

A campus newspaper for faculty, staff and students at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

Growth of Facilities, Recruitment & Programs a Continuing Theme at UTHSC

By Pamela Lewis, *Institutional Advancement*

The past year has been one of growth of facilities, programs and recruitment, reports James T. Willerson, M.D., president of the UT Health Science Center at Houston, and the coming year offers us many more opportunities to sustain that growth and build upon it.

"Our continued recruitment of the world's best scientists has borne more fruit with the hiring of Tom Caskey, M.D., as chief operating officer of the Brown Foundation Institute of Molecular Medicine for the Prevention of Human Diseases (IMM); Mauro Ferrari, Ph.D., professor of NanoMedicine at the IMM, and president of the Texas Medical Center Alliance for NanoHealth; and Paul Simmons, Ph.D., who will lead our research effort on adult blood stem cells and other bone-marrow stem cells at the IMM and is the president of the International Society for Stem Cell Research," Dr. Willerson says.

"We must continue to recruit the world's best for the IMM and for all of our education, research and clinical efforts," Willerson urges.

"We are extremely grateful that in the last 5.5 years we have been able to raise approximately \$670 million in funding from private philanthropic sources, the UT System Board of Regents and the state of Texas, among oth-

ers, to build buildings and aid recruitment of excellent clinicians, researchers and educators. We have recovered from Tropical Storm Allison, opened the new School of Nursing and Student Community Center Building

and will dedicate the new Faye S. Sarofim Building for the IMM this fall," notes Dr. Willerson, adding that scientists are already working in the new Sarofim building.

"We are fortunate to have received \$60 million in Tuition Revenue Bond funds for the new Dental Branch building from the Texas Legislature and \$77.1 million for additional buildings from the UT System through the Permanent University Fund (PUF)," Willerson continues. (See related article, below)

The project for construction of a biomedical research and education facility in the UT Research Park received \$41 million from the Permanent University Fund. "This building will house the primary translational research on stem cells and their potential for curing disease. The facility also will be the centerpiece of a new neuroscience research complex that will include the Mental Sciences Institute and the School of Health Information Sciences imaging research, as well as the Center for Advanced Biomedical

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Kevin Dillon, left, executive vice president, business and administration for the health science center; Juanita Romans, second from left, chief executive officer of Memorial Hermann Hospital-Texas Medical Center; James T. Willerson, M.D., center, president of the UT Health Science Center at Houston; Michael McKinney, M.D., second from right, senior executive vice president and chief operating officer of the health science center; and Jerry S. Wolinsky, M.D., interim dean of the UT Medical School at Houston, celebrate the signing of the most recent joint operating agreement. Photo by Darla Brown, Medical School

UT System Regents Grant \$77.1 Million for New Health Science Center Buildings

By David R. Bates, *Institutional Advancement*

Meeting in Arlington Aug. 10, the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System allocated a total \$77.1 million from the Permanent University Fund (PUF) to three new construction projects at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston.

A total \$41.1 million will create a Biomedical Research and Education Center — the primary home for adult stem cell research and teaching. The planned \$62-million facility will contain laboratories, support

spaces, multipurpose conference rooms and office space.

James T. Willerson, M.D., president of the UT Health Science Center at Houston, a leading scientist in adult stem cell research, is committed to investigating human stem cell transplantation in all areas, including cardiovascular disease, spinal cord injuries, diabetes and cancer.

"Research that will be done at the new Biomedical Research and Education Center, at our Brown Foundation Institute of

Molecular Medicine for the Prevention of Human Diseases (IMM), and through our affiliation with the Texas Heart Institute, will dramatically change the way we educate the physicians of tomorrow, and how they treat their patients," Willerson says. "That is the ultimate goal of stem cell research — translating findings in the laboratory to the bedside and doctors' offices where future generations will feel the impact of what we are beginning to do today. We also are very hopeful that the institutions of the Texas

Medical Center and their scientists involved in stem cell research, and other stem cell scientists throughout the UT System, will collaborate with us in this new research facility."

The University of Texas Dental Branch at Houston will get \$18 million in PUF money for new construction to replace its current six-story building, which opened in 1955. The 79th Legislature previously appropriated \$60 million in tuition revenue bonds (TRBs) for the project, which is estimated to cost at least \$90 million to complete.

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Increased Research Funding and Class Sizes Among '06 Accomplishments

Continued growth in research, even in hard funding times is one of the goals that the UT Health Science Center at Houston has accomplished in the past year. "In spite of the fact that National Institutes of Health growth has been zero, our research growth has increased," says Michael McKinney, M.D., senior executive vice president and chief operating officer. "That's due to the investigators and research administration; they've all stepped up to the plate. There's been better satisfaction among the researchers and better results in their grants."

In order to provide increased numbers of research and health-care professionals for the state and the country, McKinney says, "we went through the process at each of the schools to increase class size. That is a big accomplishment, especially in conjunction

with the changes we got approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, such as the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree at the School of Nursing."

The Medical School practice plan has been stabilized, which was in our goals a couple of years ago, although, he says, "there will always be a certain level of instability with it." Some of our departments or divisions are hanging on by a thread and need increases in faculty and budget. "That's part of 2007, not just to stabilize, but to grow them."

In addition, he says, "Dr. Jerry Wolinsky has taken on the interim deanship like he was born to it, as he stepped in following Dean Schultz."

The appointment of Dr. Jack Smith as dean of the School of Health Information Sciences took place this past year. And SHIS

is recruiting right and left — good faculty and good researchers. "I only wish I were 30 years younger," McKinney says. "That's where I would try to go to school. And that's from someone who doesn't know anything about computers."

In the areas of collaboration, McKinney is especially happy about the continued growth and improvement in the relationship with both the Memorial Hermann Hospital System and Memorial Hermann Hospital-Texas Medical Center. "In addition, our relationship with the Harris County Hospital District/LBJ Hospital is going well."

In another area of collaboration, both internally and externally, "we are writing agreements for the Center for Clinical and Translational Sciences with the Medical School, School of Public Health, SHIS,

Dental Branch, the HSC in general and UT M. D. Anderson Cancer Center. We look toward finishing the build-out of the translational science center in the Medical School and we will continue to work to get external funding."

Compensation for faculty and staff is another topic that is frequently foremost in McKinney's mind.

At Texas A&M, if they do things twice, it's a tradition, McKinney says, adding that "we're getting to that point with planning every year for paying attention to compensation. We've added annual merit incentives to our budgeting process. That's both an accomplishment and a continuing commitment."

"The university is developing a consistent approach where budgeting for merit raises for

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Save the Dates for Fun

UT Volunteers Thank You Ice Cream Social, noon-1:30 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 26, Webber Plaza near Medical School. To be on the guest list, respond by Monday, Sept. 18, to Elise.PJenkins@uth.tmc.edu.

Fun Fest for all Faculty, Staff, Fellows, Residents and Students, 2-6 p.m., Friday, Oct. 6, Hornberger Conference Center. Visit <http://www.uthouston.edu/funfest> for more information. To volunteer, contact Rose.M.Betancourt-Trevino@uth.tmc.edu.

The Fourth Annual Holiday BookFair, Wednesday, Nov. 29, through Saturday, Dec. 2, at Barnes & Noble Booksellers, 3003 W. Holcombe. For details, Elise.PJenkins@uth.tmc.edu or <http://www.uthouston.edu/community/barnesnoble/>.



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