

## From Deluge to Doctor UT Medical Students Match a Rising Tide

By Meredith Raine, Public Affairs

When the Class of 2005 entered The University of Texas Medical School at Houston, the basement and ground floor were still damp from the floodwaters that damaged the school during Tropical Storm Allison.

Classrooms were buzzing with the sounds of mosquitoes in flight and diesel generators providing emergency electricity to the school. The gross anatomy laboratory, the comfortable couches in the Leather Lounge and all the other facilities the students had admired during their interviews were gone. With a sink-or-swim attitude, more than 180 freshmen cracked open their textbooks and went on to conquer the challenge of learning medicine in the middle of a disaster area.

"Never before have I seen a group of students withstand this kind of assault without falling apart," said Stanley Schultz, M.D., the medical school dean. "They persevered. They did more than make do. They rose above the adversity."

Almost four years later, the Class of 2005 has conquered another challenge — getting into residency programs so they can begin the next phase of their training after graduation.

On March 17, 183 Medical School seniors participated in Match Day, an annual event coordinated by the National Resident Matching Program. In stark contrast to the dank, mold-scented classrooms of their first day in medical school, it was dry and sunny

in Webber Plaza as the students celebrated their futures.

The process that led up to this moment is similar to a job search. Students apply to residency programs, interview with directors, rank the programs of their choice and then wait to see if they've earned one of the coveted positions. Meanwhile, residency directors rank applicants they would like to be in their program.

Approximately 16,000 U.S. medical school seniors compete alongside 17,000 independent applicants for approximately 23,000 residency positions. Competition is intense, and not everyone gets a residency slot, but at the Medical School, all seniors matched. Internal

medicine and family practice were the top two areas of medicine in which seniors chose to do their residency training. Anesthesiology, surgery, and obstetrics and gynecology tied for third.

Latricia "Tricia" Thompson is among more than a dozen Medical School seniors who chose a residency in obstetrics and gynecology. She will stay at the Medical School and train at Lyndon B. Johnson General Hospital. Hers is a familiar face from the *Houston Medical* television mini-series that aired on ABC in the summer of 2002. The documentary featured key moments during Thompson's first year of medical school.

*continued on page 2*



**Happy in Houston:** Derick Sager cherishes a moment with his wife after they learn that he will do his internal medicine residency at the Medical School. Photos by Meredith Raine



**Prime Time to Celebrate:** Latricia Thompson, left, celebrates Match Day and her 34th birthday with Larry Gilstrap, M.D., professor and chairman of the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences. Thompson will stay at the Medical School to do her ob/gyn residency at Lyndon B. Johnson General Hospital. During an interview with Ch. 13, Gilstrap told reporter Christi Myers, "We were hoping she would pick us, because we picked her."



**A Family Matter:** Ana Leech celebrates with her husband, 6-month-old daughter and 4-year-old son during Match Day. Leech is among a growing number of women who are becoming surgeons, and she will do her residency at the UT Medical School.



**Great Expectations:** Meredith and Manny Reyes open their envelopes and learn that they will stay at the UT Medical School at Houston for their residency training in pathology and internal medicine, respectively. The two were among numerous fourth-year students who went through the "couple's match" March 17 in Webber Plaza.

## Behind the Scenes, Office Keeps Facilities Clean, Safe and Operating

By Pamela Lewis, Public Affairs

Until you need them, you may not notice members of the Facilities Department. The department members primarily operate behind the scenes, except in the case of new building construction. "We carry a new building from the planning stages to fully operational, keeping it — as well as previously built health science center buildings — clean, safe and operating," says Richard McDermott, vice president for Facilities.

"Our primary responsibility," says McDermott, "is to serve the programs that carry out the mission of the university — education, research and clinical care. The Facilities Department does not have enough resources to provide everything that is requested. Our challenge is to make sense of the hundreds

of requests we get; to figure out the most important and most urgent; and to use all the resources available to fulfill those requests."

To help with this prioritizing, there is a facilities advisory council in each school. "We listen closely to each of the schools. The councils provide key information to help in prioritizing scarce resources. They are crucial to keeping things on the right track."

McDermott says he'll be happy with his department if "our customers say that Facilities has done the right things — even though they could not do everything."

When McDermott came to the campus last summer, his charge was to take a fresh look at everything in the department, then under interim management after budget cuts, and

decide how the department should be organized and how it should best act in support of the various areas of the health science center.

It became apparent, he says, that the department should have a fairly flat hierarchy. Now, four managers — Jim Victor, Gerard Marchand, Sam Samuel and Mark Ferguson — report directly to McDermott (see organization chart, page 2). Each manager has one or two teams of employees, depending on their areas of responsibility. "I am thrilled with the leadership these four managers are providing to the critical areas of project management, planning, maintenance and operations, and controls and utilities," he says.

### Project Management

Project Management and Engineering

Services is composed of a team of professional engineers and project managers, headed by Jim Victor. The team members plan and manage non-routine facility improvements such as new building construction, capital improvements and renovations.

"Our charge," says Victor, "is to complete new buildings and capital improvements on time and on budget, be good stewards of the health science center's money; and collaborate and facilitate projects. We need to get the projects done and get along with all the diverse participants as we do that."

Victor says he and Gerard Marchand, manager, Facilities Planning, are "really a team" in terms of planning, completing and keeping track of new and existing space at the health science center.

*continued on page 2*

### Inside:

Meet . . . Roy Prichard ... Page 3

STAR Awards ..... Page 4

New UT Housing ..... Page 5

### Practice Plan Collections Top \$10 Million in March

"Thanks to our hard-working physicians, staff and Per-Se Technologies, in March 2005 The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston recorded its first 'eight-figure' month of gross collections — totaling \$10.2 million, said Kevin Dillon, executive vice president for Finance and Business Affairs.

Through March, the physician practice plan's professional fee collections are \$61.7 million, an increase of \$4.9 million, or 8.6 percent, over the same period of fiscal year 2004. Dillon cited increased physician production, plus improved collection activities, for the record levels of revenues. "The Per-Se outsourcing relationship is now a year old, and the practice plan and Per-Se are working more effectively together to yield greater collections."

Though complete March '05 financial results are not yet available, the practice plan projects an overall positive margin of approximately \$3 million for the fiscal year ending Aug. 31, 2005, approximately the level earned last year.



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