

UNIVERSITY of NORTH TEXAS HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER at Fort Worth

Prokai joins HSC as first Welch professor

Laszlo Prokai, PhD, joined the health science center's Department of Molecular Biology and Immunology in August as its first Robert A. Welch Professor.

Dr. Prokai will establish the new proteomics laboratories and a state-of-the-art mass spectrometer, the largest in North Texas, which will be installed on the fourth floor of the Research and Education Building.

The Welch Professor position was funded by the Welch Foundation, one of the oldest and largest private funding sources for basic chemical research in the United States.

Dr. Prokai plans to focus his proteomics research, with the help of the new mass spectrometer, on the research areas of aging, neurodegenerative diseases and biodefense. His interests also lie in the discovery of new drugs to combat these diseases.

"It's no longer enough to have research for the sake of research alone," Dr. Prokai said. "It has to have an end of helping people. We believe that the compounds we are working on are useful in combating multiple diseases."

Dr. Prokai's background in a variety of subjects makes him somewhat unique in the world of science. His bachelor's degree is in chemical engineering, and his master's degree is in radiochemical technology, while his doctorate is in radiochemistry, but his research has brought him into medicinal chemistry, biochemistry, pharmaceuticals, drug discovery, neuroscience and, finally, to the molecular biology and immunology department at the health science center.



Laszlo Prokai, PhD, Welch professor

"I aspire to be a renaissance man," he said. "When something catches my interest, I strive to learn more and more about it — even outside my field of training and expertise. When you confine yourself to one piece of the puzzle, you're not able to put together the whole picture."

After graduating from college with a doctorate in radiochemistry, Dr. Prokai had an awakening.

"I looked around and saw that there were not too many jobs in radiochemistry," he said. "You need a nuclear reactor, so that's when I found mass spectrometry."

Since then, Dr. Prokai's interest has expanded to newer fields, but he has often used mass spectrometry as a tool to advance his research.

"Mass spectrometry is not the center of the universe," Dr. Prokai said. "It's what you do with it that will

define your scientific identity."

For Dr. Prokai, that scientific identity has been continuously evolving. His love of chemistry from his early schooling through college played a major role in his scientific identity, and a postdoctoral fellowship in medicinal chemistry led him to an interest in drug discovery and life sciences.

"Medicinal chemistry is really interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary," Dr. Prokai said. "You have to know chemistry and what the drug is doing in the body, so biochemistry, pharmacokinetics, and how drugs are processed and eliminated in the body, as well as where to pursue drug targets, are all part of medicinal chemistry. Suddenly, I couldn't categorize myself anymore, and I was published in all sorts of journals outside the field of chemistry."

While at the University of Florida, Dr. Prokai had collaborated with James Simpkins, PhD, chair and professor of pharmacology and neuroscience at the health science center, on projects related to Alzheimer's disease and stroke. More collaborations with health science center researchers, such as Michael Forster, PhD, professor of pharmacology and neuroscience, followed, so the move to the health science center just seemed like the next progression.

Dr. Prokai brought his 8-year-old son and his wife to Mansfield, while his other son stayed in college at the University of Florida. Katalin Prokai, PhD, Dr. Prokai's wife of more than 20 years, also serves as one of his primary research partners. She will work

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in the Prokai labs as a research associate professor in pharmacology and neuroscience. Her background is also in chemistry, with a specific interest in drug discovery.

The Prokai's arrival was also timed to include the arrival of the new mass spectrometer that will be located in the Prokai labs in addition to two other instruments that were moved to the health science center from the University of Florida. The new mass spectrometer is the most powerful mass spectrometer in the Metroplex. The magnetic field within the instrument is one million times stronger than the earth's own magnetic field, Dr. Prokai said.

"When I saw the specifications for this machine, I was just blown away," Dr. Prokai said. "This mass spectrometer's capabilities will support drug discovery in and outside of UNT Health Science Center. We are very excited to have it available here."

In the mean time, the Prokai's are setting up their labs and offices to continue the work that they enjoy most and plan for doing research together with other health science center faculty members.

"The know-how, knowledge and experience that I bring will be helpful to people who are interested in collaborating with me," Dr. Prokai said. "I look forward to these new challenges." ★

CAMPUS Connection

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Jacobsons to receive preventive nutrition award

Elaine Jacobson, PhD, and Myron "Mike" Jacobson, PhD, will receive the Roger J. Williams Award in Preventive Nutrition Tuesday, Dec. 13, at noon in Luibel Hall.

Following the award presentation, they will present the keynote address "Back to the Future: Translating New Roles for Niacin to Disease Treatment and Prevention."

The Roger J. Williams Award in Preventive Nutrition was founded by the late E. Bruce Street Sr. and is presented by the health science center for outstanding contributions to the prevention of disease and promotion of health through nutrition.

The award commemorates the pioneering research of Roger Williams, PhD, founding director of the Clayton Foundation Biochemical Institute at



Mike and Elaine Jacobson will be presented with the Roger J. Williams Award in Preventive Nutrition Dec. 13.

the University of Texas at Austin. In keeping with the broad nature of Dr. Williams' contributions to nutrition, nominees are considered in terms of the magnitude of their contributions

to any aspect of preventive nutrition, either scientific or sociological.

In addition to the keynote presentation, the Jacobsons will present two seminars during their visit.

The Department of Molecular Biology and Immunology is hosting an individual seminar presented by Dr. Mike Jacobson, "Polymers of ADP-Ribose: Not Just for DNA Damage Anymore," Dec. 13 at 3 p.m. in the mini-auditorium in the Lewis Library, room 110.

The Office of Technology Development and Commercialization is sponsoring an individual seminar by Dr. Elaine Jacobson, "What a Scientist Has Learned About Business: The Venture Adventure of Niadyne Inc.," Dec. 14 at 10 a.m. in the mini-auditorium in the Lewis Library, room 110.

The campus community is invited to attend all three events.

The Jacobsons are former members of the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine faculty. They are currently professors of pharmacology and toxicology at the University of Arizona Health Science Center. ★

ORC receives grant to study carpal tunnel syndrome

Scott Stoll, DO, PhD, executive director of the Osteopathic Research Center, has received an R21 exploratory/developmental grant for clinical studies from the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine at the National Institutes of Health to study carpal tunnel syndrome.

According to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, carpal tunnel syndrome is a painful progressive condition that occurs when the median nerve, which runs from the forearm into the hand, becomes pressed or squeezed at the wrist. Initial treatment for the disorder usually involves wearing a splint to keep the wrist from twisting or bending, and surgery may become necessary if the symptoms persist for six months or longer.

The \$568,000 grant, "Treatment Efficacy of Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment for Carpal Tunnel Syn-



Scott Stoll, DO, PhD,

drome," will support a three-year clinical trial that will examine whether an eight-week regimen of osteopathic manipulative treatment will have immediate and lasting positive effects

on the symptoms, functional limitations and physiologic impairment associated with carpal tunnel syndrome.

The Osteopathic Research Center, a national research organization housed at the health science center, was developed in 2001 with an initial investment of \$1.1 million over a four-year period (2002-2005) from the American Osteopathic Foundation, the American Osteopathic Association and the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine. These same osteopathic organizations have refunded the ORC for the next four years, bringing the total investment to \$2 million for the eight-year period.

The ORC works to increase evidence-based knowledge about the mechanisms of action and clinical efficacy of osteopathic manipulative medicine through research, training, and conducting local and national research. ★

Researchers study effects of binge drinking

Christopher de Fiebre, PhD, assistant professor, and NancyEllen de Fiebre, senior research associate, both of pharmacology and neuroscience, were recently awarded a grant from the National Institutes of Health to study the effects of binge drinking on brain function.

The project, funded by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, will specifically look at binge drinking, the act of consuming large amounts of alcohol within a short period of time.

The practice of binge drinking, which is predominantly associated with adolescents and young adults, is practiced by about 20 percent of the American population aged 12 and older, according to a 2001 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse.

According to the NIAAA, 1,400 college students die every year from alcohol-related causes, and more than

150,000 students develop a health problem related to alcohol consumption. One of the health problems that can be related to binge drinking is brain damage.

According to Dr. de Fiebre, patients who end up in the emergency room as a result of binge drinking receive mostly supportive therapy at that point — respirators to keep the patient alive. Currently, no therapies are available to alleviate the brain damaging properties of an alcohol overdose. The researchers hope that results from this grant will fill this void.

"What we want to find out is the threshold where you're going to start killing brain cells," Dr. de Fiebre said. "When we find that threshold, we'll be able to look at potential therapeutic treatments to keep the brain cells alive."

The \$362,688 grant will fund a two-year research project. The first year will be spent developing a mouse

model of binge-drinking-induced neurotoxicity to define the minimum amount of alcohol that produces brain damage. The second year will be spent working with mice that are missing the alpha7 nicotinic receptor to determine if and how this receptor decreases the brain damaging effects of alcohol.

"Alcohol acts at dozens if not hundreds of different receptor sites," Dr. de Fiebre said. "Our preliminary data suggest that the presence or absence of the receptors that nicotine acts at, the alpha7 receptor, may determine if you end up with a hangover, in the hospital or dead after a night of binge drinking."

The next two years of work funded by the NIAAA will help corroborate the de Fiebres' previous work. And if Dr. de Fiebre's hypothesis proves to be true, the results could be used in studies of other types of brain-damaging diseases, such as Alzheimer's disease. ★

SPH creates Center for Public Health Practice

Claudia Coggin, PhD, CHES, assistant professor of social and behavioral sciences, will serve as director of the newly created Center for Public Health Practice at the health science center.

With the creation of the center, the School of Public Health will join 29 of the 36 accredited schools of public health in the Association of Schools of Public Health that have a staffed entity that emphasizes practice-related activities within their schools.

Practice-based activities include internships and research activities involving faculty, students and the community.

“When the city of Fort Worth asked us to create a School of Public Health almost six years ago, one of the things that we wanted to do was make sure that the community benefited from having trained public health practitioners here locally,” said

Fernando Treviño, PhD, MPH, dean of the School of Public Health. “This center continues that proud tradition of community service and focuses even more on the aspect of outreach in Tarrant County and Texas.”

The purpose of the Center for Public Health Practice is to promote practice-based research and related activities among the school faculty, students and community.

Another purpose of the center is to create a connection between the School of Public Health and area communities to facilitate assisting them in addressing public health issues through research and practice-related activities such as internships.

“I am committed to enhancing the relationships and collaboration between UNT Health Science Center and local, regional and state health departments, as well as community agencies,” Dr. Coggin said.

Dr. Coggin will recruit sites, negotiate contracts and place master’s of public health students at public health practice sites to apply the skills learned in the classroom in a public health setting. Fifteen to 25 master’s students are currently placed each semester in sites throughout the community.

Students may elect to complete their public health practice either in Fort Worth or the surrounding communities or compete for internships or fellowships nationally.

“Through the center, the community, faculty and community public health professionals will be able to find collaborators for projects and get technical advice from faculty members and students,” Dr. Treviño said.

An advisory committee for the center composed of public health professionals and community members will be in place by January 2006, Dr. Coggin said. ★

Angel Tree

The Employee Benefits and Action Committee is once again hosting the “Angel Tree” program to collect gifts for children of employees who need a helping hand to make their children’s Christmas a little merrier. Full-time employees with full custody of children 12 years old or younger whose salaries are \$21,000 annually or less qualify.

If you know employees who qualify, please direct them to the application forms located in Human Resources. The deadline for returning forms to Human Resource Services is Nov. 22.

This year, the Angel Tree will be virtual. Organizers are creating a web page for angel selection to streamline the process and allow off-campus employees to participate more easily. The site will be available after Thanksgiving.

Please plan to purchase clothing (shirts, pants, shoes, coats, socks, etc.) and a toy for each angel selected. Departments and individuals are encouraged to share an angel or an angel family.

Angel presents should be delivered, unwrapped, to Judy Sager in EAD 807 by Dec. 16. For more information, check the Daily News or contact Judy Sager at ext. 2658.

Kudos to...

Katie Cardarelli, PhD, MPH, SPH 1999, assistant professor of epidemiology, and Roberto Cardarelli, DO, MPH, TCOM/SPH 2001, assistant professor of family medicine, on the birth of their first child, a son named Cristiano Cardarelli, Nov. 4. He weighed 8 pounds, 1 ounce and was 21 inches long.

Rebecca Deaton, PhD, GSBS 2004, and her husband, David, on the birth of their son, William Brady, Oct. 29. He weighed 6 pounds, 10 ounces and was 19 inches long.

Tom Valencia, MS, GSBS 2002, doctoral student in biomedical sciences, and his wife, Jessica, on the birth of their daughter, Makena Marie, Sept. 9. She weighed 5 pounds, 13.8 ounces and was 18 inches long. ★

SPH researcher to facilitate project funding from Chile

Alberto Coustasse, MD, MBA, DrPH, research associate in the School of Public Health, was recently selected by Fundacion Chile and sponsored by the World Bank as one of the 20 most successful Chileans working in the United States and Canada in biotechnology, information services and food technology.

Dr. Coustasse was one of only two Chileans living in Texas chosen for the list and is the only person on the list currently working in academia.

"I couldn't believe it when I was selected," Dr. Coustasse said.

The group of 20 was chosen to create a network of Chileans in North America called Chile Global. The Chile Global network, which has now expanded to 60 members, will work to establish relationships and facilitate projects to address the "brain drain" occurring in this South American country.

Brain drain describes a situation where top researchers and scientists from a developing country leave that country for more lucrative work in developed countries. When that occurs, the developing country loses the people who can help in the development process.

The World Bank has worked on a project called "Mobilization of Diasporas for Knowledge Transfer" in India, China and Israel to transform their brain drains into brain circulation. The Chilean government became involved with the World Bank project to help direct investment into the economy of Chile, with the goal of becoming a developed country by 2015.

Currently, Chile is reinvesting a percentage of its gross domestic product to research and development for technology transfer. According to Dr. Coustasse, the government would like to expand this area and focus on improving several aspects of the Chilean economy, which is where Dr. Coustasse comes in.

As part of Chile Global, Dr. Coustasse has been tasked with finding peo-

ple, businesses or government entities who want to compete for federal projects from the government of Chile. The project areas of interest include biotechnology, health information systems, nutrition, environmental health, virology, biochemistry, agricultural products and aquaculture, to name a few.

The Chilean government will provide \$6.6 million for grant projects in the next year. If the congress of Chile approves a royalty bill for the mining industry, the grant funding amount could expand to \$140 million for technological innovation.

"There are opportunities for researchers like us," Dr. Coustasse said.

Knowledge of Spanish is not necessary to apply for a grant project or to work on a joint venture with different Chilean agencies. Dr. Coustasse will serve as a liaison between project applicants, Fundacion Chile and the Chilean government.

"This is an exciting opportunity, and I'm looking forward to helping make the connection between researchers here at the health science center and officials in Chile," Dr. Coustasse said.

The School of Public Health currently has an agreement for technical cooperation with the School of Public Health of the Medicine Faculty of the University of Chile to exchange information, instructional materials, students and professors and to develop academic projects.

Dr. Coustasse will be traveling to Chile in December to renew the agreement with the University of Chile and meet with government officials. He will also attend the second meeting of Chile Global, which will address the next step in the grant process.

For more information about grants from the Chilean government, contact Dr. Coustasse at ext. 0150 or e-mail him at acoustas@hsc.unt.edu. ★

In the News

Jennifer Alexander, DO, assistant professor of internal medicine, was quoted in an article in the October issue of *Glamour* magazine about how doctors stay healthy all winter.

A front-page feature story about the **Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine's 35th Birthday Gala** and pictures of the event were published in the Oct. 3 edition of the *Fort Worth Business Press*.

Ronald Blanck, DO, president of the health science center, was featured in a front-page story about his retirement in the Oct. 10 edition of the *Fort Worth Business Press*.

Marianne Levine, DO, assistant professor of pediatrics, was quoted in a story about Sudden Infant Death Syndrome published in the Oct. 11 edition of the *Star-Telegram*.

Kimberly Brown, RN, clinical research coordinator in pharmacology and neuroscience; **James Simpkins, PhD**, professor and chair of pharmacology and neuroscience and director of the Institute for Aging and Alzheimer's Disease Research; and **Anna Ratka, PhD, PharmD**, associate professor of pharmacology and neuroscience and director of clinical research for IAADR, were mentioned in a story about screening for Alzheimer's disease and other dementias published in a special section of the *Star-Telegram*.

Christopher de Fiebre, PhD, assistant professor of pharmacology and neural science, was quoted in a story about the drinking habits of college students published in the Oct. 12 edition of the *North Texas Daily*.

John Fling, MD, associate professor of pediatrics and acting chair of the pediatrics allergy/immunology clinic, was featured in the "Dossier" column in the Oct. 31 edition of the *Fort Worth Business Press*. ★

Adair wins professional award

Bobbie Ann Adair, student development coordinator, has been named Outstanding New Professional in Texas by the Texas Association of College and University Student Affairs Administrators.

TACUSPA is an association of administrators, staff and students interested in the professional administration of student affairs programs in higher education.

Some of the criteria for the award include not having served more than three years in a full-time position in student affairs, performing all aspects of the job in an exemplary manner, and being a current member of TACUSPA.

Thomas Moorman, EdD, associate vice president for student affairs, nominated Adair for the award.

“She has only been here a short time, but she has made a huge impact on the students and student life here,” Dr. Moorman said. “I felt like she deserved the recognition.”

“I was very excited to receive the award and to know that my supervisors were happy with my work,” Adair said.

Adair will be leaving the health science center at the end of this year. She said she will miss all the faculty and students here and she appreciates the way everyone treated her like family. ★

Wound healing and hyperbaric medicine clinic moves to Harris

The Wound Healing and Hyperbaric Medicine Clinic has moved to the Harris Professional Center located at 1325 Pennsylvania, Suite 750, in Fort Worth.

Formerly housed in the Osteopathic Medical Center of Texas, which closed last year, the clinic was temporarily placed in the Patient Care Center at the health science center until a hospital partner could be found.

Now located on the main campus next to Harris Methodist Hospital, the new facility will allow the staff of the clinic more space and the ability to better serve their patients.

“Now that we are connected to a much larger system with a bigger referral base and more resources, we will be able to expand our practice and bring a higher level of service and care to our patients,” said Kelly Grimes, DO, associate medical director.

The clinic is the only hyperbaric chamber in Tarrant County. Hyperbaric treatment is usually used on patients with skin lesions or wounds as a result of diabetes or other illnesses. Hyperbaric treatment may also be used for other conditions, such as carbon monoxide poisoning, decompression sickness and burns.

The treatments, which last about 90 minutes, increase the amount of oxygen in the blood and decrease the amount of harmful gases, such as nitrogen or carbon monoxide. The high amount of oxygen delivered by the blood to the infected area prevents further tissue death and aids in the healing of the wound. ★



Memory Walk 2005

Team Brainiacs, organized by the Institute for Aging and Alzheimer's Disease Research, participated in this year's Alzheimer's Association Memory Walk Sept. 10. This year the team raised \$1,926, an increase from last year's effort, which raised \$1,501. Many health science center faculty, staff, students, friends and family members walked or donated to the cause, including team captain Anna Ratka, Tom Brown, Cheryl Bryant, Kaleb Bryant, Akiko Dobi, Izumi Flynn, Jonathan Flynn, Monica Jenschke, Pil Kim, Peter Koulen, Sara Koulen, Shaun Logan, Nathalie McClung, Chigusa Nolen, Evelyn Perez, Ann Phillips, Rhonda Phillips, Saumyendra Sarkar, Ritu Shetty, Volodya Rybalczenko, James Simpkins, Meharvan "Sonny" Singh, Mary Sumien, Nathalie Sumien, Sophie Wang, Sue Yi and Marianna Jung. ★

Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences

Reeves chosen as Outstanding Graduate Faculty

Rustin Reeves, PhD, assistant professor of cell biology and genetics, has been selected as the 2004-05 Outstanding Graduate Faculty Member.

The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and the Graduate Student Association sponsor the Outstanding Graduate Faculty Seminar Series. Each year, the graduate student body selects an outstanding faculty member.

“Dr. Rusty Reeves is a professor who is easy going, open, hard working and always ready to help students,” said Kissaou Tchedre, doctoral student in biomedical sciences. “I have noticed that Dr. Reeves is someone who wants to see his students succeed in life.”

As this year’s Outstanding Graduate Faculty Member, Dr. Reeves was invited to present, in broad terms, the history of his research program. Dr. Reeves presented his lecture, “Hybrid Science Educators: An Alternative Path for Academic Careers,” Nov. 17.

Dr. Reeves said he initially intended to pursue a career in farming and earned a degree in agriculture science from Texas A & M University in 1980. However, in 1986 he completed the requirements for teacher certification at the University of Texas at Arlington and began his career as an educator.

He spent the next six years teaching physical science, biology, honors biology and advanced placement biology for Waxahachie High School. In 1992, he enrolled as a doctoral student in the biomedical sciences program administered by the University of North Texas at the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine campus.

He worked under the supervision of Patrick Cammarata, PhD, in what was then known as the Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology. In 1997, he received his doctoral degree through



Rustin Reeves, PhD

the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences at what had become the health science center.

He stayed with the institution as a postdoctoral fellow and then moved into the position of instructor, eventually becoming an assistant professor in the Department of Cell Biology and Genetics.

Dr. Reeves has been productive in and out of the classroom. He serves as course director for structural anatomy and as lab instructor for Medical Gross Anatomy.

He is also the primary investigator for Schools’ Cooperative Opportunities for Resources and Education, a program designed to train and support biomedical sciences graduate students at the health science center to serve as enhanced curriculum resources in collaboration with high school biology students and teachers in the Fort Worth Independent School District.

“The SCORE program is one result of the insight Dr. Reeves gained

as a secondary school science educator, and he gets it,” said Kathryn Kaiser, doctoral student in health psychology. “The key to the future of scientific advancement is fostering the interest in as many young people from different backgrounds as possible.

“By encouraging students to explore and have fun, they can learn to have a passion about scientific inquiry that will serve them and all of us well,” she said.

He is also the co-principle investigator for Minority K-12 Initiative for Teachers and Students, a program designed to increase the diversity of the scientific workforce by promoting interest in science among underrepresented minority students in kindergarten through the 12th grade.

Dr. Reeves also serves as the graduate advisor for students in the Science Education discipline, and he received the GSBS Rising Star Award for Research in 2003.

Dr. Reeves is a council member of the American Association of Clinical Anatomists and serves on the Accelerated Science Achievement Program Advisory Council for the Fort Worth Independent School District.

He is a journal reviewer for *Clinical Anatomy* and a grant reviewer for the National Science Foundation, Math and Science Partnership Review Panel. He serves on numerous institutional committees, such as the TCOM performance review and medical admissions committees. He is also actively involved in panel discussions and mock interviews for the students in the GSBS post-baccalaureate certification program in premedical science.

Dr. Reeves also volunteers with the Texas Aces Youth Hockey Program in Plano and judges science fairs across the Metroplex. ★

Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine/Physician Assistant Studies

PAAs celebrate profession during national PA week

Physician assistants at the health science center and around the United States celebrated National Physician Assistant Week Oct. 6-12.

The first class of PAs graduated from Duke University in North Carolina Oct. 6, 1967.

PA Week at the health science center was sponsored by the Physician Assistant Student Association and organized by the PA class of 2008.

PA students hosted several events aimed at promoting awareness of the physician assistant profession.

The students made "PA Day bars" (PayDay bars) and placed them in the student mailboxes along with flyers with facts about PAs.

The students also hosted a luncheon and PA information session Oct. 7 for students and faculty at the health science center.

Christopher Cooper, PA, instructor of PA Studies and PA in pediatrics, talked about the team-based medicine that physician assistants and doctors conduct in rural medicine.

Speaking from personal experience, Cooper described how his partnership with his doctor enabled him to practice medicine in a rural area even though his supervising physician was not physically present.

Without this relationship, the inhabitants of that area would not have been able to get the medical treatment that they needed, he said.

In addition to the lunch presentation, several PA students from the class of 2008 went to visit underprivileged high schools in the Fort Worth area to give a presentation about the PA role in the medical profession.

One of the schools they visited was Reach High School, where students who have dropped out of high school return to earn their diplomas.

PA students passed out pamphlets about the physician assistant profession and discussed how to apply for PA school, described the different areas in which PAs can be employed, and shared their personal reasons for choosing to become PAs. ★

PA students provide hurricane relief

The Resource Connection, a shelter run by JPS hospital, at one time had 800 survivors from hurricanes Katrina and Rita in its shelter, which was designed for no more than 250 people.

The Physician Assistant classes of 2007 and 2008 decided to help the shelter provide basic necessities for its residents.

Patricia Moreno, director of volunteer services at JPS, told the students that the shelter needed basic supplies, clothing and food, even as the survivors were being relocated to more permanent housing.

The PA students delivered 240 "Shelter Kits" to JPS in mid-October. These kits, assembled by members of the PA classes of 2007 and 2008 and some of the PA Studies office staff, contained basic toiletries: toothpaste, toothbrush, comb, mouthwash, body lotion, shower gel and shampoo.

Other items were also collected, and a total of 10 bags of supplies, clothing and toys were delivered.

Moreno said she was overwhelmed and thrilled, and thanked everyone at the health science center who made the donation possible. ★

Family medicine establishes rural medicine division

Family medicine has established a Division of Rural Medicine to allow students to get a better taste of what life and practice in a rural community is all about.

"There's a huge need in Texas and across the country to address the needs of rural health communities," said Elizabeth Palmarozzi, DO, associate professor and chair of family medicine. "People in rural areas have unique medical issues."

The new curriculum, called Rural Osteopathic Medical Education in Texas, will begin during the 2006-2007 school year. It is designed to give students more opportunities to work closely with rural physicians in Texas.

John Bowling, DO, associate professor of family medicine, who previously served as director of the rural education program, will now serve as director of the division.

"The ROME Texas curriculum has two major goals: to prepare students for acceptance into premier graduate medical education programs and to provide a foundation for life and practice in a rural community," Dr. Bowling said.

Faculty members in the division are in the process of developing curricula, recruiting new faculty, finding training sites and conducting admissions interviews for applicants to the program.

Other staff and faculty members working with Dr. Bowling in the new division include Barbara Adams, MSA, assistant director; Eugene Zachary, DO, clinical education coordinator; Carol Stehly, MS, MEd, regional AHEC coordinator; and Lorna Brooks, administrative associate. ★

Fall activities at the health science center

Top right: The health science center celebrates Diwali. Perhaps one of the most well-known of the Indian festivals, Diwali is celebrated throughout India, as well as in Indian communities throughout the world. It signifies the renewal of life and heralds the approach of winter and the beginning of the sowing season.

Middle and lower left: TCOM students hold fourth annual DO Dash. Health science center faculty, staff, students and family members participated in the DO Dash Oct. 29 to help raise funds for Cook Children's Medical Center. A health and wellness fair on the Alumni Plaza featuring wellness checks, preventive education and osteopathic manipulative treatments followed the race.



EBAC hosts Halloween Party. The Employee Benefits and Action Committee threw a Halloween party for health science center faculty, staff and students and their families Oct. 31 on campus. There were plenty of treats on hand for the young trick-or-treaters.

Faculty Advances

Rafael Alvarez-Gonzalez, PhD, associate professor of molecular biology and immunology, presented an abstract on “The Termination Reaction Catalyzed by PARP-1” as part of the symposium PARP 2005: Bench to Bedside, held Oct. 5-7 in Newcastle, England. **Hilda Mendoza-Alvarez, MPH**, SPH 2003, clinical research coordinator II in internal medicine, is co-author.

Alakananda Basu, PhD, professor of molecular biology and immunology, has been invited to join the editorial board of the *Journal of Cellular and Molecular Medicine*.

Harvey Brenner, PhD, professor and chair of social and behavioral sciences, was the keynote speaker and presented “Commentary: Economic Growth is the Basis of Mortality Rate Decline in the 20th Century — Experience in the United States 1901-2000” at the Health Impact of Unemployment, Underemployment and Informal Labour: Problems of Developed and Developing Countries conference, held Oct. 13-14 in Izmir, Turkey. The conference was planned by the International Commission on Occupational Health’s Scientific Committees on Unemployment and Health and Occupational Health and Development.

Michael Clark, PhD, PA-C, assistant professor of medical education and physician assistant studies, recently became president of the Texas Academy of Physician Assistants. **Dr. Clark**, who previously served as TAPA president in 1996-1997, will continue to serve as chair of the TAPA Legislative Affairs Committee.

Samuel “Tim” Coleridge, DO, professor of family medicine, moderated a Texas Academy of Family Physicians roundtable discussion about issues that affect the physician/physician assistant team in Texas in July. Issues discussed at the roundtable included site-based practice law; misperceptions in the physician community about the physician/PA team, especially in disciplines such as OB/GYN, psychiatry and pediatrics; communications among professional organizations; business relationships between the physician and PA; and information about groups of non-PA providers who may be using the PA title inappropriately.

Fred Downey, PhD, regents professor of integrative physiology, is senior author of a review, “Mechanisms of oxygen

demand/supply balance in the right ventricle,” published in the September issue of *Experimental Biology and Medicine*. **Pu Zong, MD, PhD**, former postdoctoral research associate in integrative physiology, and **Johnathan Tune, PhD**, assistant professor of physiology at the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center and former assistant professor of integrative physiology at the health science center, are co-authors. **Dr. Downey** also presented “Oxygen balance in right ventricular myocardium” at the CIS Congress of Physiology Sept. 19-23 in Sochi, Russia. In addition, **Dr. Downey** presented a research report at the Fourth International Conference on Reactive Oxygen Species, Nitric Oxide, Antioxidants and Human Health held Sept. 26-30 in Smolensk, Russia.

Peter Hilsenrath, PhD, professor of health management and policy, hosted the second annual Tuberculosis Economics Workshop Oct. 12-13 at the health science center. **Dr. Hilsenrath, Thaddeus Miller, MPH**, doctoral student in health management and policy; **Kristine Lykens, PhD**, assistant professor of health management and policy; and **Stephen Weis, DO**, professor of internal medicine, spoke at the workshop. Other speakers included economists from universities in Washington, Georgia and Texas and representatives from state and county health departments in Florida, California and Texas and from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Mary Luna Hollen, PhD, RD, LD, research assistant professor of social and behavioral sciences, and **Leticia Davila** and **Elizabeth Castillo**, both public health master’s students, presented “Achieving Social Justice through Spiritual Empowerment in the Hispanic Community” at the Third Annual Latina Student Leadership Conference, part of Texas Woman’s University’s Cultural Connections Conference Series, Oct. 7 at TWU in Denton. They also presented a poster, “Enhancing Outreach and Service Delivery Through the *Promotores de Salud*,” at the Fourth Annual Latino Health Conference: Social Justice and Latino Health, held Oct. 28-29 at New York University.

Yu-Sheng Lin, ScD, assistant professor of environmental and occupational health, is first author of the paper “Air samples versus biomarkers for epidemiology,” published in the November issue of *Occupational Environmental Medicine*. Lawrence Kupper, PhD, professor of biostatistics, and Stephen Rappa-

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Faculty Advances

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port, PhD, professor of occupational health, both of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, N.C., are co-authors.

Sue Lurie, PhD, assistant professor of social and behavioral sciences, served on a proposal review panel for the Education Network to Advance Cancer Clinical Trials, sponsored by the Lance Armstrong Foundation, Nov. 3-4 in Silver Spring, Md.

Thaddeus Miller, MPH, doctoral student in health management and policy, is first author of the paper “Using cost and health impacts to prioritize the targeted testing of tuberculosis in the United States,” published online (<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/10472797>) by Elsevier Science Direct in October and currently in press with Elsevier’s *Annals of Epidemiology*. **Peter Hilsenrath, PhD**, professor of health management and policy; **Kristine Lykens, PhD**, assistant professor of health management and policy; and **Stephen Weis, DO**, professor of internal medicine, are co-authors. **Patrick Moonan, DrPH**, SPH 2005, and Scott McNabb, PhD, both with the

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, are also co-authors. **Miller, Dr. Hilsenrath** and **Dr. Lykens** were also part of a panel presentation at the American Evaluators Association’s annual meeting Oct. 29 in Toronto, Canada. The panel was hosted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. **Miller** presented “Evaluation as a tool to drive county-level health policy decisions: Making rational decisions for resource allocation.” **Dr. Lykens** presented “From Logic Model to Program Change: Piloting a Tuberculosis Evaluation Toolkit.” **Dr. Hilsenrath** presented “Cost as a Yardstick to Aid County Level Health Program Design.” In addition, **Miller** and **Jessica Reading**, master’s student in epidemiology, presented “What is the magnitude and cost burden of suspected tuberculosis?” at the American College of Chest Physician’s CHEST 2005 meeting Oct. 31 in Montreal, Canada. **Dr. Hilsenrath** and **Dr. Weis** are co-authors.

Albert Olivencia-Yurvati, DO, professor of surgery, has been elected chair of the cardiothoracic and vascular discipline of the American College of Osteopathic Surgeons. ★