Dean’s Comments: Research Reports

The latest research reports comparing FY 2006 to FY 2007 contained very impressive news for the School of Medicine and the University of Texas Health Science Center. In the School of Medicine, research awards increased from $84,750,000 to $108,750,000, a 20% increase. This gain in research funding is even more remarkable when one considers that the NIH budget is flat again this year, and, when inflation is calculated in the budget, funding has actually declined. In the Health Science Center, overall funding in 2007 tops $170,000,000. The Health Science Center has as one of its major missions the promotion and facilitation of research that stands at the center of the $15 billion health care industry in San Antonio.

You might ask, as a first question, why so much attention on these figures or why is this focus on research productivity important? I think there are two basic answers to this question for every citizen and every physician. First, it is only through research that real progress in the fight against so many dreaded diseases can be made, and that real improvements in the diagnosis and the treatment of disorders once thought unapproachable or incurable can be addressed. It is this goal which motivates us to pursue the rigors and uncertainties of careers in science — that we might actually contribute a lasting and tangible benefit to patients who previously had little hope for a good outcome. A second reason to pay attention to research awards is that they are a surrogate for quality in other sectors of biomedical excellence. Given the highly competitive arena for obtaining the kind of funding described above, any faculty member who can actually procure such funding automatically ascends into a distinguished group. At the NIH today, the pay line for funding grants in several institutes is about 11%; this means when you submit a grant, you have a one in nine chance for funding. The competition is fierce, to say the least.

We are committed to the research mission at the School of Medicine and the Health Science Center. For me, it is a pleasure to work with so many talented and dedicated individuals who struggle with the challenges of discovery. I am very pleased with the upward trend in our research progress as it denotes measurable steps to excellence. The numbers do not include several new grant/contract milestones achieved by the faculty in just the last few weeks that will bring, between them, an annual increase in finding of another $10 million: The National Children’s Study, co-led by Daniel E. Hale, M.D., professor of pediatrics at the Health Science Center and and Donald J. Dudley, M.D., professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the UT Health Science Center and a federally funded Trauma Grant, co-led by Ronald M. Stewart, M.D., associate professor of surgery at the UT Health Science Center and trauma medical director at University Hospital and Stephen M. Cohn, M.D., F.A.C.S., professor and chairman of the Health Science Center Department of Surgery and the Witten B. Russ Chair in Surgery.

Finally, it is with great pride that we acknowledge the election to the Institute of Medicine two of our most distinguished faculty, Dr. Amelie Ramirez and Dr. Cynthia Mulrow, who were appointed just this past month. Our institution was one of only three nationally to have two members elected this year. Having them as members of the National Academy of Science is further evidence of the superb work being performed at San Antonio, and it conveys, in the most emphatic terms, that biomedical research is thriving in the Health Science Center, in our Community and in San Antonio.

William L. Henrich, M.D., M.A.C.P.
Dean, School of Medicine
Vice President for Medical Affairs
John P. Howe, III, M.D.,
Distinguished Chair in Health Policy

Inside this issue:

New Faculty 2
KUDOS 3
KUDOS & Announcements 4
Greehey Children’s Cancer Research Institute 5
Welcome New Faculty

Anesthesiology
Dr. Steven G. Venticinque joined on November 1, 2007 as a Clinical Associate Professor. He received his medical degree from the University of Florida College of Medicine in 1994 and completed an internship in Surgery in 1995 and residency in Anesthesiology in 1998 from the San Antonio Uniformed Services Health Sciences Consortium. In 1998, he completed a fellowship in Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine at Wilford Hall Medical Center.

Family & Community Medicine
Dr. Rodrigo D. Cantu joined on November 5, 2007 as an Assistant Professor. He received his medical degree from Texas A&M University in 1998. He then completed his Family Medicine residency training in 2001 from the Santa Rosa Family Practice Residency Program.

Medicine
Ms. Sonja Brune joined on November 14, 2007 as a Faculty Associate in the Division of Cardiology. She received her Bachelor of Science and Master of Science in Nursing from the HSC.
Dr. Angela Velez joined on November 1, 2007 as an Assistant Professor. She received her medical degree from the Instituto de Ciencias de La Salud and completed her residency training at the HSC.

Neurosurgery
Mr. Fabian J. Gomez joined on November 1, 2007 as a Faculty Associate. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Biology at the HSC in 2002. He then obtained his Masters of Physician Assistant Studies at A.T. Still University in 2006.
Ms. Melissa A. Fontenot joined on November 1, 2007 as a Faculty Associate. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Microbiology at Louisiana State University in 1999 and her Associate of Science degree in Emergency Health Science at Our Lady of the Lake College in 2002. She then obtained her Masters of Physician Assistant Studies at University of South Alabama in 2006.

Obstetrics & Gynecology
Dr. Sujit Nair joined on November 1, 2007 as an Instructor. He received his Ph.D. in Biotechnology from the University of Pune, National Centre for Cell Science in 2003 and received a Master of Science in Zoology (Molecular biology) from the same program. In addition, he received a Bachelor of Science in Zoology and Chemistry from Abasaheb Garware College, in 1995.
Dr. Luke A. Newton joined on November 1, 2007 as an Assistant Professor. He received his medical degree from the University of Texas Southwestern in 2003 and then completed his residency at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill in June 2007.

Ophthalmology
Dr. Patrick S. O’Connor joined on November 15, 2007 as an Assistant Professor. He received his medical degree at St. Louis University School of Medicine in 1970. He then completed a Surgical Internship at Cleveland Clinic. He completed his residency training also at Cleveland Clinic in Ophthalmology in 1977. He continued with fellowship training in Neuro-Ophthalmology receiving his certificate from Bascom Palmer Eye Institute at the University of Miami School of Medicine in 1978.

Rehabilitation Medicine
Dr. Daniel L. Santa Maria joined on November 1, 2007 as an Instructor. He received his medical degree from the University of Kansas and received his Bachelor of Arts in Microbiology. In addition, he is well known to us, having just recently completing his four year PM&R residency at our HSC with this department. He is currently a Sports Medicine Fellow at Santa Rosa.

Surgery
Mr. Paul B. Allen joined on November 1, 2007 as a Faculty Associate. Mr. Allen received his Master of Physician Assistant Studies degree from the University of Nebraska in 2004. He also received a Bachelor of Science from their program too.
Mr. Wun C. Augustin joined on November 1, 2007 as a Faculty Associate. He received his Master of Physician Assistant Studies from the University of Nebraska in 2005.
Mr. John Dembrosky joined on November 1, 2007 as a Faculty Associate. He received his Master of Physician Assistant Studies degree from the University of Nebraska in 2003.
Mr. Will D. Booker joined on November 1, 2007 as a Faculty Associate. He received his Master of Physician Assistant Studies from the University of Nebraska in 2004. Currently, he is an Emergency Medicine Physician Assistant Fellow at Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston.
Dr. Ross Willis joined on November 1, 2007. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Psychology at the UTHSCSA in 1992 and received his Ph.D., from Texas Tech University in 1999.
Dr. Alfonso Chiscano joined on November 1, 2007 as a Clinical Assistant Professor. He received his medical degree from University of Barcelona Medical School and received his Bachelor of Science from Instituto Nacional Ensenanza media Tenerife.
Ms. Ana Tattersall Cocke joined on November 1, 2007 as a Faculty Associate. She received her Bachelor of Science in nursing, at the HSC in 1994. In addition, she received her Master of Science in Nursing from our program in 1998.
The following faculty, fellows, residents, staff and/or students appeared in the news (television, print media or radio): Dr. Steven Bailey, Medicine/Cardiology; Dr. Robert Brzyski, Obstetrics/Gynecology; Dr. Francisco Cigarroa, President; Dr. Nan Clare, Dean’s Office/Pathology; Dr. George Crawford, Medicine/Infectious Diseases; Dr. John Day, Neurosurgery; Dr. Reza Ghohestani, Medicine/Dermatology; Dr. James Hanley, RAHC/Residency Program; Dr. Drew Horlbeck, Otolaryngology; Dr. Alexander Miller, Psychiatry; Dr. Alan Peterson, Psychiatry; Dr. Kristen Plastino, Obstetrics/Gynecology; Dr. Bradley Pollock, Epidemiology/Biostatistics; Dr. Amelie Ramirez, Epidemiology/Biostatistics; Dr. I. Jon Russell, Medicine/Clinical Immunology; Dr. Ronald Stewart, Surgery/Trauma & Emergency Care; Dr. Ian Thompson, Urology.

The following faculty are the 2007-2008 MFA Senators: Drs. Deborah Baruch-Bienen, Leticia Vargas, Mark Nadeau, Krista Bowers, Sally Combest, J. Christopher Franka, Daniel Johnson and Rajeshwar Rao Tekmal.

Dr. Jan E. Patterson, Medicine, was selected as the 2007 Phyllis T. Bodel Lecturer at Yale University School of Medicine. On November 7th, she presented “Healthcare-associated Infections and Health Policy: 2008 Update” at Yale Medicine Grand Rounds. She also met with Medicine housestaff and Yale medical students to discuss “Leadership: Gifts and Challenges of the New Generation.”

Dr. Daniel Hale, Pediatrics, was named the 2008 Distinguished Alumnus at the University of Texas Medical School at Houston. This award recognizes alumnus with outstanding contributions in medical science and education, or prevention and treatment of diseases, and continued interests in the Medical School and its students. Read more...

Nicole Manley’s, Medical Dean’s Office, H.E.B. Clinical Skills Center, work in Progress abstract #251 entitled "LOST IN TRANSLATION: ESTABLISHING METHODS OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN USERS AND VENDORS OF CLINICAL SKILLS ASSESSMENT SOFTWARE” has been accepted for poster presentation at the 8th Annual International Meeting on Simulation in Healthcare. Her abstract will be published in the conference syllabus and on the Society’s website following the meeting.

Department of Medicine
Employees of the Quarter

Pauline De Los Santos
09.01.2006 to 11.30.2006

Eduardo Martinez-Benfield
12.01.2006 to 02.28.2007

Linda U. Aguirre
03.01.2007 to 05.31.2007

Linda A. Keller
06.01.2007 to 08.31.2007

Department of Medicine
Employee of the Year

Linda A. Keller
09.01.2006 to 08.31.2007
It is time once again to order your Reach Out and Read holiday cards! As you will recall, sales from the cards will benefit the Reach Out and Read Programs of the UTHSCSA. Reach Out and Read is a national, non-profit organization that strives to make literacy promotion a standard part of pediatric care, so that children grow up with books and a love of reading. At every well-child check-up between ages 6 months and 5 years, children who come to our clinics receive a beautiful, new book to take home and keep. Through Reach Out and Read, children start school with a home library of 9 beautiful children’s books and their parents understand that reading aloud is the most important thing they can do to prepare their children for school. Funds from the card sales will be used to purchase new books for the two Reach Out and Read Programs in the Department of Pediatrics: the Children’s Health Center and the Premiere Program. The Children’s Health Center is the training clinic for the pediatric residents at the UTHSCSA and provides primary pediatric care to a large population of low-income families. The Premiere Program is run by the Division of Neonatology and provides comprehensive follow-up care for premature infants. Currently, these programs are distributing about 4000 books per year to children in San Antonio.

Please take a moment to look at these beautiful cards. The brochure can be accessed at: http://www.pediatrics.uthscsa.edu/generalpeds/reachout.asp. These cards were designed by children, many of whom were patients at Christus Santa Rosa Children’s Hospital and University Hospital. They come in packages of 20 identical cards with plain white envelopes. Ordering the cards is simple. Just send your order and check to me through campus mail. PLEASE DO NOT INCLUDE SHIPPING, since I will send them to you through campus mail. The check should be made out to: UTHSCSA. The cards are available now through the end of the year.

Thank you for your support of our Reach Out and Read Programs! Happy Holidays!
Rebecca L. Huston, M.D., M.P.H
Clinical Professor
Department of Pediatrics

Christian A. Corbitt, MSIII, was awarded the 2007 Herbert W. Nickens Medical Student Scholarship. Only five scholarships are awarded to medical students entering their third year of medical school. The student must demonstrate leadership in eliminating inequities in medical education and health care and addressing educational, societal and health care needs of minorities in the United States.

Christian received his B.S. in Biochemistry from UT at Austin. He started volunteering at elementary schools in Austin primarily serving the underserved Hispanic population. He discovered his passion for medicine through his experience at the local county hospital. Christian became very involved in Frontera de Salud, organization that travels to numerous colonias through South Texas to provide health care to underserved populations. As Vice-President and Treasurer of Frontera, him and others were able to raise over $10,000 and helped expand Frontera to other communities.

Dr. Martha Medrano, Associate Dean for Continuing Medical Education and Director of Medical Hispanic Center of Excellence, was selected as one of the 100 Most Influential Hispanics in the country in the October issue of Hispanic Business magazine. Read more in HSC news...

From President Dr. Francisco Cigarroa: the Cancer Therapy and Research Center (CTRC) Board of Directors and The University of Texas System approved a letter of agreement to formally merge the CTRC with our Health Science Center. The agreement is subject to final approval by The University of Texas Board of Regents and continued due diligence by the UT System. Read more...
The Greehey Children’s Cancer Research Institute (GCCRI) was renamed this year to recognize the transformative $25 million gift received from the Greehey family. Though our name changed, our mission is unchanged, i.e. to advance scientific knowledge relevant to childhood cancer and accelerate the translation of knowledge into novel therapies, aimed at elimination of cancer at all ages. Since our official opening and dedication in March '04, we have grown to more than 80 physicians, scientists, staff, and students, horizontally integrated across four departments in the School of Medicine and the Graduate School of Biological Sciences as well as the San Antonio Cancer Institute (SACI).

The recruitment earlier this year of Gail Tomlinson, MD, PhD, from UT Southwestern to the dual positions of Deputy Director of GCCRI and Division Chief of Hematology/Oncology, Department of Pediatrics, at Santa Rosa, has provided an important linkage for us to foster clinical and translational research and expand opportunities for training. A new ACGME-approved fellowship in pediatric hematology and oncology is planned for launch in 2008. GCCRI labs will provide research training for these fellows, just as we currently do for pre-doctoral medical and graduate students and undergraduate summer students. This past summer we had a total of 29 students working in our research labs including 12 undergraduate students from eight different universities. Medical students working on our labs won first and second place in the UTHSCSA Medical Student Research Day in September this year.

In an important development this year, we launched a program in collaboration with the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics (DEB) to establish bioinformatics and computational biology at GCCRI, led by an outstanding expert, Dr. Edward R. Dougherty, from Texas A&M University. We have recruited two full-time faculty and five adjunct faculty for this important initiative which should prove critical to our research success and very helpful to DEB, SACI and the campus at large.

Positioned as we are at the center of the Greehey Academic and Research (North) Campus, we are positioned to leverage our research resources considerably with the new South Texas Research Facility (STRF) which will be physically connected to our building and greatly expand the vivarium space here. We are anticipating an increase in faculty and are committed to building more programs of collaborative research.

**Sharon B. Murphy, MD**  
Director, Greehey Children’s Cancer Research Institute  
Professor, Department of Pediatrics  
Website: [http://gccri.uthscsa.edu/](http://gccri.uthscsa.edu/)

---

The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio  
School of Medicine  
Office of the Dean, MSC 7790  
7703 Floyd Curl Dr.  
San Antonio, Texas 78229-3900  
Phone: 210-567-4420  
Fax: 210-567-6962  
E-mail: meddean@uthscsa.edu

Send all comments to  
Georgina Anguiano-Elliott  
anguiano@uthscsa.edu

---

Publications are archived at: [http://som.uthscsa.edu/eNews/Archive.asp](http://som.uthscsa.edu/eNews/Archive.asp)