



Scoop

May 9, 2003

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MEDICAL SCHOOL AT HOUSTON

Events to Know

May

9 Dr. Madeleine Duvic to receive the Business Professional Women/Texas award, 4 p.m., Alkek Hospital, 2nd floor.

14 Dr. Henry McGill, 11 a.m., on coronary disease prevention, RAS auditorium.

SMYTHE WINS HUMANISM IN MEDICINE AWARD

Harvard Medical School trained and South Carolina native **Dr. Cheves McCord Smythe** will become the fifth recipient of the Faculty Humanism in Medicine Award at commencement, Sat., **June 7**, at the George R. Brown Convention Center. Past recipients are: **Drs. Oscar Rosales, Phil Johnson, John R. Stroehlein, and Philip R. Orlander.**



The award will be announced at commencement and presented at a post-commencement reception. "This award honors those judged to be exemplary in their compassion and sensitivity in the delivery of care to patients and their families, in addition to administering scientifically excellent clinical care," **Dean Max Buja** said. "It also recognizes a faculty educator noted **Dr. Cheves Smythe** for his or her outstanding ability to teach students and residents."

"I'm delighted to be the recipient of this award. People who are good at teaching tend to do a lot of it, and I have had a lifelong interest in teaching," Smythe said.

INNOVATIVE CHASE PURSUES FORT BEND HIGH SCHOOLERS

Students and staff from all six UTHSC-H schools, with coordinating efforts from Student InterCouncil and the Office of Community and Educational Outreach, traveled to Hightower High School in the Fort Bend Independent School District six weeks ago to present a new program, CHASE: Careers in Health and Science for Everyone. CHASE is an innovative, interactive program in which high school students experiment and learn hands-on what it means to be a health professional. Students at Hightower made palatal impressions, learned how to dress an extruded eyeball, dealt with a hypothetical smallpox outbreak case, and played an original trivia game show, "Nursing: Truth or Dare." If you are interested in participating in future presentations, contact **Manuel Reyes**, Student InterCouncil representative, <Manuel.M.Reyes@uth.tmc.edu> or **Shannon Morrison**, coordinator, Office of Community and Educational Outreach, <Shannon.Morrison@uth.tmc.edu>.

LAST DAYS FOR HERMANN EMR TRAINING

All clinical faculty who need access to the new Hermann electronic medical record, **CARE⁴** have just one more week to be trained on the new software, which is scheduled to "go live" Sat., **May 17.**

CARE⁴ allows physicians to electronically sign dictated reports online for inpatients or outpatients at any Memorial Hermann Healthcare System (MHHS) facility via an electronic digital signature inside the CARE⁴ electronic medical record. *Such electronic signatures will be mandatory, effective May 17.* The software training takes only a maximum of 20 minutes, and faculty members will receive 1 hour of CME credit for the training.

Training is available 7 a.m. – 4 p.m. **Monday** through **Friday** in Memorial Hermann Hospital's Surgery Lounge, Medical Records, and Physician Lounge. No appointment is needed. Office staff may call 713-626-4546, ext. 229 to schedule an appointment. E-mail **Brian Beardmore**, <Brian_Beardmore@mhhs.org>, for more information.

NOTE - On May 2, **Dean Max Buja** presented a check from Doctors Orchestra to **Dr. Roger Bick**, Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, to support his research.



L. to R., **Dr. Jeffrey Katz**, **Dr. Daniel Musher** (advisory board member), **Libi Lebel** (conductor), **Dr. Roger Bick**, **Dean Max Buja**, **Ariela Alpert** (president, Doctor's Orchestra) and **Bobbie Newman** (board of directors).

UTMost Interest

Dr. Guy Clifton, Neurosurgery, was featured in the *Houston Chronicle* (5/4/03) concerning his work to reconnect severed sensory nerves. The work is just one of 11 scientific initiatives in Mission Connect, a collaborative, \$10 million project involving UT-Houston Medical School, The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research, Baylor College of Medicine, UTMB in Galveston, and Texas A&M Institute of Biosciences and Technology...**Dr. John H. Byrne**, Neurobiology & Anatomy, has been invited to present a lecture at an international symposium on memory to be held in Vienna, Austria May 30-31.

FACE IN THE CROWD



Isabel Alvarado

Isabel Alvarado, left, president, Employee Relations Committee, smiles for the camera at an ERC luncheon fund-raiser on Cinco de Mayo Day. Check out the Medical School's Employee Relations Committee's Web site, <http://www.uth.tmc.edu/ms_erc/>.



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DEAN ADDRESSES BUDGET CUTS, FLOOD RECOVERY EFFORTS

Flood recovery, financials, and the fire marshal were all topics of discussion during UT-Houston Medical School **Dean Max Buja's** quarterly Town Hall meeting April 30.

Flood recovery

Dean Buja reported visible progress on the rebuilding of the Medical School following Tropical Storm Allison. "The major mechanical and electrical equipment has been placed on the ground floor and the external generators have been removed," he said.

The temporary lounge space on the ground floor is making progress, and the first phase of the new Biomedical Imaging and Structural and Functional Analysis Center on the ground floor is on the verge of completion, he added.

Dean Buja showed the Gensler Architects' drawings of the designs for the ground floor and basement, which include a formal entrance on the Fannin side of the building and a monumental staircase from the ground floor to the basement.

While the School has received **\$56 million** from insurance policies and **\$6 million** from the National Institutes of Health for the new vivarium, **\$34.9 million** is needed from the Legislature to match funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (**FEMA only provides 75 cents on the dollar**) and to provide enhancements.

"The House unanimously passed the bill for us to receive \$34.9 million in tuition revenue bonds," Dean Buja said. "However, this appropriation was not in the Senate's version of the budget, so it must go to conference committee to be worked out."

Dean Buja said that without this \$34.9 million, the anticipated timeline of completing the ground floor by the end of 2003, completing the basement by the end of 2004, and finishing the vivarium by the end of 2005 would not be feasible.

"I applaud the patience of our faculty and staff during this time. It hasn't been easy," he said.

Budget cuts

Due to the dismal state budget, Dean Buja said that he and other members of the Medical School leadership have been looking at ways to meet the required 7 percent reduction in state funding for the remainder of fis-

MEDICAL SCHOOL REACTS TO SARS

Dean Max Buja addressed the issue of "SARS and the Medical School" at the Town Hall meeting and presented the following facts:

- **Dr. Henry Strobel**, assistant dean for student affairs, and 14 senior Medical School students went to Beijing for an annual elective course in April.
- Due to the SARS outbreak, Dean Buja became increasingly concerned about the situation and asked them to cut their trip short and return to the United States.
- After consulting with the Centers for Disease Control policies and **Dr. Herbert DuPont**, Dean Buja instructed those who had been on the China trip not return to the Medical School, other UT-Houston facilities, or any patient facility for 10 days after their return to the United States.
- The students have been asked to get a health check prior to returning to these facilities.
- There are currently no requirements from local or state health officials regarding visitors from infected areas.
- Memorial Hermann Hospital has an isolation room for suspected SARS patients.
- The UT-Houston Physician Offices have created policies to deal with suspected SARS patients.

cal year 2003. "Our share that has been cut is **\$2.37 million**," he said. "We have been able to meet this cut by not filling unfilled positions and reducing our operating funds. No salaries have been affected."

A cumulative total of 32 percent of the Medical School's state funds is proposed to be cut over two-and-a-half years. This, in combination with the faculty practice plan deficit of **\$7.6 million**, is putting a major stress on the Medical School.

"We are aggressively working with departments to shift, where possible, expenditures to sources other than practice plan dollars. These two forces coming together are creating constant pressure, but we are dedicated to preserving our core mission," he said.

Incentive retirement packages, such as the one at UT-Austin, are not something that is being planned here to help meet budgetary cuts, said **Mike Jimenez**, vice president for Human Resources.

"To date we have not looked at that here," he said. "At UT-Austin, only 400 of their employees are eligible for the package, which means they are classified employees with more than 30 years of service, or their age plus years of service equals 80. If they accept the package, they will receive **\$16,000** to leave the campus."

Fire marshal visit

A surprise visit by the state fire marshal is prompting a renewed effort to keep the Medical School hallways clear and safe. An anonymous call brought the fire marshal to the building April 11, and although a formal written report has not been received, the verbal comments during the inspection give a hint as to what is to come.

Dr. Bob Emery, executive director of Environmental Health and Safety, said the inspector's comments focused on the hallway clutter. "Hallways must be clear not only to provide emergency egress but also to provide access to safety equipment, such as showers and eyewashes," he said.

"Certain items to be cited are likely non-negotiable, including flammable cabinets, anything combustible, and impediments to safety equipment," he added.

Dr. Emery added that a corridor policy has been drafted by the Health Science Center and was provided to the inspector for input. It was acknowledged that items for surplus are not picked up in a timely fashion and contribute to the hallway problems.

"Surplus is a bottleneck," said **Pico Mina**, vice president of Facilities and Operations. "Feel free to call 713-500-3421 if you have any problems with that."

"We want a safe working and learning environment, but we have to be able to do that within our space constraints," Dr. Emery said.

- D. Brown