



## MEMORANDUM

---

TO: All Faculty and Staff  
FROM: Steve Kinslow, Executive Vice President   
RE: **RESULTS FROM THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH'S TESTING  
AT THE RIO GRANDE CAMPUS**  
Date: January 4, 2002

As we've done over the past several weeks, I want to continue to share information with you about the Rio Grande chemistry labs as it becomes available.

On December 19, we received the written report of the Texas Department of Health's findings from their mercury vapor testing of December 13. The report indicates, "To the extent that the zero readings accurately reflect the conditions in the tested rooms, there is no indication of a public health problem from mercury contamination in the surveyed rooms at this time."

The TDH report parallels the testing results of Bolton Laboratories, an independent, state-registered environmental firm that ACC previously contracted to do both surface and air testing of heavy metals at Rio Grande. Both the Department of Health and Bolton Laboratories used the same testing methodology and the same equipment.

In all, four tests for mercury vapor have been conducted, one by TDH (December 13) and three by Bolton Laboratories (December 8, 13, and 14), as well as surface testing for mercury and lead by Bolton Laboratories in August 2001. The surface testing was negative for hazardous levels. In addition, more than 250 separate measurements were taken for mercury vapor, 92 of them by TDH. Of these 92, only three were found to be positive for mercury vapor. Subsequent re-measurements on that same day indicated no mercury present. Bolton Laboratories retested in all areas where previous positive readings were received; all 42 re-measurements were negative for mercury vapor. As noted in the TDH report, this is a strong indication that the first measures were false positives. At the same time, TDH recommends testing whenever renovations occur. Therefore, we will retest once the ventilation system upgrades in the two Rio Grande chemistry labs that are part of our FY02 budget have been completed.

Regarding concerns related to the plugging of holes in an office at Rio Grande prior to the testing, TDH officials told us before and after their testing that they did not feel it was necessary to unplug the holes, nor did they feel it ultimately affected their test results. While TDH has said it will not do additional testing, the College will conduct additional testing of air space between the plaster ceiling and the third floor structure in room 221 and adjacent rooms.

Based on the results of all the testing done to date, we feel reassured that Rio Grande is a safe place for our students, faculty, and staff. Additional background information on this issue is attached. The TDH and Bolton final reports, as well as other related documents, are available for your review at [http://www2.austin.cc.tx.us/faoadmin/risk\\_mgmt\\_ins/safety\\_health.html](http://www2.austin.cc.tx.us/faoadmin/risk_mgmt_ins/safety_health.html)