

TEXAS LEGISLATURE BACKS STARS WITH \$750,000/YEAR APPROPRIATION

DALLAS—June 29, 1993—In a far-reaching move, the Texas Legislature has awarded \$750,000 a year to expand a program that uses the resources of higher education to enhance secondary education in North Texas.

The new state funding will help support Science Teacher Access to Resources at Southwestern (STARS), a partnership between science teachers and working scientists at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas.

"Improving science education for our children is vital to produce not only scientific innovations and a skilled work force but also the informed citizens upon whom democratic government depends," said Rep. David Cain of Dallas. "The STARS project is an excellent example of the invaluable contributions UT Southwestern provides our city and state. We need both to fully support and to appreciate this project and the benefits for teachers and students in our community."

Dr. Kern Wildenthal, UT Southwestern president, said, "The effects of the STARS program will be far-reaching, as the children of today become the researchers, health professionals and scientifically literate citizens of tomorrow. The Texas Legislature has shown great foresight in supporting this project, and we especially appreciate the efforts of the North Texas delegation on behalf of the children of our region."

STARS' goal is to bring better science education to young people throughout North Texas by informing and motivating their teachers.

The state appropriation will fund:

- Hands-on science demonstration kits for use in classrooms.
- Teacher training at secondary schools.
- The Science Ambassadors project, in which UT Southwestern faculty members visit classrooms to discuss scientific and career topics and distribute teaching materials.

(More)

STARS program—2

- STARS newsletters to inform teachers about current events in science and research.
- Opportunities for science teachers to work in UT Southwestern research labs during summer vacation, with stipends to allow teachers who must supplement their salaries with summer income to participate.
- A STARS Center at UT Southwestern to coordinate the program, with an academic program coordinator with teaching and curriculum-development experience to coordinate activities with the schools, develop new projects, conduct classes about using STARS resources and evaluate the program.

The STARS program began in 1991 as an experimental partnership between UT Southwestern and a limited number of Dallas-Ft. Worth area secondary schools. It is a knowledge and motivational resource for secondary school biological science teachers and students.

UT Southwestern faculty members, students and staff members volunteered their time to coordinate basic science symposiums for teachers, mentor students for science fair projects, conduct tours of the UT Southwestern campus and visit classes at schools. Until now, operating costs of the program have been funded out of faculty members' donations.

"The long-term goal of the STARS program is teachers and students who are excited and knowledgeable about the process and discoveries of science," said Dr. Curtis Chubb, an associate professor of cell biology and neuroscience who coordinates the program. "We hope the students will continue their interest in science as informed members of our society and, possibly, in science and health-related careers."

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NOTE: The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas comprises Southwestern Medical School, Southwestern Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, Southwestern Allied Health Sciences School, affiliated teaching hospitals and outpatient clinics.