

nature medicine

Farewell, captain

Last month, Juan Carlos López, who was Chief Editor of *Nature Medicine* for a decade, left the journal for a new position in the biopharmaceutical industry. His team looks back at his legacy and forward to what's next.

When Juan Carlos—called JC by his friends and colleagues—left *Nature Medicine* in February, he was the longest-serving Chief Editor at the journal since its launch in 1995. In those years, we have witnessed many changes in how research is performed, critiqued and reported and have been party to an increased focus on translational science on the backdrop of shrinking research funding in many countries. Under JC's leadership, *Nature Medicine* has strengthened its position as a leading biomedical research publication, and we aim to build on his legacy for the continued betterment of the journal.

One of JC's greatest strengths is his ability to connect with people. For him, community building was a key way to improve our awareness of cutting-edge research and to aid in our decision-making process. He encouraged his team to interact with scientists as much as possible, and he led by example: he was constantly traveling worldwide to meetings and institutes to obtain feedback about the journal and to find new ways for us to serve the biomedical research community.

During his tenure at the journal, he led the push to initiate new collaborative meeting series with universities, foundations and pharmaceutical companies all over the world. For example, we have been collaborating with the Volkswagen Foundation in Germany for five years and have already held seven meetings with them on a variety of topics such as autoimmunity, cancer metastasis, and stem cells, with an upcoming meeting on autism planned for this year. We have also recently launched our annual Helmholtz–*Nature Medicine* Diabetes Conference with the Helmholtz Diabetes Center in Munich, Germany and hope to continue to grow our conference offerings in the future.

As Chief Editor of *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* before his jump to *Nature Medicine*, JC was keenly aware of how much a good review, or a strong and timely Focus issue, could attract readers from a particular community to the journal's pages. So he expanded our offerings of disease-focused content, such as groupings of topically related reviews as well as analysis of the most exciting recent findings in a particular field, on the basis of both community feedback and citations. Over the years, we have published focus issues on many topics, including metabolic

disease, HIV, Alzheimer's disease, cancer and malaria, to name a few. This special content has allowed us to highlight fields that we feel are exciting and rapidly changing and to provide a forum for scientists to raise important questions and present new perspectives to move these fields forward.

JC encouraged and oversaw the launch of new sections of the journal, such as Between Bedside and Bench, which examines how recent clinical and preclinical findings could influence each other, and Community Corner, which provides close analysis of research breakthroughs or controversial new findings, as well as our blog *Spoonful of Medicine*. Linked to this content expansion, JC realized that increasing the number of editors on staff would allow us to better provide our readers with the breadth of findings that were emerging in translational research. Upping our number of manuscript editors has improved author service by allowing us to more rapidly make editorial decisions after manuscript submission. The additional dedicated Reviews editors enabled us to increase the number of high-quality reviews we could commission. The expansion of the News team allowed for more diverse offerings for our readers, such as podcasts and videos, and new content, such as the Opinion section. The news team has also initiated our entry into social media under JC's watch, with sizable followings on Facebook and Twitter. A portion of our most recent podcast is dedicated to JC's legacy (go.nature.com/1xv9lT).

Working with JC has been constantly provocative and entertaining. He possesses that rare combination of thoughtfulness and decisiveness and was always there to lend an ear when we needed his advice, even if he was halfway around the world at the time. We deeply value JC's contributions to the journal, his collaborative spirit and his guidance. Just as he invited the participation of his editorial team in making important decisions for the journal, we invite our readers to comment on how we are doing and how we can improve in the future by sending an e-mail to medicine@us.nature.com. We look forward to continuing to be responsive to the needs and concerns of the scientific community and to providing the best venue for publishing biomedical research.