



MEMORANDUM

TO: All Faculty and Staff
FROM: Steve Kinslow, Executive Vice President
DATE: January 9, 2002
RE: **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON RIO GRANDE LAB TESTING**

As I have done over the past month, I would like to share some additional information with you about the Rio Grande chemistry labs.

Last week, a staff member brought to our attention the existence of an air space between the concrete floor beneath the chemistry lab at Rio Grande and the plaster ceiling above the drama department's scene shop (room 221). We were asked to test this area for mercury vapor.

In early December, to address potential wastewater leaks from an abandoned drain pipe, and to "fire stop" (caulk) around A/C and electrical conduit, ACC maintenance staff had sealed holes in the plaster ceiling in room 221. Despite the fact that the Texas Department of Health has twice told ACC staff that unsealing these holes was not necessary, given the discovery of this air space, we wanted to confirm if mercury vapor was or was not present above the ceiling.

Therefore, on January 4, 2002, Bolton Laboratories, an independent environmental consultant, conducted mercury vapor tests of this air space in room 221 and elsewhere. In all, seven rooms were tested. More than 40 separate measurements were taken. All were negative (.000) for mercury vapor. The air space between the plaster ceiling and concrete flooring above was tested in six of the seven rooms (including 221 and 209, both rooms being beneath science labs). This was achieved by either sticking the test probe through existing "penetrations" in the plaster ceiling (A/C conduit; electrical conduit) or, as in the case of room 221, by poking a hole through fire stopping materials to get to the air space.

At this point, five separate mercury vapor tests have been conducted since December 8, 2001, with approximately 300 separate measurements taken, and all indicate the absence of any mercury vapor. At the same time that this latest test again confirms no mercury present, the Texas Department of Health recommends testing whenever renovations occur. Now that planned FY02 ventilation system upgrades in the two Rio Grande chemistry labs have been completed, we plan to retest one more time. In addition, an ongoing program of Industrial Hygiene Sampling will commence this spring.