

**Southwest Center for Occupational and Environmental Health
University of Texas Education and Research Center for Occupational Safety
and Health**

**Summary ANNUAL Report
July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008**

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Program Overview

The University of Texas (UT) Education and Research Center (ERC) is housed in the Southwest Center for Occupational and Environmental Health (SWCOEH) in the Division of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences (DEOHS) in the School of Public Health (SPH), and incorporates faculty and students from various disciplines related to occupational and environmental health. The overall goal of the Center is to respond to the critical need for well-trained occupational and environmental health (OEH) specialists by providing graduate level academic and research training in the OEH disciplines and continuing professional education. The UT ERC was established in 1977, and competed for the most recent five-year award in 2005, for the period July 2005 to July 2010.

The UT SPH is a multi-campus system with the main campus located in Houston in the Texas Medical Center, and five Regional Texas Campuses: Austin, Brownsville, Dallas, El Paso, and San Antonio. This makes the UT SPH unique among other schools of public health. All campuses are linked electronically, facilitating quality teaching and research, expanded course offerings, interdisciplinary collaboration and access to regional stakeholders, as well as expanded minority student populations. The UT ERC includes close collaboration with the UT School of Nursing located next door; the University of Houston; and other international universities and colleges.

The current core and specialty academic programs of the SWCOEH ERC include a complete spectrum.

Core Academic Programs	Industrial Hygiene (IH) Online at http://www.sph.uth.tmc.edu/swcoeh/default.aspx?id=1997
	Occupational and Environmental Medicine (OM) Online at http://www.sph.uth.tmc.edu/swcoeh/default.aspx?id=1969
	Occupational Health for Nurses (OHN) Online at http://www.sph.uth.tmc.edu/swcoeh/default.aspx?id=1984
Allied OH&S Academic Programs	Occupational Epidemiology (OccEpi) Online at http://www.sph.uth.tmc.edu/swcoeh/default.aspx?id=1981
	Occupational Injury Prevention (IP) Online at http://www.sph.uth.tmc.edu/swcoeh/default.aspx?id=1994
Center Wide Programs	Pilot Projects Research Training Program (PPRTP) Online at http://www.sph.uth.tmc.edu/swcoeh/default.aspx?id=1999
	NORA Research Support Program Online at http://www.sph.uth.tmc.edu/swcoeh/default.aspx
Continuing Education and Hazardous Substance Training	Occupational Health and Safety & Hazardous Substances Training Online at http://www.sph.uth.tmc.edu/swcoeh/default.aspx?id=2019

A total of five academic programs and an active Continuing Education program provide a full spectrum of training opportunities. The number of program trainees and NIOSH supported trainees are shown in the following table.



Academic Program	Total Trainees	NIOSH Trainees	Graduates
Industrial Hygiene	10	6	3
Occupational Medicine	6	5	4
Occupational Health Nursing	2	2	1
Occupational Epidemiology	4	4	1
Injury Prevention	1	1	1

Progress & Accomplishments

ERC program progress and accomplishments for this reporting period include: successful recruitment and graduation of program trainees; presentation and publication of research and papers; implementation of professional development courses; successful implementation of research to practice (R2P) projects in vulnerable populations; revision of academic and professional course content based on needs assessments; cross-school/institutional and regional collaborations, as well as others -- but in the interest of space, the categories below are highlighted.

(1) Faculty Recruitment and Development

SWCOEH has expanded its faculty and research training program activities through the UT SPH Regional Campus system in San Antonio with the appointments of: Sharon Cooper PhD, Program Director for the Occupational Epidemiology doctoral training program and Regional Dean at the San Antonio campus; Eva Shipp PhD, Assistant Professor in the Occupational Epidemiology and Injury Prevention Programs, and David Gimeno, PhD, Associate Professor in the Injury Prevention Program. Dr. Shipp was a UT ERC NIOSH Occupational Epidemiology Program graduate in 2005, Dr. Gimeno was a post-doctoral fellow at the UT SWCOEH from 2003 – 2006.

(2) Meeting Regional and Diversity Needs

This reporting period, the UT ERC has contributed to the implementation of the EOHS Division strategic planning process that was developed in 2005 – 2006, and builds on existing strengths, interests, and community need. Three research areas of focus relevant to occupational health emerged from this process which has guided faculty recruitment, NORA research support activities, and staff recruitment and training. They include: air environment; injury prevention; and multidisciplinary collaborative research with the UT SPH regional campuses. An achievement of note is the work being done on OHS curricula for high school and college students in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Evaluation of regional programs' content, visibility, outreach, and needs are done in a variety of media including post course evaluations, informal surveys, email, phone, focus groups, and internet review.

Regarding diversity efforts UT SPH is committed to equal access for all qualified applicants seeking quality graduate education regardless of age, sex, race, disability, religion, or national origin. In addition to ongoing institutional minority recruitment efforts, new academic program brochures and recruitment activities were developed integrating web- and paper-based feedback from 2005 efforts.

(3) Continuing Education (CE)

The CE program has developed several new course titles during the reporting period and is also partnering with innovative groups to create additional programming, outreach, and services, including: the City of Houston Department of Health and Human Services (along with CDC/EPA/HUD *Healthy Homes* Project); and the University of Texas at Arlington (Region VI OSHA Training Center). In addition, new relationships have been formed with: the City of Houston Department of Homeland Security; the American Society of Safety Engineers; and the Texas Association of Environmental Professionals. A total of 27 courses were offered during this reporting period to 1150 trainees.

New courses offered during this reporting period include: Industrial Hygiene Sampling; EHS Academy for Performing Arts Professionals; Texas Health & Safety Conference; Non-Violent Intervention for Nurses; Security 101 for EHS Personnel; and Enhancing Security & Radioactive Materials. Course evaluations provided positive and valuable feedback which will be incorporated into future course content and offerings. The new Region VI OSHA Training Center is a partnership of UT ERC with UT Arlington, and compliments existing occupational and environmental health and safety training. The OSHA Center has held more than 30 general industry and construction industry courses across the region since Spring 2008. A major contribution the UT ERC to the OSHA Training Center will be in the area of healthcare, especially in the area of developing new discipline specific subject matter.

During this reporting period an online course in clinical toxicology has been developed with support from The University of Texas Telecampus. This course is in the final production stages and expected to be offered during the next academic year. An exciting accomplishment during this period in CE has been the development and implementation of a Spanish language Industrial Hygiene certificate training program with a Training of Trainers supplement to be developed in the next reporting period.

(4) Pilot Projects Program Progress

During his reporting period, a total of 16 applications were received, with seven receiving awards. Of these, two were transitional awards; two were received by faculty or doctoral students; and the remainder to research trainees in other institutions. Six of the awards were made to applicants in three different institutions in Texas and one in Oklahoma. Publications and presentations include topics such as: overhead power lines; future nursing workforce; occupational exposure to antineoplastics; work-related asthma; role of oxidative stress; pesticide exposures; work assignments during pregnancy; cantina job risks to Latinas; and environmental



tobacco smoke exposure among restaurant and bar workers; as well as many others. The annual offering of pilot projects research funds continues to attract attention and increase the number of quality applicants.

Additional Information & Resources

Supplementary information about the Center is available online at <http://www.sph.uth.tmc.edu/swcoeh/default.aspx>. Academic- and specialty-related program information is available on the websites listed above. A copy of last year's annual report is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/oep/reports.html#ercreports>. Additional information can be provided by contacting: Dr. Sarah Felknor, ERC Director, at Sarah.A.Felknor@uth.tmc.edu.

