HOLIDAY GREETINGS!

Take a look at what happened this semester, as well as what is in store for the new year 2016!

SIC Community Outreach: Toy and turkey drives!

By: Jocelyn N. Triplett, SPH

Each year the SIC participates in an Annual Turkey Drive benefiting Star of Hope, a Houston-based mission dedicated to meeting the needs of homeless men, women, and children through employment, life management, and educational programming. This year the SIC purchased 24 turkeys that were delivered to Star of Hope on November 25th, to aid in their Thanksgiving Day efforts (picture on the left).

The SIC is also helping the UT Police with their annual Toy Drive! Spread the holiday cheer by dropping off a new toy, including but not limited to, coloring books, board games, crib toys, and baby item at your school’s donation location. Donations boxes are located at each of the UTHealth schools, accepting toys through December 15, 2015. Let’s all come together to help the children at LBJ General Hospital have a Merry Christmas!

SIC aims to reach out more to UTHealth students!

By: Margaret Wang, SIC co-Historian, MS

Do you know what the Student InterCouncil (SIC) can do for you? The SIC, comprised of student representatives from each UTHealth school, is the official student governance of the university. Established in 1979, we are only seven years younger than the founding of UTHealth itself! We meet every month with university administrators to discuss matters that are important to all UTHealth students. Not only are SIC members the student representatives on school and state-wide committees, but we are also your greatest advocates for the rules that directly impact students at UTHealth.

If you want to hear what your advocates have been up to, check out our Facebook page, browse our website, or just chat with one of your school’s SIC members. Come out to our school-wide events and mingle with students from all schools! And apply for our scholarships that are coming out in the spring semester.

Lastly, we want to hear what you have to say about our university. Email us at sicgov@uth.tmc.edu or find one of us around campus. Let’s all work together to make UTHealth even better!

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Student InterCouncil

Visit our official website:
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We are your voice at UTHealth!
The 3rd Annual Halloween Boo Bash 2015

By: Morgan Jones, SON

Boo Bash was an exciting and successful event to help students of multiple UTHealth schools socialize and celebrate Halloween! The School of Public Health (SPH), School of Nursing (SON), Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS), School of Biomedical Informatics (SBMI), and the Student InterCouncil (SIC) hosted the event this year. Due to weather conditions, the event was hosted inside SON. Students, friends, and family from the various schools gathered in their costumes to meet new people and socialize. Appetizers and beverages were provided, as well as games and entertainment. Some of the food choices included wings from Buffalo Wild Wings, fruit trays, and fancy donuts. Music was played during Boo Bash and included lots of hits from the 2000’s.

The highlight of Boo Bash was the costume contest that included a Grand Prize! There were two categories for the costume contest – Individual and Group. The students came in with great costumes. Some of the costumes included cats, Lilo & Stitch, Harry Potter, witches, vampires, characters from Emperor’s New Groove, Captain Hook and the Joker. The Grand Prize group costume winner was from GSBS, dressed as Poseidon and his sea creatures (picture below). Students said that they really enjoyed getting to meet people from the other UTHealth schools. Boo Bash had a great turnout and everyone had a great time!

It’s a small World after all! The 7th Annual School of Public Health Diversity Fair

By: Shannon Neufeld

The UTHealth School of Public Health Student Association held its seventh annual Diversity Fair on Nov. 13 at UTHealth’s Cooley Center. The fair is a way to celebrate the school’s diversity and increase cultural awareness within the community through cultural performances, exhibits and cuisine.

“I am always impressed with the quality of the experience our students deliver with each Diversity Fair,” says Mary Ann Smith, Ph.D., associate dean for student affairs and assistant professor of environmental and occupational health. “This venue provides our students the opportunity to share and educate others about their cultural heritage. When you share a meal, a dance, a song or a previously unknown fact about someone’s homeland, you learn that we are more alike than we are different. This is something we need to remember in these difficult global times.”

Thirteen booths represented six countries (China, Ethiopia, Iraq, India, Nigeria and Taiwan), one state (North Carolina), one city (Chicago), four organizations (Student Society for Global Health, outREACH [Research, Education, Advocacy and Community Health – a student organization in support of the LGBTQ community], Student Inter-Council, and the Society for Health Equity. In addition to celebrating culture, the cuisines of at least 22 countries were prepared by students, faculty and staff. There were 16 performances representing the global talent of the school’s student body, faculty and staff.

Anne Baronitis, executive director of student affairs at the School of Public Health, explains why she loves Diversity Fair. “One of my favorite things about Diversity Fair is the pride I see on the faces of students sharing their culture through food, exhibits and performances,” says Baronitis. “It’s a wonderful event lead by the SPH Student Association in collaboration with many other student organizations and the efforts of many student leaders.”

Diversity Fair was first envisioned in 2009 by former School of Public Health Student Association president, and now alumna, Preeti Zanwar, with the goal of highlighting and celebrating the diverse cultural backgrounds and interests of UTHealth.
What you need to know about ‘Campus Carry’

By: John Franzen, MS

In June of this year, Governor Greg Abbott signed Senate Bill 11 into law here in Texas. This bill allows only those who have concealed handgun licenses (CHL) to carry concealed handguns on school campuses effective on August 1st of 2016. To clarify a caveat here in the medical center, this means that all persons holding a CHL would have the right to conceal a handgun for their own protection, including but not limited to: students, faculty, staff, guests, and patients.

Over the course of the past two months, Dr. George Stancel, along with the UTHealth working group, have been holding town hall meetings around UTHealth to gather input from students, faculty, staff and other constituents of the system for consideration in the implementation of exclusion zones. These exclusion zones would be designated areas, specific to each campus; the concealed carry of handguns would not be permitted. Though they must meet specific criteria designated by the bill, which could include areas such as pediatric care facilities or storage for hazardous materials.

Right now the presidents of each of the UTHealth campuses are constructing campus specific rules to be submitted to system leadership by December 4th for feedback, and then submit finalized rules by December 18th. The UT System Board of Regents will then review these finalized rules in February and either accept or veto them by August 1st.

Below I have listed some key points from the town hall meetings that were brought up for discussion or clarification:

- If a building is rented by a campus, the owner of the building has the right to restrict conceal carry.
- Concealed weapons must be on or about your person! They cannot be stored in lockers or left in desks.
- Student housing is considered part of the campus. However, there is a clause in the bill allowing presidents the right to set rules allowing storage of handguns in on-campus housing, though you would still be required to have a CHL.
- When exclusion zones are set, they will be posted with large signs in those designated areas.

Find the full text of the bill at: http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/84R/billtext/html/SB00011F.htm.
Spotlight Interview: Dr. Barbara J. Stoll, 9th Dean for the McGovern Medical School

By: Margaret Wang, SIC co-Historian, MS

The Medical School ended its long national search for dean this October with the appointment of Barbara J. Stoll, M.D. Dr. Stoll is world-renowned for her research in neonatal infectious diseases, but she also loves staying up late and writing her weekly email column (#studybreak). She recently sat down with us to chat about her career, vision for UTHealth, and why you should never be afraid to challenge yourself.

Margaret (M): Dr. Stoll, thank you so much for meeting with me today! Yale, Columbia, Emory, over 200 papers, not to mention appointments on various national and international boards. Your career has been quite impressive! Was there an “ah-ha” moment in your career when you decided academia and education was for you?

Dean Stoll (S): I’ve had a winding road throughout my career with wonderful opportunities, moments of serendipity, and changes in direction. Throughout this exciting journey, I’ve never been afraid of changing paths or taking on new challenges and opportunities.

M: As the new dean, I am sure you have a lot of initiatives for UT Medical School at Houston that you are passionate about! Can you pick one to tell the students about?

S: An important part of the medical student experience is developing close relationships with faculty mentors. We have a responsibility to nurture our students as we prepare them to become outstanding physicians and scientists. Working together with our Education Deans, I hope to put plans and resources into place to enhance small group teaching to provide additional educational and emotional support for our medical students.

M: And we look forward to seeing those changes! What advice can you tell the students on how to obtain a successful career?

S: Get the best training you can to prepare yourself for a changing world of healthcare and an exciting future in science and medicine. Find role models and formal mentors, develop close relationships, and keep in touch with them throughout your career. Be proactive about asking for guidance, set a high bar for yourself, and don’t be afraid to fail or reinvent yourself or change your career path.

M: What do you see as the opportunities and challenges for the Medical School and UTHealth in the next 10 years?

S: Houston is a generous, friendly city. As the fourth, soon to be third, largest city in the nation, we have a wonderful opportunity and responsibility to be a resource for and make an impact on our community. We need to understand and find our place in the ever changing world of healthcare. At the same time, we need to be always mindful that as a medical school and as a healthcare institution, we must pay attention to all missions: clinical care, teaching, research, and advocacy. We have an obligation to mentor and develop young physicians and scientists and to improve the quality of patient care, the value of the care we provide, and the patient and family experience.

M: Alright, now let’s shift gears for a bit! You have spent the majority of your career and life in Atlanta. Have you been able to enjoy Houston with your busy schedule?

S: I am a New Yorker who came to love Atlanta. Coming to Houston is a new adventure. I’ve had a great introduction to this city—with a uniformly warm Texas welcome. Houston is bigger than Atlanta and is a wonderful city for culture (symphony, ballet, opera, museums) and food. We’ve already gone to the opera and symphony, visited museums, and have had too many great meals!

M: That sounds like a lot of fun! You mentioned ‘we’- can you tell us more about your family?

S: I met my husband, Roger Glass, when I was 19, so we’ve grown up together and have had many shared experiences. Roger, an MD PhD, is Director of the Fogarty International Center at NIH and Associate Director of NIH for global health. We have 3 children—Nina, a physician—a fellow in trauma critical care surgery; Michael, a computer engineer who works at an educational startup teaching kids grammar and writing; and Andy, an aspiring film producer who recently decided that a career in medicine might be in his future. They are each different and wonderful people. With my move to Houston, we are a family of 5 living in 4 time zones (Houston, Atlanta, Washington DC, Denver, and Berlin)!  

M: Wow that is quite the family! As we are running out of time, I just have to ask: have you worn the cowboy boots President Colasurdo gave you in your first week here yet?

S: Not yet – I’m saving them for the rodeo!

Dr. Stoll welcomes your questions and feedback at dean.stoll@uth.tmc.edu.
What is the Student InterCouncil?

The Student InterCouncil (SIC) is the official UTHealth student governance organization and is the recognized forum of student opinion and the primary vehicle for student participation in the governance of UTHealth. The organization is comprised of three representatives from each of the six UTHealth schools and three from underrepresented student groups and three international student constituencies.

The SIC contributes to the quality of student life at UTHealth by participating in the development and implementation of policies and procedures affecting students; providing funds to support special projects of other UTHealth registered student organizations; representing student interests on external and internal committees; improving communication among the schools through the publication of an SIC newsletter, Student Pulse; and planning and implementing activities that encompass all students across UTHealth.

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Felices fiestas! I am Angie Torres Adorno, the Student InterCouncil (SIC) Historian. As historian, I am the Editor-in-Chief of the SIC student newsletter, the Student Pulse. The Student Pulse is released every semester to increase students awareness of events and available resources, as well as to increase communication among students of all six UTHealth schools. Do you wonder how could you be part of enhancing communication with other schools and students? Simply by sending us news from your school, and student organization! Send us announcements about upcoming events, scholarship awards, fundraising opportunities, volunteering events, etc. With your help, we can achieve a more unified UTHealth student community, supporting one another towards our common academic goals.

Please send your announcements and articles to sicgov@uth.tmc.edu, using the subject line: “Student Pulse Article”.

Sincerely,

Angie Torres Adorno
Student Pulse Editor-in-Chief
2015-2016 SIC Co-Historian
Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences