

dean's message

“EITHER YOU BRING THE WATER TO L.A., or bring L.A. to the water” is a memorable quote from 1974’s *Chinatown*. The movie, based in the 1930s, told a tale of politics, murder and betrayal — all having to do with water. As discussed in our cover story (see page 4), the water issue is highly charged and extremely complex. In Southern California we worry about the cleanliness of our



beaches, about surfing and about the seafood we eat. We seem at times less concerned about our drinking water as long as tap water is safe and bottled water continues to be delivered to our homes and offices. But should we worry more?

Research and work currently conducted by UCLA School of Public Health faculty, students and alumni confirm that we are on a dangerous course. We learn why we need to address critical water issues now in order to plan for the future. The issues on our horizon have evolved into a global crisis linked directly with poverty, malnutrition and disease caused by inadequate sanitation and water scarcity. In addition, we are witnessing an increase in water-related disasters, including the Indian Ocean tsunami; hurricanes in the Caribbean, west Pacific and United States; floods in Central and Eastern Europe; and extensive droughts in Niger, Mali, Spain and Portugal. These extreme events are among the most prominent, but serve to illustrate the profound global impact of water.

I recently had the opportunity to attend the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) Annual Meeting along with advisory board member Cindy Horn. It is the second year in a row that former President Bill Clinton hosted the event to find and fund solutions to the world’s most pressing problems. This year global public health was introduced as one of four main themes. Attendees included more than 50 current and former heads of state, plus a high-profile group of CEOs, philanthropists, journalists and representatives of nonprofit organizations. The meeting is unique because of the action-oriented focus; participants are not only expected to bring ideas, but concrete investments and plans for change.

Being in the company of those attending CGI was inspiring. I was encouraged by listening to leaders from all over the globe with the means and resolve to make a difference in our world. Upon reflection, the resolve and goals of the meeting embody what we strive to do in the field of public health. We have the unprecedented opportunity and responsibility to help people meet their needs.

Armed with training in public health, our students and faculty are actively engaged in research and consultation in nearly 70 countries throughout the world. And the work we do at UCLA has a global reach. A new high speed, high volume laboratory network (see page 30) will utilize technology to allow real-time disease surveillance around the globe. Meanwhile, our faculty and alumni are utilizing advanced information technology to change the way health care services are delivered and public health is practiced — work that transcends all borders (see page 14).

Attending the Clinton Global Initiative Meeting and reflecting on the global importance of work currently underway at the school has reinforced, in my mind, the necessity to continue broadening our vision and extending our reach. Our strategic plan written nearly five years ago charted a course for expanding our global efforts. Much as the movie *Chinatown* foreshadowed the importance of water, our plan correctly focused more of our efforts abroad.



Linda Rosenstock, M.D., M.P.H.
Dean

