

## A new Dean for the University of Geneva Faculty of Medicine



As of 15 July 2019, Professor Cem Gabay replaces Professor Henri Bounameaux as Dean of the University of Geneva (UNIGE) Faculty of Medicine. Jointly appointed by UNIGE, Yves Flückiger, on the proposal of the Participatory Council of the Faculty of Medicine, and by the Board of Directors of the Geneva University Hospitals (HUG), where he takes up the position of Director for Teaching and Research, Cem Gabay will carry out this dual mandate for the next four years. Its future actions will mainly aim to strengthen the training of MDs and dentists, in line with the health needs of the Swiss population, as well as to promote a regional dimension of research and teaching in a perspective of international excellence.

With more than 2,800 pre- and post-graduate students and 1,800 employees, the UNIGE Faculty of Medicine trains nearly 150 new MDs and 30 new dentists each year. The Faculty of Medicine also hosts 225 research groups working on the different aspects of life sciences, both fundamental and clinical. Biomedical research will be at the heart of Cem Gabay's action: "Today, no doctor can ignore the continuous advances in research and it is precisely this link between fundamental research and clinical applications that makes the strength of the Faculty of Medicine. Our students with a special interest in research will thus be able to add an extra emphasis on research from the very beginning of their studies. And for all others, the visibility of research will be strengthened throughout their medical curriculum."

### Regional networks for a top-notch medicine

Today, the biomedical field is so wide that it is impossible for the universities of Western Switzerland to cover all expertise on their own. The academic institutions located in the Lake Geneva Region are therefore thinking in terms of complementarity. "We must think at a broader level to claim a place at the international level, adds Cem Gabay. I also intend to open up more to the industry by encouraging the rapid development of medical applications based on researches conducted here, and by supporting the creation of translational centres that aim to facilitate this transition from the bench to bedside."

In addition, Geneva's unique place in the global health ecosystem, through the international organizations present on its territory, makes global health a major theme for the Faculty of Medicine, particularly through its Institute of Global Health.

### Ongoing support for primary care medicine

Primary care medicine remains one of the institution's priorities. If, in French-speaking Switzerland at least, the number of doctors leaving universities is sufficient, their geographical distribution across the territory and choice of specialisation are not in line with the population's needs. The major efforts made over the past few years to fix the issue must continue. The new Dean's action will thus focus on three main areas: demonstrate and stimulate interest in primary care medicine from the very beginning of medical studies; facilitate clinical and academic careers in primary care with a well-established curriculum; and finally influence the political debate by advocating for greater recognition, particularly financial, of primary care medicine.

### An equal team

Professor Gabay has surrounded himself with a team of six vice-deans who will assist him in his task. And for the first time, the Dean's team shows an equal representation of genders. "I would like to promote women's academic careers and starting with my team is both natural and a strong signal." The team therefore consists of Professors Alexandra Calmy, in charge of international and humanitarian medicine, Martine Collart, in charge of fundamental medicine and Petra Hüppi, in charge of post-graduate training and relations with the Biotech Campus, as well as Professors Nicolas Demaurex, in charge of core facilities, Mathieu Nendaz, in charge of pre-graduate teaching, and Jérôme Pugin, in charge of clinical medicine.

Trained in Geneva, Cem Gabay obtained a doctorate in medicine in 1991. He specialized in internal medicine and rheumatology and spent several years in the United States before returning to Geneva in 1999. Currently head of the rheumatology department of the HUG, he has been a Full Professor at the UNIGE Faculty of Medicine since 2008, where he also headed the Department of Medicine from 2013 until his appointment as dean. He was also President of the Swiss Society of Rheumatology for four years. Throughout his career, Cem Gabay has maintained in parallel clinical and fundamental research activities in the field of inflammation. His research has been supported for more than 20 years by the Swiss National Fund for Scientific Research, of which he was a member of the National Council from 2015 to July 2019