

Meet ... Stephen Kry

New Leader of SIC Prepared for Upcoming Challenges

Erika E. Durham, Public Affairs

At a time when the demand for student events and programs has increased, while the amount of resources to support them has decreased, Stephen Kry, a student of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, has been named the new president of The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston's Student InterCouncil (SIC).

But Kry, who is pursuing a Ph.D. in Medical Physics as he takes over from former president UT Medical School graduate Manny Reyes, M.D., said he looks forward to the challenges ahead of him.

And his peers are supportive of his new role. Ryan Barrientos, a student at the UT Medical School who has been involved in the SIC for years, said there is no doubt Kry will fulfill his duties exceptionally well.

"Over the years, Stephen has shown an ability to lead," Barrientos said. "And serving as Vice President last year has given him the experience to multi-task and complete projects. Also, because of his experience, his opinion is well respected among the members of the organization."

And with that type of support Kry plans to face the challenges ahead of him with opti-

mism. According to Kry, the elimination of some programs that supported the SIC have made it imperative that the organization focus on new, creative ways to provide the same services at the same level of quality.

The Adopt-A-Family program, United To Serve and CHASE (Careers in Health and Science for Everyone), a program that mentored high school students, were the SIC programs receiving the most support from the department, according to Kry.

"My focus as the new president is not necessarily to implement any new programs or projects, but more to ensure that we continue to do what we have done — well," he said. "It will be hard work, but it is important that we make sure it is done."

This is Kry's fifth year to serve on the coun-



Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences student Stephen Kry replaces UT Medical School graduate Manny Reyes as the new president of the SIC.

cil, so he speaks from experience. "Over the years we have managed to maintain and improve our level of services, while also managing to keep the costs down. Along with the rest of the university, we have successfully jumped on the band wagon of being more fiscally responsible."

Kry uses Salutation, a welcoming event for incoming freshmen as an example of changes.

Four years ago the event, a then sit-down dinner at a hotel, cost \$12,000.

Last year a mixer took place at the School of Nursing and Student Community Center to the tune of \$5,000. With Kry's leadership it is likely that the team will pull off these top notch results in the year to come.

Kry is a native Canadian and is studying medical physics at the UT Graduate

School of BioMedical Sciences. His mother is a retired teacher and his father a retired petroleum physicist, who nurtured his son's love of science. Kry said the ability to mix science and laboratory research with patient care through medical imaging and radiation therapy is what he most enjoys about medical physics. His studies keep him busy, but not too busy to serve his school and the students.

"The Student InterCouncil provides a sense of campus life to a school that is spread throughout this large medical center," he said. "In undergraduate universities it is easy to feel that connection among the student body. In graduate school it's a little harder to do, but that is exactly what we strive for."

The SIC, which is heavily supported by the Office of Academic Affairs and Auxiliary Enterprises, sponsors social, civic, community and academic events. SIC members manage a scholarship fund, blood drives, and donations to those in the city who are most in need. Its goal is to contribute to the quality of student life at the health science center by participating in the development and implementation of policies and procedures affecting students. ★

Center on Aging Wins Award, Hosts Upcoming Elder-Care Conference

"Caring for Those Who Cared for Us," a video about volunteers in the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, has received a Bronze Award in the 2005 HeSCA Media Festival. The video was developed through the Center on Aging and produced by The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center and translated into Spanish.

Ombudsmen, trained through the Center on Aging program headed by Program Director Diane Persson, Ph.D., are helping a generation of people who can no longer help themselves — the frail elderly who now live in nursing and assisted living facilities. Both residents and facility administrators who have called on the volunteers for help express their appreciation at having another set of eyes and ears to address concerns. "We're tough enough to care. And I'd like to think that one day if

I need it, there'll be an ombudsman there for me," as one volunteer ombudsman says,

"This is another example of the fine way the COA and Ombudsman program are enhancing the image of the UT Health Science Center at Houston and the School of Nursing in our community and beyond," said Nancy Bergstrom, Ph.D., the Theodore J. and Mary E. Trumble Professor of Aging Research and director of the Center on Aging.

HeSCA, the Health and Science Communications Association, is a national association of communications professionals committed to sharing knowledge and resources in the health and science arenas.

Annual Conference

"Is Houston Elder-Friendly?" is the subject of discussion at the upcoming 19th Annual

Selenia E. and Joseph C. Valley Conference, which brings together experts in aging research and elder care, city officials, business people, and community activists for a frank, informative and constructive discussion about the problems faced by Houston's senior population and how the area can prepare to be more supportive of its citizens as the baby boomers age.

Topics will include:

- Key factors that make a community elder-friendly
- Future plans for older adults in the Houston area
- The challenges of planning for a diverse elder-friendly community
- Developing a vision and action plan for an elder-friendly Houston.

The Valley conference, which will take

place 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Friday, Sept. 16, at the University of Houston Hilton Hotel and Conference Center, is hosted by The University of Texas School of Nursing at Houston's Center on Aging, with the support of the Harris County Agency on Aging, the Alzheimers Association-Houston and Southeast Texas Chapter and Care for Elders.

Everyone interested in senior issues is invited to attend. Continuing Education units may be available for nurses, social workers and long term care administrators.

The Hilton Hotel and Conference Center is accessible via Entrance One of the University of Houston central campus. Pay parking is available at the hotel.

Early registration (by Aug. 31) is \$75, \$45 students. Contact: (713) 500-9167 or visit <http://uthcoa.org/> ★

We Did It! Food Drive Hits Goals

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston community stepped up to the dinner plate, donating more than 3,885 pounds of non-perishable goods and \$4,200 to the UT Bags Hunger Food Drive as part of the Texas Medical Center/Channel 11 Spirit of Texas Food Drive. The drive benefits the work of the Houston Food Bank, which can purchase \$25 worth of food for every dollar donated.

"We all can appreciate the challenges the Houston Food Bank faces year round. Hunger does not take a summer vacation," said C. Gwin Morris, Ph.D., vice president for Public Affairs, who congratulated health science center participants for giving the equivalent of \$105,000 of food purchasing power and nearly two tons of food products to help feed Houston's hungry.

That meant the university exceeded its

goal of 3,000 pounds and \$4,000 in cash. A raffle to encourage participation resulted in Gail Whitsitt, Environmental Health and Safety, General Administration, receiving a Kodak EasyShare camera, and Mary Ann Smith, Ph.D., Environmental and Occupational Health, School of Public Health, an iPod Shuffle.

"The UT volunteers who worked as coordinators and helpers did an outstanding job,"

said Elease Jenkins, Office of Public Affairs, overall Food Drive coordinator for the university. (See the complete list of volunteers on the UT Food Drive Web site at http://www.uthouston.edu/community/food_drive/.)

Connie Tapper, School of Health Information Sciences Food Drive coordinator, appeared on KHOU-TV (Channel 11) as she and others sorted and packed donations on the final day of the Spirit of Texas Food Drive. ★

Former Surgeon General Fires Up Students about Diversity

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members of the 5-H club: Hungry, Helpless, Homeless, Hugless, Hopeless. Their basic health-related needs must be met before they can begin to pay attention in school. "What good is reading, writing and arithmetic, when you are physically, mentally, and emotionally sick?" Elders asked.

"Dr. Elders didn't give us just the problem, she also gave us the solution," said Rowena Reyes, a fourth-year student at the UT Medical School, who co-chaired the conference with fourth-year dental student Alice Luan, under the direction of Paula O'Neil, Ed.D., associate dean of Education and Professional Development for the Dental Branch.

Elders stressed the importance of reaching young people with direct care and health education. "You need to start with yourselves," she said. "We can't teach what we don't know and we can't lead where we don't go."

"(The UT Dental Branch) is doing a fine job of emphasizing the importance of oral health in relation to overall health care, but I don't think this is the case everywhere," Elders said.

"We, as physicians and dentists, need to do a better job of stressing this fact. We need more trained leaders to make sure this and other important health-care issues are brought to light."

In addition to advocacy, Elders encouraged the students to become generalists, instead of,

or in addition to becoming specialists, so that they can be instrumental in helping a wider range of patients.

Following her talk, James T. Willerson, M.D., president of UT Health Science Center, thanked Elders for her time and commitment to the cause, calling her courageous.

"You speak what you know is right and you don't worry about the consequences," Willerson said. "I encourage you to keep charging forward. You remind me a lot of Barbara Jordan, and I can't pay you a higher compliment."

Later in the day Richard Haight, D.D.S., president of the American Dental Association, spoke about the need for diversity in today's

dental population and the importance of reaching underserved areas.

Charles Terrell, Ed.D., vice president for Diversity Policy and Programs at the Association of American Medical Colleges, reminded the student leaders to "Never Compromise the Dream," when advancing diversity in medicine.

Earlier in the week, the students listened to a presentation on cultural competence by Tawara Goode, director of the National Center for Cultural Competence and associate director for community planning at Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development. ★