are now of different cultural backgrounds?

Diversity contributes to a more emotionally intelligent workplace, often making it easier to accomplish interprofessional initiatives. A goal of mine is to seek and celebrate our cultural diversity. I want to have patients, students, faculty and staff of all cultures and backgrounds, women and men feeling comfortable and celebrated in our workforce experience. Our faculty, our students and our employees must reflect the attributes of the world we live in today. My goal is to develop customized leadership institutes to kick-start our diversity initiatives and a celebration of our diverse cultures. One of our messages will be that "everyone matters."

### What keeps you up at night?

The Eagles and the Phillies. Honestly, I guess what worried me most when I first joined Jefferson was that staff wouldn't recognize the need for a fast pace of change in an environment where urban academic institutions are under enormous pressure. The competitive landscape we are in requires that we apply some creative thinking to what we're doing. I don't think we can look at any opportunity and not say let's at least explore it.

Some really smart people believe there will eventually be only a few major medical centers in the state and significant consolidation nationally. They may not be that far off so we can't debate where property lines fall when the levee breaks and the tsunami is coming. I want to lead that transformation so when the smoke clears, Jefferson is one of those leading-edge centers. We need to change where we invest our dollars and how we look at traditional academic enterprises and NIH funding. Publishing an article in *Science and Nature* should be our academic goal, but imagine the buzz around publishing an article in *Wired* magazine or getting a grant from the Gates Foundation for something totally unexpected from Jefferson. Embracing the tried and true is great, but we also need to create some flexibility to push the boundaries and do some things no one would have thought of a few years ago.

I also believe physicians are looking for different work models. They now have a choice to be employed by a hospital or university or stay in private practice. That's not a perfect choice because many of them don't want to go from having total autonomy and total risk to having little autonomy or little risk. I am working to create several choices for physicians who join Jefferson. If they want to join as employees, as private doctors, or a hybrid — where there are different levels of autonomy and risk — we're going to present them with options. They will choose us because we offer something different for the future, add value and present so many opportunities.

I sleep very well knowing that the hard work and intelligence of our faculty and staff and my team will prepare us now to become one of the leading integrated healthcare delivery systems in the country with exceptional research centers and one of the best health sciences universities in the country.

### Is the future now?

From the start, I knew we couldn't wait to make changes. We need to do something about the changing landscape of health care. I want to be the place where people are saying, why are they doing that now? Why are they creating a school for computational biology in 2014? Why is pharmacogenomics a part of the curriculum? By 2020, molecular genomics may be a \$100 billion industry and the ability to provide efficient, effective care will require decision support. The answer to your question is found in a favorite quote of mine from Buckminster Fuller: "If you want to create the future, don't change the existing reality. Make a new model that makes the old way obsolete."

### How can our alumni stay connected to what's happening at Jefferson?

We're taking advantage of more social media opportunities so alumni can keep up with the cool stuff that's going on at Jefferson. I am hoping to build a strong loyalty among Jefferson alumni around the world. I want them to know we can help them in the changing healthcare environment and can

continue to be a great resource to them throughout their careers in the health professions. And finally, I want them to know that when they come back to an alumni event at Jefferson, it's going to be a whole lot of fun. We work hard but also have fun.



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