

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/>.



THE UNIVERSITY
of TEXAS

HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER
AT HOUSTON

School Accomplishments and Planning Ahead

Medical School

Jerry S. Wolinsky, M.D., interim dean

"The Medical School has undergone tremendous change over the last decade, marked mostly by structural growth. Now, we are moving toward a new era in which we renew our commitment to be recognized as an emerging premier institution.

"We already are recognized for outstanding clinical care, medical care and areas of research. Now we are building new areas of strengths, such as the John P. McGovern M.D., Center for Health, Humanities and Human Spirit, where students learn to connect with the human side of medicine. Also on the horizon is the Surgical and Clinical Skills Center, which marries the traditional aspects of physician-patient interaction with the latest in simulation technology. Our new six-story research building adjacent to the Medical School will be completed in the fall of 2007, bringing with it 208,500 square feet of research and related space, as well as a two-story vivarium.

"We must retain and recruit the brightest and the best. In order to do that, we must have access to funds from a variety of sources. To that end, the foundations for a new philanthropic campaign for the Medical School have been laid to raise more than \$120 million over the next 12-18 months."

Medical School Highlights of 2006

- Medical School's role in Katrina recovery, including establishing and staffing the medical command center at the George R. Brown Convention Center.
- Facilities:
 - Recovery from Tropical Storm Allison is complete except for vivarium which will be on the top of the Research Replacement Facility (RRF)
 - Groundbreaking and topping off of the RRF
 - Surgical and Clinical Skills Center
 - New roof and sprinkler system for the MSB
- Office of Communications created from Offices of Community Affairs and Graphic Communications
- Re-energized Alumni Relations program
- Preparation for increase of size of entering class to 220

Goals for FY 2007

- Complete search for dean of the Medical School
- Plan for research activities and faculty recruitment for the RRF
- The Surgical and Clinical Skills Center becomes fully operational
- Implement a comprehensive fund-raising initiative for \$120 million for
 - Recruitment and start-up packages
 - Faculty endowments
 - Student scholarships
 - Surgical and Clinical Skills Center
- Complete searches for department chairs
- Continue efforts to diversify faculty, staff and student body.

School of Health Information Sciences

Jack Smith, Ph.D., dean

Accomplishments in FY 2006

In education:

- Enrolled first students in our new dual-degree program with School of Public Health and acquired philanthropic funding for fellowships for the initial students in the program.
- Completely revised and updated SHIS curriculum to have a research path (MS/PhD) and an applied path (with certificate, work-study program, MS). We will be piloting this new approach in the coming year and formalizing a substantive change to our degrees based on our experience in fall 2007. The certificate program launched with five online courses identified for a basic Certificate in Health Informatics emphasizing the fundamentals of Clinical Health Informatics.
- Co-sponsored the highly successful regional Teaching and Learning Day 2006 with UT Health Science Center Office of Academic Affairs.

In research:

- Led the informatics core for the institutional Clinical and Translational Sciences Award (CTSA) application and leading the informatics core for the new Center for Clinical and Translational Science (CCTS).
- Co-led the submission by the Gulf Coast Consortia (GCC) of the multi-institutional Biomedical Informatics Training Grant to NIH/NLM which obtained an outstanding, funding priority score (120).
- Organized a two-day Symposium on Information-Based Translation Medicine for the Texas Medical Center research community and a highly successfully international workshop on Innovations in Nanoscale Modeling and Imaging of Biological Systems.
- Played a major role in the planning and establishment of the multi-institutional University of Texas Department of Biomedical Engineering.

General accomplishments:

- Created our first endowed professorship.
- More than 25 percent of our faculty were promoted and tenured this past year.
- New faculty accepted offers that will increase faculty 20 percent next year.

Goals for FY2007

"Our goals focus on the continued expansion of the depth and breadth of the school in research, education and service. We will pilot a number of curriculum changes and a fully online certificate program to better align our educational offerings to the needs of students and professionals. We also are going to be focused on aligning our programs to take advantage of the unparalleled opportunities for informatics within the institution as new initiatives like the Brown Foundation Institute of Molecular Medicine for the Prevention of Human Diseases, the Gulf Coast Consortia Chemical Genomics Center and the Center for Clinical and Translation Sciences start coming online in force.

"We plan to start laying the groundwork for a significant program in translational neuroinformatics in order to leverage current and planned neurology, psychiatric, neuroscience, cognitive science and behavioral research and associated clinical capabilities within the institution.

"Our activities in computational bioengineering also will expand significantly with the activation of our formal relationship with the new University of Texas Biomedical Engineering

(BME) Department and the addition of two new BME faculty to SHIS.

"We will be involved in planning to expand and integrate our programs with the Dental School, Mental Sciences Institute, Children's Learning Institute, the Medical School's neuroscience program and the joint imaging research center as they develop in the UT Research Park on the south campus."

Dental Branch

Catherine M. Flaitz, D.D.S., dean

"In 2006-07 we will be focused on planning for the construction of a new building and the creation of an institution that will strengthen our ability to educate and train the finest dentists and dental hygienists in the state. We have a great reputation for producing well-rounded and compassionate clinicians, but we need to expand our research efforts through collaboration and synergy with scientific teams throughout the Texas Medical Center.

"In addition we have a strong commitment to recruiting leaders in oral health research to find cures for the most common oral health diseases, which are increasingly being linked to other illnesses, such as heart disease.

"The new building is about more than just a replacement facility; it's about improving an entire institution and subsequently the health of our community and the advancement of the dental profession. The resources in the Texas Medical Center are incomparable, and we need to take advantage of creative opportunities with medicine, bioengineering, public health and health information sciences."

Major accomplishments of 2006

- Capped off the celebration of the Centennial, a year spent honoring the 100-year span of the school and committing to another progressive 100 years.
- Received \$60 million in Tuition Revenue Bonds from the Texas Legislature and \$18 million from the UT System Permanent University Fund for the construction of a new building.
- The class of 2006 placed the Dental Branch at sixth in the nation for their scores on the National Board Exam, Part I.
- Launched the Electronic Patient Record system; the first of its kind in a Texas dental school. The system will eliminate the need for paper records in student and graduate residency clinics.
- Received a \$1.2 million grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to host the Summer Medical and Dental Education program in collaboration with the UT Medical School. The program welcomed a diverse population of undergraduates into the school to learn more about dentistry.
- Recruited four nationally respected department chairs – this represents a 50 percent change in leadership.

Looking forward to 2007

- Will begin planning for the construction of the new dental school building and the development of an enhanced dental education institute. The new school will have a strong focus on endowed chairs, scholarships funds and resources for research.
- Will open a \$1 million state-of-the-art simulation center to enhance the Dental Branch pre-clinical and clinical education, improve teaching resources for faculty, and expand continuing education. The center is an actual clinic that integrates technology and hands-on training to provide a more true-to-life clinical experience for students to learn dentistry.
- Will open the UT Dentists faculty practice clinic, which will provide top-quality patient care to employees, students and visitors to the Texas Medical Center.

School of Nursing

Patricia L. Starck, D.S.N., dean

Faculty Practice:

The School of Nursing is very proud to have a faculty practice plan that is considered one of the best in the country.

- This past year we had 19 faculty practicing in 13 agencies throughout the greater Houston area with a total income of \$590,514.
- Our UT Health Services clinic had more than 11,000 patient visits for a total income of over \$1,200,000 which is the largest income of any academic nursing center in the country.

Research

We have the following completed laboratories:

- A wet lab, which is up and running,
- A biobehavioral laboratory (with observation room and one-way mirror),
- Two small biobehavioral laboratories (currently called Stress Reduction Lab and Energy Field Lab), and
- A bioengineering laboratory.

The other labs are built out and will be equipped for specific faculty project needs.

- The Controlled Environment Laboratory is expected to be completed in FY 07.
- In spring 2006, we received a \$500,000 grant from UT System to renovate space in the Service Building for a pre-clinical critical care laboratory; this laboratory has been designed and cost estimates are being obtained. Although completion work remains to be done, the strategic planning for physical infrastructure is done and we can move on with greater intensity to programmatic planning.

The late September research retreat was devoted exclusively to honing in on two areas of emphasis that can serve:

- to integrate the research interests of faculty, doctoral students and future postdoctoral fellows; and
- as the basis for National Institutes of Health-funded Centers of Research Excellence and, eventually, institutional research training grants. Criteria for emphasis areas include:
 - current faculty expertise in the focus area,
 - current or previous major external grant funding (> \$100,000) in the focus area,
 - takes advantage of our unique environment (e.g., UTHSC-H and TMC), and
 - provides opportunities for discovery and translational research not available to other institutions.

Academic Affairs

- The SON is in the top 8 percent of graduate schools in the country.
- The SON has the first Doctor of Nursing Practice program in Texas.

Office of Academic Affairs

L. Maximilian Buja, M.D., executive vice president

“We have completed the creation of a multi-year Strategic Plan (see box, at right) for the institution, which has been signed off on by Drs. Willerson and McKinney. This plan was developed over several sessions with input from deans, vice presidents and representatives of faculty and staff.



L. Maximilian Buja, M.D.

“My colleague Deanne Hernandez worked with me on putting together the details of this plan. It’s got to be viewed as a living document, not cast in stone. It will have to be reviewed. We are developing key performance indicators that we would review against it over time.

“This joins the compact process that has been in place since the chancellor instituted it several years ago. We have just completed the third round of this process, which included a review of milestones met and included plans for 06 and 07. The strategic plan is designed to run through 2013.

“We are in the process of redesigning and updating the Office of Academic Affairs Web site, which will include the Strategic Plan Web site, which will contain all the planning documents and the accomplishments documents. It will also include the Compact, the UT System accountability report and the Fact Book. We will roll the new Web site out in FY07.

“In another major area, we have formally started the process of reaffirmation of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges

and Schools (SACS) for the institution as a whole. We will be rolling out an institutional SACS Web site for the entire community in the near future. This is going to require a lot of organization, planning, documentation, attention to student outcomes. The end of the road would be the accreditation site visit and reaffirmation of accreditation by the SACS Commission on Colleges in 2010.

“SACS is one of the regional accrediting authorities that gets its authority from the federal government. SACS accreditation is a requirement to have federal financial aid for students, and it requires a comprehensive analysis and adherence to standards that look at the overall finances of the institution, its organization, educational programs and qualifications of the faculty. So it’s a broader and more comprehensive look than occurs at the individual schools, which respond to different accrediting agencies.

“Another part of my job is working with the deans of the schools on their academic programs. The Medical School, Nursing and Dental School are increasing class sizes to better serve the needs of the state. The Strategic Plan calls for increasing enrollment collectively by 1,000 students and faculty by 270.

“There has been exciting growth relating to my role as Chancellor’s Health Fellow. We have formed a system-wide UT Academy of Health Science Education. The first 13 fellows were nominated by the presidents and we have elected an additional 24 fellows. This is, we think, the first such system-wide academy in the country. It reflects a strong commitment on the part of the Chancellor and Vice

Chancellor for Health Affairs.

“The third conference on Health Care Innovation will take part in Austin, Oct 5

and 6. I am coming to the end of my term, both as a fellow and president of the Academy. It has been very gratifying.” ★

Strategic Directions 2007-2013

Broad themes include the cultivation of focused, collaborative academic and research programs, successful recruitment and retention programs aimed at attracting — and keeping — top notch, diversified students, faculty and staff; the provision of appropriate and compassionate patient care; and the creation of a sound infrastructure that supports these priorities. At its core, the plan adds close to 1,000 students and 250 faculty by FY 2013 to meet the State of Texas’s growing need for health care professionals and scientists. Specifically, the six strategic directions are:

Strategic Direction 1 — Educate health professionals and scientists in a diverse and interdisciplinary academic community

Strategic Direction 2 — Provide leadership and advance scholarship in biomedical sciences, health professions, health promotion, public health policy and health care delivery

Strategic Direction 3 — Create and evaluate new knowledge — through basic science and applied research — as it relates to disease prevention, treatment and cure

Strategic Direction 4 — Model appropriate, culturally sensitive, and compassionate clinical care

Strategic Direction 5 — Support key mission areas with an enhanced infrastructure

Strategic Direction 6 — Maintain and enhance strategic alliances

While ambitious, this plan has the potential to position the health science center as an institution upon which Texans and the nation can rely consistently. Recognizing that such ambition is not cost-free, the latter part of the plan lays out projected financial implications as a first step in an effort to more closely link planning activities with budget decisions. A key principle of this plan is fiscal responsibility; close monitoring of plan-related finances will occur regularly. If actual expenses begin to exceed anticipated revenues, plan adjustments will ensure that the institution realizes positive operating margins. Being fiscally responsible yet still responsive to the needs of the State of Texas — be it by educating students, conducting research or providing patient care — is paramount. For the complete plan, visit <http://www.uth.tmc.edu/spia/planindex.htm>.

Office of Research

Peter Davies, M.D., Ph.D., executive vice president

“I’ve been at this university 27 years and I think this past year and the year to come has seen and will see a remarkable transition within the university. On the institutional level, the development of new research facilities played a big impact last year and will continue to have an impact in the next few years. We are embarking on a period of enormous change for research resources and capabilities for the institution.



Peter Davies, M.D., Ph.D.

“Among those are the new research facilities at the School of Nursing, the new Faye S. Sarofim Building of the Brown Foundation Institute of Molecular Medicine for the Prevention of Human Diseases and the soon-to-be-completed Research Replacement Facility at the Medical School. In addition to these new facilities, the recruitment of outstanding

researchers will have a large impact on the research programs of the university.

“There’s also a clear commitment of the institution to the next generation of research with new facilities in the UT Research Park: the Center for Advanced Biomedical Imaging and Research, a joint project with UT M. D. Anderson Cancer Center; the new Neuroscience Research facility including Mental Sciences Institute research; a new building for the Dental Branch with new capabilities for supporting research in the area of dentistry and the stem cell research center, which will provide an expansion of our capabilities in these enormously important areas of research.

“The new buildings provide the opportunity both to allow for the expansion of some of our most successful and productive research programs as well as to recruit outstanding new researchers and research teams to the institution.

“One of the most promising developments over the last few years has been our success in developing inter-institutional and interdisci-

plinary collaborative research programs.

Examples of some of these initiatives include:

- the new Michael & Susan Dell Center for Advancement of Healthy Living in Austin;
 - the new inter-institutional University of Texas Department of Biomedical Engineering, a collaborative venture with UT Austin and M. D. Anderson;
 - the Alliance for NanoHealth, bringing together researchers from across the Houston-Galveston area and Texas A&M University;
 - several inter-institutional research programs developed by faculty at the School of Public Health’s regional campuses in areas of health disparities and Hispanic health research;
 - the Gulf Coast Consortium with its new educational and research programs in several areas including cheminformatics and chemical genomics research, computational and structural biology, and membrane biology.
- “Of potentially enormous importance is our decision to establish a new Center for Clinical

and Translational Sciences, to coordinate clinical and translational research at the health science center, the Memorial Hermann Hospital System and UT M. D. Anderson Cancer Center. We are awaiting final word on whether this new Center will be the recipient of one of the major Clinical and Translational Sciences Awards (CTSAs) recently developed by the National Institutes of Health as a part of the NIH Roadmap initiative.

“All of these exciting new developments are based on the foundation of excellence in research created by our many faculty, students and staff. It is the tireless efforts of this large community of researchers that provide the foundation of our institution’s research program; it represents the platform on which our new advances will be built.

“The real strength of our institution is in the talents of the investigators who are developing new programs, and we look forward to more and more of those successes in the years to come.” ★

School Accomplishments and Planning Ahead

Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences

George Stancel, Ph.D., dean

“In keeping with recent plans noted by the UT Regents and Dr. Willerson, for the state of Texas to maintain a competitive edge, we must increase the number of highly trained research scientists in the biomedical sciences and related areas. To that end, the GSBS will grow its student number accordingly and continue to enhance excellence. Given the demographics of Texas and the nation, achieving these goals will require that we increase the diversity of our student body.”

Accomplishments in 2005-2006

- Graduated 100 Ph.D.’s, master’s, and specialized master’s students in the biomedical sciences — one of the largest groups of new scientists in the state.
- Hosted the first faculty retreat in more than two decades (since 1981). It was attended by more than 100 individuals who reviewed substantive issues including curriculum, scale of faculty and students admitted, rigor of program, and diversity — much that will shape the image of graduate education for the future.
- Provided more than \$1 million in student stipend funding, fellowships, scholarships and awards, 20 percent through private philanthropy.

- Saw a record total enrollment overall, including a large increase in the number of M.D./Ph.D. students over recent years.
- Honored Distinguished Alumnus Bhudatt Paliwal, Ph.D., a world-renowned medical physicist. Paliwal spoke at the 2005-06 alumni reunion and a related seminar for faculty and students.
- As the lead institution of the Gulf Coast Consortium, received one of the first NIH Roadmap training grants of nearly \$3 million dollars to support the training of 15 graduate students and postdoctoral fellows per year for five years in the broad area of drug discovery and development. Dean Stancel is the grant’s principal investigator.
- Held the first out-of-state alumni reunion on the West Coast in spring 2006 for alumni residing in California, Nevada, Oregon and Washington.
- Offered the first alumni-sponsored career day provided for current GSBS students to hear and interact with experts in eight different career fields including academia, industry and law.
- Named a new Andrew Sowell-Wade Huggins Professor/Graduate Fellowship team, Gary Gallick, Ph.D., and his student Jing Zhang; and renewed two existing Endowed Professorships: Steven Norris, Ph.D., the Robert Greer Professor in the Biomedical Sciences; and Stephen Daiger, Ph.D., the Thomas Stull Matney Professor in Environmental and Genetic Sciences.

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Imaging and Research in collaboration with UT M. D. Anderson Cancer Center and GE Medical Imaging,” Willerson explains.

“We will have as a synergistic continuum, a neuroscience research center, which adds the imaging component necessary for novel clinical translational research of heart and vascular disease, the brain, and cancer, including input from Dr. Jack Byrne and his memory research, and Dr. James Grotta and his efforts in stroke treatment,” Willerson says. “IMM scientists will work on degenerative brain diseases, including Alzheimer’s, Lou Gehrig’s Disease, recovery from strokes and spinal cord injuries.”

In addition, we will be at work on our expanded collaboration with TIRR (The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research), merged with UT Health Science Center in

education and research, which will put the spotlight on research and treatment to aid more complete recovery of patients from strokes and spinal cord injuries, including the use of stem cells.

PUF funds also have been given by the UT System Board of Regents towards completion of the Medical School’s Research Replacement Facility (120,000 square feet of new research space) on the main campus where the new two-floor vivarium will house research animals out of the way of harm from adverse weather. “This increase also allows us to recruit additional scientists who will find the new research space beneficial for their research studies,” states Willerson.

“In addition, due to the need for more well-trained clinical and research professionals in the state and around the country, we

are increasing class sizes at all of our schools and also increasing teaching faculty as needed to continue to provide superior education for our students and attain top ranking for all six of our schools,” Dr. Willerson says.

In our affiliation with Texas Heart Institute, the entire ninth floor of the Cooley building is devoted to IMM cardiology and vascular research.

The UT Health Science Center’s ongoing collaboration with the Memorial Hermann Hospital System and Memorial Herman Hospital-Texas Medical Center offers continued growth in a number of areas. At the new MHH ambulatory clinic, adjacent to the UT Professional Building, our physicians will provide anesthesiology and radiology services. The new facilities for the University Clinical Research Center in the hospital’s Robertson Pavilion are

another collaborative effort. And, of course, Memorial Hermann-TMC continues to be the Medical School’s main teaching hospital.

“We look forward to exciting work and growth at the Institute for Health Policy of the School of Public Health as the former Texas Commissioner of Health, Dr. Eduardo Sanchez, a graduate of the UT Health Science Center’s Master’s of Public Health, leaves Austin, becoming the Institute Director in October,” Willerson says. There is no other Health Policy Institute in the state of Texas, and Dr. Sanchez will help foster collaboration in Austin with the new satellite of SPH.

“This year is sure to be an exciting one in many ways as we continue to make great strides in the future development of our campus and programs,” the president says. ★

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

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“This new building is about more than just a replacement facility; it’s about improving an entire institution and subsequently the health of our community and the advancement of the dental profession,” explains Catherine M. Flaitz, D.D.S., dean of the UT Dental Branch. “This building will be constructed with the next 20 years in mind.”

The UT Dental Branch will seek additional funding from foundations and private individuals for construction, equipment, research expansion, faculty endowments and student scholarships. Houston endodontist Stephen F. Schwartz, D.D.S., a UT Dental Branch alumnus, will lead the fund-raising campaign.

“Our dental education program, the only

one in the Texas Medical Center, deserves a state-of-the-art facility where the world’s best dental clinicians can collaborate with the best in oral health research,” Willerson said. “We at the health science center recognize the importance of oral health in relationship to systemic health and quality of life, and I look forward to helping Dean Flaitz complete fund-raising and construction of our new dental school.”

Both the Biomedical Research and Education Center and the new dental school building will be located in the UT Research Park, a 100-acre site that is being jointly developed by the UT Health Science Center and The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center on the “South

Campus” of the Texas Medical Center.

The Regents also approved \$18 million to support ongoing construction of the Research Replacement Facility at The University of Texas Medical School at Houston. The six-story research building at Fannin Street and John Freeman Boulevard in the Texas Medical Center should be ready for occupancy by fall 2007. The total cost of \$80.53 million is being met with state dollars and funding from a variety of sources – including philanthropic gifts, tuition revenue bonds from the Legislature, two National Institutes of Health grants, and Federal Emergency Management Agency and insurance payments from Tropical Storm Allison losses.

“We are delighted that the UT System Board of Regents, in providing these funds, continues to nurture our research mission and the training of scientists and clinical investigators of the future,” says Jerry S. Wolinsky, M.D., interim dean of the UT Medical School at Houston. “The new building will give us a state-of-the-art animal care facility and four floors of critical environments for attracting new scientists and strengthening our current expertise in basic and translational research, where multiple emerging areas of knowledge will improve the lives of Texans and the larger international community for generations to come.” ★

School Accomplishments and Planning Ahead

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School of Public Health

Guy Parcel, Ph.D., dean

“This has been an outstanding year for the UT School of Public Health. We have successfully recruited top candidates for several key positions at the school including Dr. Eduardo Sanchez as director of the Institute for Health Policy and Linda E. Lloyd, Ph.D., as associate dean for Public Health Practice.

“The school made a major commitment to fighting the battle on obesity in 2006, and established the Michael & Susan Dell Center for Advancement of Healthy Living as part of that commitment, with funding from the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation. Our faculty continue to compete successfully for research funds, with sponsored project funding at record numbers in 2006. We look forward to an equally productive year in FY 2007, with plans to expand our regional campus programs and further develop our extensive research programs.”

Other SPH Highlights, FY2006:

- The UT SPH began offering certificate and non-degree programs geared toward mid-career public health professionals without formal training in the field, those considering a public health career, and physicians and scientists who seek to enhance their knowledge of public health. Enrollment in the certificate program totaled 110 for FY2006.
- The number of minority students increased again in 2006, with a significant portion of the increase coming from new students in the certificate program. Recent data from the Association of Schools of Public Health ranks UT SPH fourth in the percentage of minority students enrolled in schools of public health in the United States (excluding Puerto Rico).
- The school has developed an Evidence-Based Public Health Practice Course for public health practitioners to increase the awareness of evidence-based practice and to encourage its use.

Increased Research Funding and Class Sizes Among '06 Accomplishments

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faculty and staff becomes a first priority. If we have to choose whether to let go of things or people, we will let go of things first,” he says.

Among the things he is most proud of in the past year, McKinney says, is “the three-to-four weeks last September when we did our part in caring for Katrina survivors at the Astrodome and the George R. Brown Convention Center and after. We learned from Rita, too, to make sure that we are prepared for eventualities. There will always be something different, but we’ll learn from all of it.”

During FY2007, he says, “we look forward to continued growth in enrollment; expansion of research from existing faculty and continued growth in teachers and researchers for the growing student population.”

And, dealing with funds is a chronic struggle. “We are not trying to make a profit, but we are only going to spend what we bring in. We try to be frugal and good stewards of the public’s money,” McKinney says. “Our charge is to educate the people who are going to take care of us when we get old.” ★

UT HCPC Celebrates Its 20th Anniversary

“We have had an amazing year, seeing more than 5,000 patients, opening a new residential treatment center, and maintaining our commitment to provide the highest quality of mental health care to Houston-area residents,” says Robert Guynn, M.D., executive director of The University of Texas Harris County Psychiatric Center and chair of the Medical School Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences.

The UT HCPC will celebrate another milestone — its 20th anniversary of service to the community. Since 1986, the center has served more than 80,000 patients, expanded to provide care for those in the juvenile justice system and children’s protective services, and opened a service to provide outpatient care, not only for the patients, but for the community-at-large.

As the center celebrates, it also will announce A Children’s Behavioral Health Initiative, says Lois J. Moore, chief administrator of UT HCPC. “This initiative will

allow us to further our commitment to developing and carrying out early intervention behavioral health programs.”

Among the anniversary celebrations:

Oct. 17 (by invitation only) — A breakfast honoring current UT HCPC employees who were with UT HCPC when the hospital opened.

Oct. 18 (employees only) — A special staff celebration will take place to honor and thank all UT HCPC employees for their efforts over the past years.

Oct. 20 (all health-care professionals) — Research and Education Day, 8 a.m. breakfast, 8:30 program, speaker: Ellen Liebenluft, M.D., clinical associate professor, Psychiatry, Georgetown University Medical Center and chief, Affective Disorders in Pediatrics and Developmental Neuropsychiatry Branch, National Institute of Mental Health.

Oct. 21 (general public) — Community Education Day, 8 a.m. breakfast, 8:30 program, speakers: Garnet Coleman, Texas State Representative, and HCPC faculty. ★



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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 Institutional Advancement, University Center Tower, 1200, or fax to 713-500-3037. For information regarding *The Leader*, call Pamela Lewis, 713-500-3040.