

Health Matters

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January 2019

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Message from the Dean



The new year has just begun, but The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine has many exciting projects in the works that will advance its mission to educating the next generation of physicians and biomedical sciences, expanding access to healthcare in the Valley and conducting research into diseases that affect the area and beyond.

I am pleased to announce that our UT Health RGV Biomedical Research site in McAllen is near completion. This will be the hub for our biomedical research and the home of our new Institute for Cancer Immunology, which will include research into cancers related to women, especially cervical cancer, which has a mortality rate in the Rio Grande Valley that is 30 percent higher than the rest of the state of Texas. UT Health RGV Biomedical Research will allow us to expand our current research endeavors and, in the future, launch our clinical research program.

Our patient care services continue to grow. This month, we are celebrating the opening of our UT Health RGV Surgery and Women's Specialty, which will offer surgery services as well as women's health subspecialties in gynecologic oncology and urogynecology. With this practice, patients will be able to receive the care they need close to home. Our care team at UT Health RGV Surgical Specialty has also begun seeing patients, and more practices are slated to open this year.

We continue to expand educational opportunities for our students. This summer, we will welcome our fourth class to the School of Medicine, which will complete our enrollment. Our charter class will begin its final year of medical school and we will have our second class begin their clerkships.

As we revel in the progress we have made and prepare for more growth, we remain committed to improving and expanding patient care delivery, the learning environment and research in keeping with our promise to the Rio Grande Valley to work toward making the region a healthier place.

I look forward to sharing with you all more updates on our progress this year.

Kind Regards,

John H. Krouse, MD, PhD, MBA
Dean, UTRGV School of Medicine
Executive Vice President, Health Affairs

[About the Dean](#)

News and Events

[UTRGV, Harlingen CISD to form high school to medical school pipeline for health professions](#)

UTRGV and Harlingen CISD on Tuesday, Dec. 11, signed a letter of intent to create a pipeline to help students in the Harlingen High School of Health Professions prepare for entering the university's **Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Sciences** (BMED) program and the **UTRGV School of Medicine**.



UT Health RGV Biomedical Research near completion, anticipated February move in



Biomedical researchers with UT Health RGV will have a new place to call home soon. UT Health RGV Biomedical Research, which will house researchers from the Departments of Neuroscience, Human Genetics, Immunology and Microbiology, and Molecular Science, is expected to be ready next month for faculty and staff to move in.

The 83,032 square-foot facility includes:

- 16 research labs
- Two core facilities—a vivarium and a microscopy and imaging center
- Laundry facilities
- Two classrooms
- Administrative office suite
- 37 faculty and staff offices
- 14 research technician rooms
- Three collaborative/incubator space meeting rooms
- Large conference room
- Break rooms
- Grab-and-Go food kiosk

The new facility is a welcome addition, because the School of Medicine is in the midst of expanding its basic science and translational research programs and is about to start its clinical research program, said Dr. Andrew Tsin, associate dean for research.

“In order for us to continue to develop our research program at the School of Medicine we need additional laboratory space,” Tsin said. “The day the building opens, it will be all occupied.”

The new facility will house faculty, staff, post-doctoral fellows, and students working in 16 different research modules, including the new cancer immunology institute.

“There’s a lot of things we couldn’t have done because of the limitation of space and facility and we hope this will be the beginning of our large expansion of research in the School of Medicine,” Tsin said.

Future plans for the building include adding examination rooms and patient sample rooms for the School of Medicine’s clinical research endeavors, Tsin said.

Tsin said the future expansion will allow researchers to take their findings in laboratories into the clinical setting to see if some of the new discoveries are safe and will be applicable and effective in developing interventions.

“We are all very excited about being able to expand our research enterprise and facility and, particularly, the first that is close to a major hospital, so clinicians can now collaborate with research scientists,” Tsin said. “Our residents and medical students can go between the hospital and research labs.”

New UT Health RGV locations open in Harlingen



UT Health Rio Grande Valley, the clinical component of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine, has opened two surgery practices in Harlingen as part of the School of Medicine's mission to increase access to primary and specialty care for residents throughout the region.

"We are pleased to continue offering surgical services, as well as provide specialty women's health services, to the Harlingen community and expand access to excellent health care for residents throughout the Rio Grande Valley," said Dr. John H. Krouse, dean of the UTRGV School of Medicine and executive vice president for Health Affairs for UTRGV. "Our clinical faculty are highly skilled and talented physicians who are leaders in their respective fields. With these practices, Valley residents no longer will have to travel far distances to receive the health care they need."

UT Health RGV Surgery and Women's Specialty, located at 614 Maco Drive, offers services such as surgical consultations and follow-up appointments to patients, as well as women's health subspecialty services such as gynecologic oncology and urogynecology.

The 5,788 square-foot facility includes:

- 10 exam rooms
- One Procedure room
- Office support spaces

UT Health RGV Surgical Specialty, located at 615 Camelot Drive, will offer services in ENT and otolaryngology, plastic surgery and head and neck surgery. Dermatology services are planned for this location in the future.

The 3,898 square-foot facility includes:

- Six exam rooms
- Two procedure rooms
- Office support spaces

For inquiries and referrals, call UT Health Rio Grande Valley Surgery and Women's Specialty at (956) 440-9110 or call 1-833-887-4863(UTRGVMD).

For inquiries and referrals, call UT Health Rio Grande Valley Surgical Specialty at (956) 296-2701 or call 1-833-887-4863(UTRGVMD).

Summer research opportunities available for medical students and residents

The Office of the Associate Dean of Research has added tabs on its website for [medical students](#) and [residents](#) to seek out 2019 extramural research opportunities and funding.

Students and residents are encouraged to read each opportunity carefully, as

they have different eligibility requirements and deadlines. For any questions regarding [Research Training Opportunities](#) and finding a mentor, contact the Office of the Associate Dean of Research at (956)296-1926 or visit the office's [webpage](#).

Inaugural Evening of Honors Gala

SOM students to host fundraising gala Feb. 23

Medical students at the UTRGV School of Medicine will host its Inaugural Evening of Honors Gala at 6 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 23, at Rancho Guadalupe. The event will honor individuals who have paved the way for the creation and continued success of the medical school. All proceeds from the gala will support programs for the medical students. Click [here](#) for more information or to purchase tickets.



In the Spotlight

D'Andrea Ceasar, Class of 2021

D'Andrea Ceasar is a second-year medical student from Houston, Texas. Ceasar currently serves as vice president of the Women's Health Interest Group and the Emergency Medicine Interest Group, as well as the SNMA liaison for Minority Advancement in Medicine, head girl for the Academic Houses of Success and is a peer tutor. She completed her undergraduate studies at Baylor University and her main research interests are maternal mortality rates and pre-mature birth rates among African American women.



Great things are happening at the UTRGV School of Medicine. Learn more about the SOM Strategic Plan.

[UTRGV SOM Strategic Plan](#)

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Your gift to the School of Medicine supports our mission to educate a diverse group of medical students and future scientists to benefit the Rio Grande Valley and the world.

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