“Health care leadership’ is a wonderful oxymoron,” Dr. Raymond S. Greenberg said — with characteristic wryness — to a group of civil engineers last year. “With the possible exception of higher education, there is no human activity more naturally resistant to leadership than the... American health care system.” A reality show based on the lives of those who work in health care, he suggested, could be called Hospital Fear Factor.

In seven years as MUSC’s president, Greenberg has built a long list of achievements, including helping the school recover from the serious financial difficulties it inherited from the previous administration. Not only did he put the school “back in the black” in just one year, he has gone on to oversee the construction of cutting-edge patient and educational facilities. But he’s proudest of the collaborations he has fostered.

One of those is merging the schools of pharmacy at MUSC and the University of South Carolina into a single institution with campuses at each university. Think about that for a moment—two rival schools within the same system, each with its own administration, faculty and students, each with its own strengths and its own culture.

“People focus on change, on what will be lost, not on what will be gained,” Greenberg says. “There was a lot of concern about losing identity, tradition, control.” He believed that merging the two schools would result in a whole greater than the sum of its parts, an institution that ultimately would become a top-tier pharmacy school. He and MUSC’s provost conveyed this vision through a series of town hall meetings with students, faculty and alumni groups. But, he says, it takes more than words to win hearts and minds.

“Patience, how you treat other people, has a lot to do with your effectiveness...A lot has to do with creating enough excitement, enough enthusiasm that other people voluntarily subscribe.”

Dr. Raymond Greenberg at Emory University.

“Ray clearly understands that the work we do is very consequential work, but he certainly doesn’t take himself too seriously,” says MUSC faculty member Dr. Larry Mohr, who met Greenberg when both were undergraduates in Carolina’s chemistry department. “He’s able to put his life and his leadership in a very human perspective. It’s one of the reasons he’s been so effective.”

Unexpected words, perhaps, from a man who was the founding dean of the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University and is now president of the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC). But Ray Greenberg’s self-effacing humor has helped him become an innovative health care leader, one who successfully brought together even health care professionals who were initially resistant to the idea.

Under Greenberg’s leadership, MUSC also created the South Carolina Bioengineering Alliance with Clemson University. But his most striking success is Health Sciences South Carolina (HSSC), a public-private partnership among several of the state’s research universities and teaching hospitals. Greenberg saw HSSC as a way to expand medical research and improve South Carolinians’ health and economic well-being; he now chairs its board of directors.

Again, creating a culture of collaboration was critical—and it wasn’t easy. It took all of what Greenberg sees as the essential leadership skills.

“Do you have the ability to convince other people that your vision makes sense?” he asks. “Is your personality charismatic enough to get people to want to join you? And patience, how you treat other people, has a lot to do with your effectiveness.”

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Creating a Culture of Collaboration

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“The actions you follow up with have to convince people. They have to see that what you’re articulating and the reasons you’re doing it make sense, and that you’re serious about moving ahead with it.”

Merging the pharmacy schools, Mohr says, was “a very innovative, very creative solution to focusing resources, eliminating duplication and providing new opportunities for educational and research collaboration.” The result, in his view, is a model for inter-institutional collaboration that could very well be replicated around the country.

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Leaders continued from page 6

» The leaders profiled in this issue tell us that success does not come from one person’s efforts and abilities alone, but from their ability to inspire others to work with them, and with each other. Working together—as a team—is a theme that other UNC leaders have emphasized.

When Michael Jordan was a UNC freshman—long before he became a superstar athlete—his coach, Dean Smith, told him, “Michael, if you can’t pass, you can’t play.”

Smith, one of the most successful coaches in college basketball history, helped his players develop their skills by giving them the same three goals every year, as chronicled in his book, The Carolina Way.

» Play Hard: Insist on consistent effort.

» Play Smart: Execute properly. Understand and execute the fundamentals.

» Play Together: Play unselfishly. Don’t focus on individual statistics.

Greenberg continued from page 17

Especially in universities, where there is a hierarchy, most of what gets done is more by personal persuasion. A lot has to do with creating enough excitement, enough enthusiasm that other people voluntarily subscribe.

Shortly after HSSC got underway in 2004, South Carolina Governor Mark Sanford awarded Greenberg the Order of the Palmetto, the state’s highest civilian honor, for exceptional service to the state and nation.

“During your time as its president, MUSC has enjoyed national recognition in the areas of education, research and patient care,” Sanford said at the time.

Still to come, the governor predicted, were even greater achievements, “whose seeds have been planted through your efforts to build alliances with health and educational institutions, both public and private, through the state of South Carolina.”

In building those alliances, Greenberg has drawn on the examples of his parents, whom he calls one of the greatest blessings of his life. His father, the late Dr. Bernard Greenberg, founded and chaired the Department of Biostatistics in the UNC School of Public Health and later served as dean. His mother, Ruth Greenberg, has a graduate degree in chemistry from Yale. She says her son was a very determined young person from the time he was very young.

In retrospect, his ending up in public health was a matter of chance, but it also came from his ability to inspire others to work with him, and with each other. Working together—as a team—is a theme that other UNC leaders have emphasized.

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