

University opens second bioterrorism lab

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University opens second bioterrorism lab. The \$10.6 million Margaret Batts Tobin Laboratory Building on the San Antonio campus of the University of Texas (UTSA) opened in November 2005. The 22,000-square-foot facility will accommodate UTSA faculty and graduate students researching emerging infectious diseases. The new building houses six biology research labs. The facility also includes UTSA's second BSL-3 lab, certified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; researchers must have government security clearances. Several top researchers will work in the new lab:

* Garry Cole, internationally known microbiologist specializing in fungal diseases, author of more than 170 publications, will focus on coccidioimycosis (Desert Valley fever), which is endemic to West Texas;

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* Judy Teale, an immunologist investigating neurocystercosis, a parasitic disease of the brain found in Latin America, is also studying the immune response to Francisella tularensis, considered to be a potential bioterrorism weapon;

* Jose Lopez-Ribot PharmD, PhD, is focusing on Candida albicans, the leading cause of fungal disease in the world; and

* Floyd Wormley, assistant professor of microbiology, is working to develop novel immune therapies and/or vaccines to treat or prevent invasive fungal diseases.

[ILLUSTRATION OMITTED]

All four are part of the 15 faculty comprising UTSA's new South Texas Center for Emerging Infectious

Diseases and, with other researchers, will be targeting additional critical areas of human health, including anthrax, tularemia, cholera, Lyme disease, and other parasitic and fungal diseases.

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