

Human Subject Research Review System to Go Online Exclusively

By Scott Merville, Public Affairs

At the end of January, the human subjects' research enterprise at the UT Health Science Center at Houston will say goodbye to the 1960s. That's the vintage of the technology — photocopiers and lots of paper — that has supported that research for decades, said Peter Davies, M.D., Ph.D., executive vice president for Research.

Since Nov. 16, in anticipation of out with the old and in with the new, any researcher submitting a new protocol for review by the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects has had the option of using the new, Web-based internet Research Information System (iRIS). **Davies expects to have all committee business conducted through iRIS by the end of January, making the use of the system mandatory for all users at that point.**

"The system has been customized to fit institutional policies and procedures and has been configured to our forms," Davies said. "Barbara Legate has worked hard and closely with CPHS, our research faculty and staff, and the iRIS vendor. We are ready to implement a pretty mature system."

Legate, information technology coordinator in Davies' office, estimates that 300 people are either using the system as a key study person on an iRIS protocol. There are 75 studies currently in iRIS.

Hands-on training opportunities will continue and a support line is available at (713) 500-3800. Technical support is available and iRIS documentation is online at http://www.uth.tmc.edu/ut_general/research_acad_aff/orsc/iris.html. "This system simplifies the process of preparing and submitting human subjects' research protocols and the process of managing the enormous amount of information that goes with those protocols," Davies said. "We will spend less time worrying about the movement and tracking of paper and be

able to spend more time and effort to support actual research."

The system also is transparent. Using their UT ID and passwords, researchers and CPHS members will be able to log in and track the progress of protocols from anywhere.

Many researchers and research coordinators have been using iRIS without formal training as it has been in a pilot mode since March.

Existing research protocols are being converted from paper so all CPHS-related business — change requests, continuing reviews — can go through iRIS. Legate expects the process to be complete this month. The university has approximately 1,200 active protocols under way.

The system allows individualized routing

of protocols to meet the needs of researchers in each school. Electronic signature signoff by principal investigators, co-investigators, department chairs or school research offices will be provided using a UT ID and password — digital IDs are not required.

Legate reminds all university researchers that research collaborators not associated with the university will need to become guests of the university to obtain their own ID and password if they are to access the system. The process to obtain a guest account can be found at <http://oac9.hsc.uth.tmc.edu/jsp/GuestAdmin/>.

Scheduled training classes continue, 1:30-3:30 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 19, and Thursday, Jan. 27, University Center Tower (UCT), Room 1155. Classes will be scheduled in February on an as-needed basis. Parking for the classes at UCT will be validated; to register, contact Barbara.S.Legate@uth.tmc.edu, (713) 500-3470.

Special training classes also will be held at:

- the Dental Branch (contact Laura A.Warner@uth.tmc.edu) and
- the School of Nursing (contact Cynthia C.Bihm@uth.tmc.edu). ★

More on iRIS

iRIS Support: (713) 500-3800

Training class registration: Barbara.S.Legate@uth.tmc.edu

Contacts: Barbara.S.Legate@uth.tmc.edu; April.Washington@uth.tmc.edu; and Kathryn.Matthew@uth.tmc.edu

iRIS Documentation: http://www.uth.tmc.edu/ut_general/research_acad_aff/orsc/iris.html

Guest Account Information: <http://oac9.hsc.uth.tmc.edu/jsp/GuestAdmin/>

The Dental Branch: 100 and Counting

By Erika E. Durham, Public Affairs

The Centennial year of The University of Texas Dental Branch at Houston arrived in style Monday, Jan. 3, as faculty, staff and students came together for an in-house kickoff celebration. Talks, a large historical display, cakes imprinted with the Dental Branch Centennial mark, and the sounds of local guitarist John Acevedo left no doubt that it was a celebratory occasion.

Words of pride about the school's past and promise for the future were offered by Dental Branch Dean Catherine M. Flaitz, D.D.S., and UT Health Science Center President James T. Willerson, M.D., Bryant Boutwell, Dr.P.H., associate dean for Community Affairs at the UT Medical School at Houston,

highlighted through words and photos the Dental Branch's historic milestones.

Although the in-house celebration was primarily aimed at current Dental Branch fac-

ulty, staff and students, several proud alumni, including representatives from the UTDB Alumni Association, were in attendance.

The Dental Branch Parents' Association presented a gift of a Kavvo Diagnodent, a device that detects caries (decay) through a laser, to the student body. The students were appreciative, not only for the costly cutting-edge equipment, but also for the occasion, which fostered a great sense of pride in their school.

Additional events for alumni and other audiences are scheduled throughout the year. Visit the school's Centennial Web page at <http://www.db.uth.tmc.edu/Centennial/> for more information. ★



Fourth-year Dental Branch students, L-R, Nedith Casquete, Ann Blaine and Gretchen Price with Dean Catherine M. Flaitz, D.D.S., second from right, during the Centennial celebration. Photo by Brian Schnupp

Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination Focus of Upcoming Workforce Audit

The Texas Workforce Commission Civil Rights Division is scheduled to visit the UT Health Science Center during the week of Jan. 24.

Michael Jimenez, vice president and chief human resources officer, said the review will include the health science center's policies and procedures for faculty and staff related to:

- Hiring and promotion (including recruitment);
- Personnel evaluations;
- Disciplinary actions;
- Workplace accommodations;
- Equal employment opportunity (including

sexual harassment); and

- Compensation.

The civil rights division of the Texas Workforce Commission is responsible for reviewing personnel policies and procedures of each state agency and institution of higher education on a six-year cycle to ensure an institution's policies and procedures are in compliance with the Texas Labor Code, Sections 21.451-456.

The Department of Human Resources has worked closely with the offices of Equal Opportunity and Diversity, Academic

Affairs, and Legal Affairs and Institutional Compliance in preparation for this audit.

The representative carrying out the audit randomly may select personnel evaluations and other personnel records for review. "Any department within the health science center may need to provide specific documentation about a particular employee," said Jimenez. "It is essential that your departmental files represent current and complete personnel actions for each faculty and staff member. This includes a current performance evaluation for each staff member within the last year

as required within HOOP 2.33 Performance Appraisals. For faculty, there should be a current annual review as required by HOOP 4.07 Faculty Review."

Following the on-site review, a report of the findings will be submitted to the governor, legislature and the Legislative Budget Board.

Direct questions regarding the audit to Marsha Brody-Silva, director of Human Resources Client Services at (713) 500-3143, or Yolanda Davis, director of Equal Employment Opportunity & Diversity at (713) 500-3025. ★

Mentoring Award Winners Say Balance, Perseverance Are Key

continued from page 1

Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS).

Today, Hanneman said, CPHS has three panels, all chaired by women, with women in many of the decision- and policy-making positions. Knudson, who received a standing ovation during the reception, said even though the number of women in leadership positions has improved since she came to the university 30 years ago, the need to mentor women hasn't decreased.

"There is always a need to mentor women," Knudson said. "For boys and men I think it is a much more natural process. We are just getting to the glass ceiling."

Although Knudson shares many words of wisdom with those she mentors, she stresses to them that it is most important to "operate in integrity."

Debra Wallis, a former researcher in Medical Genetics at the Medical School, was honored with the Classified Staff award for mentoring. Lisa Vincent, a graduate student in Medical Genetics, said that in the three years she worked with her, Wallis was always helpful and open to sharing informa-

tion. Vincent recalls that Wallis was looked up to not only for her lab experience, but also for her willingness to listen to others' problems, whether they were professional or personal. "She was our resident problem-solver," Vincent said.

Wallis has since followed the advice she often gave to those around her and followed her dream of running her own business. She is now the owner of a coffee shop in Marshall.

Linda Nieman, Ph.D., chair

of the Committee on the Status of Women, said this year's President's Award winners once again embody the emphasis on mentoring that the committee promotes. Nieman, whose career also has influenced women through mentoring, echoed the honorees' thoughts on the importance of the practice.

"Mentoring is a way of showing people the ropes," Nieman said. "It helps in career development and promotes productivity." She added that mentoring provides a context for people to work within and provides a model for the aspirations of those being mentored. ★



Paula Knudson