**Candidate Statement of Debra Simmons, MD, MS**

I am a Professor of Internal Medicine with tenure completing my second three-year term as an elected Senator representing the School of Medicine. I believe that my diverse experiences and passion for education coupled with my commitment to shared governance at the University of Utah make me an ideal candidate. We are facing unprecedented challenges due to changes related to the COVID-19 pandemic and will all be affected personally and professionally in ways not yet known. By carefully listening to each other as we collectively implement the school’s responses, we will not only continue the school’s rich and innovative history but increase its local, national, and global influence.

I earned my BA in Plan II, Honors Liberal Arts at the University of Texas in Austin and my BS in Nutritional Biochemistry at Cornell University in Ithaca before completing my MD degree at Southwestern Medical School in Dallas. I furthered my medical training at Indiana University Medical Center in Indianapolis for Internal Medicine and at the University of California, San Diego in La Jolla for Endocrinology. I learned to value different perspectives and to seek understanding before making conclusions by being at these different academic institutions. This experience, coupled with my intellectual curiosity and enjoying helping others become their best selves, it led directly to my success at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock. I was a tenured Professor of Medicine and Acting Chief of the Endocrine Section at the Little Rock Veterans Affairs Medical Center before joining the University of Utah in June of 2012. I currently see patients at the University and at the Salt Lake City VA and I understand the challenges facing healthcare providers, patients and the systems which underpin them. In addition, I teach and participate in clinical trials related to my career-long interest in diabetes and cardiovascular disease prevention at both institutions.

In addition to serving the University of Utah as a School of Medicine Senator, I serve on University committees with faculty, students and staff from the entire campus. In these settings, I have the privilege of getting to know the campus community members and learning their passion for the University’s mission as well as their concerns. I also serve on national committees that illustrate the trust given to me and analytical skills that I have developed. I served on the Endocrine Society Finance and Audit Committee for six years. During my tenure, we made critical decisions with long-lasting impact on the Society which internationally represents both scientists and physicians. I personally learned about the finance of business including investments and auditsand currently serve on the Finance committee of the American Diabetes Association which represents multidisciplinary healthcare providers, scientists and people living with diabetes. This is a very different model and has provided meadditional opportunities and challenges with the COVID-19 pandemic. My experience on these two finance committees translate into valuable assets for the Senate as we face the economic impact of the pandemic. My experience as current President of the Association of Specialty Professors, and serving as a founding member organization of the Alliance of Academic Internal Medicine representing all of academic internal medicine, has provided me insights from national colleagues facing similar issues across the nation. This allows me to bring a more global perspective to our Senate.

I hope that I have shared enough about myself and why I believe I am an ideal candidate for President-Elect of the University of Utah Academic Senate. If selected, I will work hard with all of you to represent the Senate and ensure the University of Utah’s continued success. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully yours,

Debra Simmons, MD, MS