Thriving for 110 Years: National's Philosophy of Collaboration and Integration

Kenneth J. Dougherty, DC

ABSTRACT

The National University of Health Sciences celebrated its 110th year in 2016. This article is an edited transcription of the presentation made by Dr Kenneth J. Dougherty, Chair of the Board of Trustees, at the National University of Health Sciences Homecoming reception on June 18, 2016, in Lombard, IL. (J Chiropr Humanit 2017;24:41-43)

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As we celebrate the 110th year of National University of Health Sciences, a question comes to my mind. Through ups and downs with the US economy, several recessions, a depression, and political efforts by some groups to eliminate the chiropractic profession, why has National persisted, and in fact thrived and expanded, over these past 110 years?

I feel that a substantial part of National's success has been our philosophy of rigorous, high-quality, scientific education in combination with our philosophy of collaboration and integration with other health care professions. Here is a brief summary to support this postulation.

Two years after founding National in 1906, John Fitz Alan Howard, DC (Fig. 1), moved the campus of the National School of Chiropractic from Davenport, Iowa, to Chicago, Illinois, so that the National students could learn in a more rigorous, scientific, and interdisciplinary environment.¹⁻⁵ Because of this move, the students were able to complete their internships at Cook County Hospital, which was about a block away from the new campus. As this was back in 1908, National was way ahead of its time.

In the 1960s, President Joseph Janse, DC, ND (Fig. 2), saw the need for chiropractic to have an accrediting body recognized by the US Department of Education. Thus, he led a charge that culminated in the eventual formation of the Council on Chiropractic Education and the recognition of the whole chiropractic profession by the US Department of Education in 1974.⁶⁻⁸ This was a great triumph, not only for National, but for the chiropractic profession.

In the 1990s, James Winterstein, DC (Fig. 3), developed a concept for National to become a University, with other health professions all sharing classes in a truly collegial

Fig 1. John Fitz Alan Howard, DC (President 1906 to 1919).

Private Practice, New Smyrna Beach, FL.

Corresponding author: Kenneth J. Dougherty, DC, 2700 N Peninsula Ave, #242, New Smyrna Beach, FL 32169.

E-mail address: kenddc@bellsouth.net.

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Fig 2. Joseph Janse, DC, ND (President 1945 to 1983).

setting. In 2000, this integration became a reality when National College of Chiropractic became National University of Health Sciences. To the core program of Chiropractic Medicine, the University added professional degree programs in Naturopathic Medicine, Acupuncture, and Oriental Medicine. Per Dr Winterstein's vision, students from all 4 professions share classes when appropriate.

Initially, Dr Winterstein received criticism from some in the chiropractic profession for moving National from a singular professional educational institution to National University of Health Sciences with 4 professional degree programs. But since then, the wisdom of his vision has shown through and has taken National to new levels. This transformation fosters an atmosphere of collaboration. Rather than viewing other health care professionals as competitors who want nothing to do with each other, our students see each other as colleagues and work together for the good of the patient. National pioneered this model, thus breaking new ground, and it has worked out very well for our university and the health care professionals we educate. The University has also set the tone for collegiality among health care professionals nationwide.

In 2008, under Dr Winterstein's Presidency, National opened a second site in Pinellas Park, Florida, in partnership with St. Petersburg College, which is a public institution.

St. Petersburg College offers 4-year bachelor's degrees, is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and enrolls about 65000 students annually. At this location, National's chiropractic medicine program shares facilities with several other health care professions (<http://www.spcollege.edu/UPC-Medical/>), and lecturers from the various health professions occasionally cross-lecture to each other's classes. Once again, this follows our philosophy of integration with other health care professions. National's Florida site is the first chiropractic educational institution in the United States in partnership with a public, tax-supported, state college, and both institutions share classes in a truly collegial setting. As of June 2016, it is still the only one.

Since 1906, National has been the leader in scientific education and the philosophy of collaboration and integration with other health care professions. This is a great service not only to our students but also to all health care professionals and especially our patients. I feel that this is one of the many reasons we have flourished for so many years. I look forward to our growth, vision, and leadership as National's President Joe Stiefel, DC (Fig. 4), continues our heritage and leads us into our next 110 years (Fig. 5).

Fig 3. James Winterstein DC (President 1986 to 2013).

Fig 4. Joe Stiefel, DC (President 2013 to present).

Fig 5. Ken Dougherty, DC, graduated from National College of Chiropractic in 1980. He is a past president of the Florida Chiropractic Association and is currently serving his 8th year on the Florida Board of Chiropractic Medicine. He is serving his 14th year on the National University of Health Sciences Board of Trustees and is its current Chairman.

CONTRIBUTORSHIP INFORMATION

Concept development (provided idea for the research): K.J.D.

Writing (responsible for writing a substantive part of the manuscript): K.J.D.

Critical review (revised manuscript for intellectual content, this does not relate to spelling and grammar checking): K.J.D.

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