

Scoop

The University of Texas Medical School at Houston
Office of Community Affairs and Public Education

Friday, June 29, 2001

LIFE GOES ON DESPITE DEVASTATION

Despite 10 million gallons of water unleashed on the UT Medical School at Houston June 9 by Tropical Storm Allison, life goes on.

Monumental efforts are under way to restore use of the Medical School Building with progress being made daily by the more than 400

emergency personnel (internal and contracted) who have been deployed. Scoop was down last week but not out. Scoop returns as a text

document via e-mail for the interim as the Office of Community Affairs and Public Education suffered flood damage like all others in the

basement and ground floor of the building. Meanwhile, the Office of Community has been developing Dean updates sent via e-mail since

June 9. Starting today, Scoop resumes publication in a text only format that will be published via e-mail to all Medical School employees each Friday, or as often as needed.

LIMITED ACCESS TO MEDICAL SCHOOL BUILDING GRANTED FRIDAY, JUNE 29

The Dean's office received positive news on Thursday, June 28, that power restoration in the Medical School Building is going well. An

electronic message to employees was sent noting the building would be opened for very limited access on Friday, June 29 (today) 8 a.m. -

4 p.m. via the John F. Freeman Building entrance on the library side of the building near the circular drive. Limited access also will be

provided next week. No equipment may be removed or powered up and stairwell doors must be kept closed. While there is much work to

be done to restore full use of the building in the days and weeks ahead, this is a very positive step forward, noted Dean Buja, in getting

functional use of the building returned. Plans for reoccupying the building are contingent on progress made in power restoration. Watch

Scoop for updates on continued progress in restoring building use and occupancy.

GRAPHICS HAS NEW HOME

The Graphic Communications Group has relocated to Room 452 in the Dental Branch Building. Phone numbers have not changed. Phone:

713-500-5530 – FAX: 713-500-5533. Most services are available – slides, posters, publications, and photo processing & printing. E-mail to

most of the production personnel is functioning, but customers are encouraged to use digital@utdigital.net. Due to many relocations, those

who cannot get their work to the DBB may contact the office for pick-up and delivery.

UT-HOUSTON TO PLAY IMPORTANT ROLE IN NEW UT-AUSTIN DEPARTMENT

The University of Texas at Austin's planned biomedical engineering department took a leap toward fruition June 14 with the announcement that it had received a Whitaker Foundation Award. The \$6M grant, comprised of a \$3M Special Award for construction and a \$3M Development Award, was given to UT-Austin to establish what will be one of the largest biomedical engineering departments in the country. The department will have close interaction with UT-Houston and the M. D. Anderson Cancer Center. "I am delighted with the news of the success in obtaining a Whitaker Award for The University of Texas. This award will facilitate a strong collaborative effort in bioengineering involving UT Austin, UT Health Science Center at Houston and the UT M. D. Anderson Cancer Center," said Dean Maximilian Buja, M.D. As a result of the grant and local matching funds, UT-Houston will recruit four new faculty members, who will be responsible for teaching a course in biomedical engineering each year. "This is a great investment for us. We will recruit faculty that will enhance our research by providing expertise to link bioengineering, computational biology, and medicine," Dr. Buja said. A new undergraduate program, with a targeted enrollment of 500 students, is awaiting state approval. Dr. Ken Diller, UT-Austin professor, will chair the new department.

DR. PARSLEY NAMED INTERIM CHIEF OF MHH PULMONARY, CRITICAL CARE

Dr. Ed Parsley, Internal Medicine, has accepted the position of interim chief of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine at Memorial Hermann Hospital. Dr. Parsley also is the director of the Intensive Care Unit at Memorial Hermann Hospital. "I, the dean, and the Memorial Hermann Hospital leadership are very enthusiastic about Dr. Parsley assuming this leadership role," said Dr. Frank C. Arnett, chairman of Internal Medicine. Dr. Steve Brown, who was previously acting in that role, has stepped down to devote more time to LBJ General Hospital. He remains the interim director of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine in the Medical School. A search committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Philip Orlander is being formed to find a permanent division director.

STUDY REVEALS CIRCADIAN RHYTHMS IN THE MAMMALIAN HEART

Dr. Heinrich Taegtmeyer, Internal Medicine, and researchers Drs. Martin Young and Peter Razeghi, Internal Medicine, found that the heart possesses an internal clock that helps it anticipate, respond and adapt to changes during the course of each day. Chronic stress, such

as high blood pressure, can alter those biological rhythms, which are controlled by a cascade of genes. "One hypothesis is that the constant resetting of the clock may be causing damage to the heart," Taegtmeier said. Their findings were published in the June 8 issue of Circulation Research. The research looks at the biology behind circadian rhythms in the mammalian heart. Previous studies have reported similar clock mechanisms in the fruit fly. "It took millions of years for the internal clock in our heart to evolve, and it doesn't know how to respond the 24-hour society we've created in the last few decades," said Dr. Young, the lead investigator.

ANESTHESIOLOGY RESIDENCY PROGRAM NATIONALLY RANKED

When it comes to graduate training in anesthesiology, the Medical School's Department of Anesthesiology's Residency Training Program is among the tops in the nation. Recently released data from the 2001 Match show that our Medical School was first in the nation in terms of the percentage of our graduates entering the match that matched into an anesthesiology program nationwide (22 of our 168 students entering the match were placed into anesthesiology programs), reflecting well on our anesthesiology faculty. UT Southwestern with 11 out of 183 was 17th in nation and the only other Texas medical school in the top twenty. UT-Houston was also 5th in the nation regarding our success in filling all graduate training positions in our anesthesiology training program with 19 of 19 positions filled. UC-San Francisco led the nation with 22 of 22. UT Southwestern was 20th on the list with 13 of 15 anesthesiology positions filled. "I am absolutely thrilled as this reflects directly on the hard work of our faculty, residents, staff, and fourth-year students as well as the quality of our training program," said Dr. Susan L. Luehr, director of residency training in the Department of Anesthesiology. "Our chairman, Dr. Jeff Katz, has been very supportive of changes and improvements we've been making and the popularity of our program tells the story. Dr. Jenny Greger, who is assistant residency director has worked hard to achieve these results, and we couldn't be happier to be recognized as a national leader in anesthesiology graduate training."

UTMOST INTEREST

Dr. Daniel Creson, Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences, delivered the keynote presentation, "Psychological Interventions: A Potential for Harm as Well as Help," June 5 for the Immigration and Refugee Services of America Mental Health Conference in Galveston... Dr. Ginger Wilhelm, Emergency Medicine, was one of nine faculty chosen to receive the 2001 American College of Emergency Physicians National Teaching Award.

EVENTS TO KNOW

Open enrollment health insurance meetings all from noon to 1 p.m. except for meetings on July 10 and 11 as indicated:

June 29, SPH 1st Floor Auditorium

July 2, DBB Room 207;

July 3, MSI Auditorium;

July 5, DBB Room 207;

July 6, OCB Rio Grande Room;

July 9, SPH 1st Floor Auditorium;

July 10, HCPC Gymnasium at 7:30 a.m., noon, and 2 p.m.;

July 11, HRC Cafeteria 7 a.m., 2:30 p.m.;

July 11, MSI Auditorium;

July 12, HMB Room 4.400;

July 13, UCT 1505C;

July 16, LBJ UT Auditorium.

Benefits Fair, Thursday, July 12 from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. at the TMC Conference Center, 2151 W. Holcombe Blvd. Refreshments will be provided.

Office of Community Affairs and Public Education

Temporary FAX: 713-500-3785

E-mail: m.darla.brown@uth.tmc.edu