ME MO R A N D U M

TO: FIU Community
FROM: Kenneth G. Furton, Provost and Executive Vice President
DATE: August 26, 2015
RE: Dean of the Robert Stempel College of Public Health & Social Work

I am pleased to announce the appointment of Tomás R. Guilarte, Ph.D., as the next dean for the Robert Stempel College of Public Health & Social Work, effective January 1, 2016.

Dr. Guilarte comes to FIU after success as the Leon Hess Professor and Chairman of the Department of Environmental Health Sciences at Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health. Before his time at Columbia, Dr. Guilarte was a professor in the Divisions of Toxicological Sciences and Radiation Health Sciences in the Department of Environmental Health Sciences at the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health.

A leading scientist, educator and academic leader, Dr. Guilarte’s research has focused on mechanism-based neurotoxicology and neuroscience using behavioral, cellular and molecular approaches, ranging from studies using primary culture of neural cells to the application of brain imaging technologies. Another major focus of Dr. Guilarte’s research assessing the effects of environmental chemicals on the central nervous system as well as the onset and progression of neurodegenerative diseases, using a biomarker protein called translocator protein 18 kDa (TSPO).

Dr. Guilarte is recognized worldwide for revealing the effects of low-level lead exposure on the central nervous system during development, and subsequently developing therapies to reverse these neurodegenerative effects.

He’s played an active role in several scientific organizations. Dr. Guilarte has served as president of the Neurotoxicology Specialty Section of the Society of Toxicology and has been a member of numerous NIH study sections and review panels. He is currently member of the advisory council of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS). Notably, Dr. Guilarte has a strong track record of mentoring and training pre-doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows, many of whom have won numerous awards in national and international student competitions.
As the head of the Stempel school— which consists of the Departments of Biostatistics, Dietetics and Nutrition, Environmental and Occupational Health, Epidemiology, Health Policy and Management, Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, and the School of Social Work— Dr. Guilarte will focus on initiatives to engage faculty and expand research opportunities, but perhaps most importantly, he will lead improvements in student success as Stempel works toward its goal of enrolling 200 doctoral students by 2020.

I would like to thank the Search and Screen Committee, chaired by Dean John A. Rock, which conducted a national search that produced excellent candidates in the dean’s search. Their service is greatly appreciated. I would also like to thank Interim Dean Mark Williams, who has led the college steadily through this transition period since September 2014 and will continue to do so throughout the fall semester.

Please join me in congratulating Dr. Guilarte on his appointment as the new dean of the Robert Stempel College of Public Health & Social Work.