FIU College of Medicine hires National Academy of Sciences member as first dean of academic affairs

MIAMI (Feb. 16, 2007) – Florida International College of Medicine officials announced today the hiring of a member of the National Academy of Sciences, as the College’s first associate executive dean of academic affairs.

Dr. Joe Leigh Simpson, who has done substantial research in the genetics field, will be responsible for the hiring of faculty and helping to lead the nascent College of Medicine’s accreditation process. The College is expected to admit the first class in the fall of 2009. Simpson comes to FIU from the Baylor College of Medicine where he teaches in the department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and the Department of Molecular and Human Genetics, where he has been chairman in the past.

FIU College of Medicine Dean and Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs Dr. John Rock said Simpson’s appointment is of great strategic importance because of his wide recognition within the U.S. scientific community and his administrative experience. In addition to his role in accreditation, Simpson will oversee areas such as curriculum development, research and faculty development.

“In an already established program, Dr. Simpson’s role is very important. In a brand new program like ours, however, it is vital,” said Rock. “We’re very pleased he accepted the position. His administrative experience is extensive and his name in research circles is well-respected by both his peers and the agencies that fund medical research.”

Simpson, 63, has been a member of National Academy of Sciences’ (NAS) Institute of Medicine since 1994. President Abraham Lincoln founded the NAS in 1863.
to provide policy makers with a group of expert advisors on scientific issues facing the nation. Institute of Medicine members help guide policy on health matters ranging from nutrition, to AIDS research.

Simpson obtained his medical degree at Duke University and went on to do post-graduate work at several institutions including Cornell University. From 1975 to 1986 he was the head of the Section of Human Genetics at the Northwestern University Medical School in Chicago. He was also chair at the University of Tennessee’s Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology from 1986 to 1994 before working at Baylor, where he held the same position until last year.

Simpson has published or edited 27 books and almost 900 academic texts ranging from abstracts, to chapters and other peer-reviewed articles. Most of those have been in the areas of genetics and obstetrics-gynecology.

“For the past 30 years I’ve had a wonderful and productive career, but I’ve never had the honor of being called upon to help start something new,” Simpson said. “I’m looking forward to all the opportunities and challenges ahead.”

Simpson will assume his responsibilities on Feb. 23, 2007.

Simpson is married and has two children.

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