

Medical School Breaks Ground on a New Era in Research

By Darla Brown, Medical School

The UT Medical School celebrated the beginning of an exciting new chapter in its research mission by ceremoniously breaking ground for a six-story research facility April 12.

Faculty, staff, students and friends of the school attended the celebratory event to welcome the construction of the 208,500 gross square-foot building, which is estimated to cost \$80 million when completed.

"This building will propel the Medical School into the forefront of new and exciting areas that hold great promise for the understanding and alleviation of prevalent human diseases," said Dean Stanley Schultz, M.D.

The building will be home to the new animal-care facility and four research programs: neurobiology of human development, physiological genomics or systems biology, structural biology, and the molecular biology of human pathogens.

It will be built on the site of the former John Freeman Building adjacent to the Medical School Building. The John Freeman Building had been carefully

deconstructed over the previous two months, with 130 18-wheeler truckloads of debris being hauled off.

"We had to break ground inside because there was too much construction going on outside to have the celebratory event," Schultz

explained with a laugh.

Honorary shovel wielders Brad Howell, chair of the Development Board; Judianne Kellaway, M.D., president of the alumni association; third-year medical student John McFate; and Executive Vice President for

Research Peter Davies, M.D., Ph.D., joined Schultz in symbolically turning the earth — signaling the start of construction for the new building.

"Today is an auspicious date in our history as we move forward with our Medical School expansion," Schultz said. "April 12, 1955, 50 years ago was an auspicious date in the history of medicine when the Salk vaccine was approved as safe and effective. There are many more 'polios' to conquer, and it is our fervent hope that HIV/AIDS, SARS, and other infectious pathogens will also become history as a result of the research efforts of the dedicated scientists working in this new building."

Funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, National Institutes of Health, and the Texas Legislature were secured to begin building. In addition, a fund-raising program to properly outfit the new facility and recruit and support stellar new scientists in these exciting areas of research and discovery will be forthcoming. ★



Digging into the ceremonial plot of earth: left to right, Peter Davies, M.D., Ph.D., executive vice president for research, and a professor of integrative biology and pharmacology on the Medical School Faculty; third-year medical student John McFate, who is also president of the student senate; Dean Stanley Schultz, M.D.; Judianne Kellaway, M.D., director of the residency program in the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Science and president of the school's alumni association; and Brad Howell, chairman of the health science center Development Board. Photo by John Everett

Learning Management System on an Online Growth Trend

Beginning this summer, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston will roll out the first phase of a state-of-the-art software tool for managing compliance training and personnel development. The new Learning Management System was a \$200,000 gift to the university from Fort Worth-based Savoy River.

"The first phase of implementation will include moving many of the current safety and compliance courses online and the conversion of orientation for new employees to an online experience," according to Brent Powell, Ph.D., manager of Training and Development in Human Resources.

"Our goals are to reduce the time for orientation and required compliance training by half and make it possible to complete the courses from office or home any time of the day or night," Powell said.

Some courses will continue to be given in a classroom, but even those can be registered for and tracked online. Employees will use their University ID and password to get into the system to see which courses they need to take. By speeding up the access and increasing

Curriculum	Description	Status	Certificate			
Annual Performance Appraisal	completes required annual performance appraisal online forms.	Not Attended	Non-Certification			
JEMO		Not Attended	Non-Certification			
Research	Group of courses is for testing purposes	Not Attended	Non-Certification			
Learning Event	Prerequisites	Pre-Tests	Courses	Post-Tests	Surveys	Status
ASL			Not Attended			Not Attended
Diabetes II			Not Attended			Not Attended
Ethics			Not Attended			Not Attended
HIPC			Not Attended			Not Attended
Safety Inv			Not Attended			Not Attended

availability, the online system will reduce administrative time. "We are trying to get the requirements handled as quickly

and conveniently as possible," Powell said.

At this point, compliance profession-

als around the university are learning how to operate the system, setting up course groups that will be assigned to employees who need them. Courses already taken will be entered into the system creating a central database that can be accessed by any employee from any computer.

Work is under way to move the annual performance appraisals online to reduce the time spent filling them out, printing and storing them. A pilot program is testing the approach among 60 classified staff members and their supervisors. "We are trying to make the annual performance appraisal required in HOOP 2.33 as streamlined as possible so the time is spent communicating and discussing how we can do better instead of chasing paper," Powell added.

The system also will provide developmental courses for employees who want to sharpen their skills at their own convenience.

Introduction and training sessions on the system are planned for presentation throughout the summer for all university personnel. ★

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We Asked, You Answered

Thanks to the more than 1,000 faculty and staff who took part in a recent survey and focus groups, the Workplace of Choice Steering Committee has a great deal of input to consider about how to help make the UT Health Science Center a better place to work. While specific recommendations and action plans are developed this summer, *The Leader* will publish a special report on what you had to say about working here. We asked, you answered. Stay tuned for this special *Leader* report!



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