

Three New HSC Collaborations Announced

HSC and TIRR Sign Rehabilitation Research, Education Agreement

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston and TIRR Systems (The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research) April 18 announced a merger in research and education that will focus exclusively on rehabilitation. The new agreement, which has been approved by The University of Texas System Board of Regents and TIRR Systems Board of Trustees, will cover research in five major areas: brain injury, spinal cord injury, independent living, neuromuscular disease, and adaptive technologies.

“We are merging our interests in rehabilitation research and education for the benefit of all individuals with catastrophic injuries and illness. This merger is part of our strategic plan for expanding and strengthening our research enterprise, especially in areas where we already have achieved clinical excellence,” said UT Health Science Center at Houston President James T. Willerson, M.D. “Building on our existing commitment to TIRR will help us deploy our faculty, staff and students in new ways of doing their very best to improve the health of our patients and educate our physicians in training.”

The new agreement, which is in effect through the end of 2015, will focus additional resources on exploring research and treatment innovations for patients with catastrophic injuries and illnesses.

HSC Joins New Border Health Collaboration

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston has joined the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio, UT Pan American and UT at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College in a new partnership to invest \$1 million next year toward projects targeting education and research on the problems of diabetes, obesity and the nursing shortage along the South Texas-Mexico border.

“The Borderplex Health Council brings together the immense scientific and health research strengths of two of our state’s great health science centers with the engineering, computer science and other great capabilities of our general academic universities that are right here along the border,” said Juliet V. Garcia, Ph.D., chair of the Borderplex Health Council and president of UT Brownsville/Texas Southmost College.

Included in the effort are the UT School of Public Health regional campuses in Brownsville and El Paso, and the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio’s two

Regional Academic Health Center campuses in Harlingen and Edinburg. The council also will work collaboratively with the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio’s Laredo extension campus and UT El Paso.

“We are proud to be a partner in this endeavor, and to provide the special expertise of our School of Public Health to the study of these urgent health topics along the border,” said James T. Willerson, M.D., president of the UT Health Science Center at Houston.

New Inter-institutional Biomedical Engineering Department a Triple Threat

To strengthen the state’s biotechnology research capabilities, educational and research programs of the Department of Biomedical Engineering at The University of Texas at Austin will join with The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston and The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center.

The new, expanded department, to operate in Houston and Austin, will foster inter-institutional collaborations by providing seed grants for new joint research incentives, facilitating multi-investigator research and training-grant proposals, and offering special educational programs and internships, distance-learning classes, and teleconferences.

“The UT Health Science Center at Houston will provide the medical school component in this department, which will have importance for our physician scientist (M.D./Ph.D.) trainees in biomedical engineering,” said Executive Vice President for Research Peter Davies, M.D., Ph.D. “We will see a growing strength in biomedical engineering aspects of the neurosciences, imaging, and cardiovascular medicine — as well as in the unique features of our School of Health Information Sciences and its role in applying computer sciences and informatics to issues of health research.”

A department chair will be selected after a national search, with deputy chairs at each participating campus. Biomedical nanotechnology pioneer Mauro Ferrari, Ph.D., will serve as an interim deputy chair of the new department and provide additional expertise from the Brown Foundation Institute of Molecular Medicine for the Prevention of Human Diseases. Ferrari recently joined the UT Health Science Center as a professor of nanotechnology.

The UT Health Science Center elements of the new department will be housed in the new University of Texas Center for Advanced Biomedical Imaging Research, planned for construction at the UT Research Park/South Campus. ★

The HSC Lost a Longtime Volunteer

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But that wasn’t all he did, Krysti explained. At the neighborhood where he lived, “Dad would gather spare parts and rebuild bicycles for children who didn’t have one,” she said. Dennie added that he even pulled together enough spare parts last year to give a House Medics homeowner’s granddaughter one too. “The little girl was excited! We couldn’t tell who was more excited, her or Daddy.”

Luther Clemons also was a fisherman and loved to camp. Those are the fondest memories Krysti says she has of their dad. “We’d go shrimping, Dad and my husband, Don, would haul in those heavy nets, then we’d prepare a feast. Later on, we’d go to the end of the dock and fish for catfish all night. Daddy wouldn’t even complain when he had to clean one catfish after another and we’d fry them up the next day.”

The sisters reminisced about how their Dad loved to barbecue and cook: “That’s one of the ways he liked showing people what being a family was about.”

Dennie talked about how their parents “always allowed our friends to come over, to stay

over. If they ended up living with us, as a couple of friends who had family problems did, it wasn’t an issue. They were very caring, warm, kind, but disciplining parents.” They made sure their children were honest and had manners, she added.

“We didn’t have a lot growing up, but we didn’t feel a lack.” Maria remembers. “We learned more about diversity in the military than any place else. Mom and Dad didn’t care who you were or what you were — a colonel’s daughter or an airman.”

Luther Clemons was very proud of his volunteer work with House Medics. “He wore his 1996 shirt the first day this year, because he wanted everybody to know how long he’d been doing this,” Dennie said with a smile.

The UT Health Science Center at Houston and the Houston community have lost a great hands-on supporter. We will miss Luther Clemons as a health science center volunteer, but we celebrate the legacy he leaves behind in his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, as well as the many volunteers of all ages whom he trained to help others. ★

CALENDAR

JUNE 15 – JULY 17

June

★ **16** — “Communicating Assertively,” **9-11 a.m.**, Medical School Building, Room B.625 (in the basement), sponsored by Human Resources-Training & Development. Learn to understand different communication styles and how they affect others; recognize and craft messages in different styles; use body language to communicate assertively with power; use a four-step method to effectively communicate assertively; and use “I Messages” to express yourself more directly. Course facilitator is William (Bill) Fetter, PhD. Free for staff and faculty. Register online at <http://www.hr.uth.tmc.edu/>.

★ **16** — “Mining the Breast Tumor Proteome for Discovery of Novel Angiogenic Protein,” **11 a.m.**, Beth Robertson Auditorium, IMM’s Faye S. Sarofim Building, 1825 Pressler Street. Speaker: Fredika M. Robertson, Ph.D., Professor, Dept. of Molecular Virology, Immunology and Medical Genetics, Ohio State University. Contact: Ruby. T.McFarland@uth.tmc.edu; 713-500-2461.

★ **16** — 29th Annual Lewis A. Leavitt, M.D. Memorial Lectureship, **11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.**, Medical School Building, Room 2.006. Baylor College of Medicine/The University of Texas PM&R Alliance proudly presents the 29th Annual Lewis A. Leavitt, M.D. Memorial Lectureship. Joseph Jankovic, M.D., professor of neurology and director of the Parkinson’s Disease Center and Movement Disorders Clinic at Baylor College of Medicine, will present “Dystonia: Pathogenesis and Treatment.” To RSVP, e-mail PMandR@bcm.edu or call 713-799-5033. Lunch will be provided.

★ **24** — The Medical School and The American Liver Foundation host the “Women and Liver Health” Seminar, a continuing medical education program, **8 a.m.-4 p.m.**, the Hilton Post Oak Hotel in Houston. The seminar is directed toward primary care physicians, internists, family

practitioners, gastroenterologists, nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and other health-care professionals. Register at <http://www.UTcme.net>. Contact: Deanna. Tessenyi@utmb.edu, 409-772-9305.

★ **28** — “Effective Communications” Class, **9-11 a.m.**, University Center Tower, Room 1505C. Sponsored by Human Resources-Training and Development. Employee Assistance Program’s Virginia Lara is the facilitator. Learn how to make effective communication decisions; to deal with conflict in the workplace; and practice listening and communicating with compassion, collegiality and creativity in a way that respects cultural diversity and develops a capacity for leadership. Free for faculty and staff. Register online at <http://www.hr.uth.tmc.edu/>.

★ **30** — “Career Development” Class, **9-11 a.m.**, University Center Tower (UCT), Room 1414. Sponsored by Human Resources-Training and Development. As a result of attending this session, participants will be able to: understand the leader’s role in empowering employees to grow; develop a model for employee development based on shared goals and recognizing the individual’s temperament, gifts and areas for improvement; and know resources available to help supervisors coach employees. The facilitator is Denise Carpenter. Free for faculty and staff. Register online at <http://www.hr.uth.tmc.edu/>.

July

★ **3** — Skeleton crew holiday

★ **4** — Independence Day holiday (full closure)

★ **13** — “Employment Policies” Class, **9 a.m.-noon**, UCT, room 1414. Sponsored by Human Resources-Training and Development. Learn employment laws that drive employment practices and decisions; understand HOOP policies and their interpretation. The course facilitator is Debbie Norris. Free for faculty and staff. Register online at <http://www.hr.uth.tmc.edu/>.

Medical School Sees Administrative Changes

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tor and role model for his faculty.”

James Ferrendelli, chair of the Department of Neurology, will step down from his position as chair effective July 1. A search committee, led by Richard Andrassy, M.D., professor and chair of the Department of Surgery, also has been formed to identify and recruit a new chair for the department.

Ferrendelli will continue to be an integral part of the Medical School with research, teaching, and clinical duties in the department.

“We appreciate Dr. Ferrendelli’s work as chair over these last 10 years and expect him to continue to aid in building the department,” Wolinsky said.

Joseph Chang, M.D., chair of the Department of Otolaryngology - Head and

Neck Surgery, has resigned as chair of the department. Until permanent leadership can be identified, Andrassy will direct and oversee the department as acting chair.

“Dr. Andrassy’s willingness to take on another leadership role in the Medical School is greatly appreciated,” Wolinsky said. Andrassy is also associate dean for clinical affairs.

“I truly appreciate the contributions of Drs. Gilstrap, Ferrendelli, and Chang,” Wolinsky said. “We owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude for their leadership and contributions to the growth and maturity of our school and wish them continued success.” ★

Editor’s note: Darla Brown and Camille Webb, Medical School Office of Communication, and Pamela Lewis, UT Health Science Center Office of Public Affairs, contributed to this article.



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DEADLINES

Submit information to be considered for publication in *The Leader* by the 15th of the month one month prior to the desired time of publication. Requests for feature articles require a longer lead time and will receive strategic consideration. Send electronic information in Word format (*no PDFs or posters*) and digital photos as unedited, high-resolution images at 300 dpi or better. E-mail to Pamela.Lewis@uth.tmc.edu. Include a contact name, phone number and e-mail address. Mail hard copy to *The Leader*, c/o Pamela Lewis, Office of Public Affairs, University Center Tower, 1200, or fax to (713) 500-3037. For information regarding *The Leader*, call Pamela Lewis at (713) 500-3040.