UMC workload not traumatic

By April Lacy
Arizona Daily Wildcat

The staff at the University Medical Center stepped up to the challenge of becoming the only trauma center in Tucson last year, and officials say employees are more skilled because of it.

Since the closure of Tucson Medical Center's trauma center on July 1, 2003, the UMC trauma center has had a 45 percent increase in the number of trauma patients, said Daniel Jenkins, trauma center coordinator.

Jenkins said since UMC became the only trauma center in Tucson, its staff has become more skilled because they have been forced to handle more cases.

"The more they do it, the better they get," Jenkins said.

To adjust to the higher number of patients, UMC has increased the number of emergency department staff, including nurses and registration clerks, said Kerin Craven, the director of emergency and trauma services.

In the past year, UMC has added about 10 full-time equivalency hours to its nursing staff. Craven said that more UMC has hired enough nurses to cover 400 extra hours per week.

UMC has also added more critical care beds to its center, Jenkins said.

When the decision was made to close TMCC's trauma center, it caused controversy because some doctors at the hospital felt that the trauma patients previously allocated to two centers.

TMCC announced in December 2002 it would close its trauma center unless it could absorb at least $2.3 million from the state.

See UMC3

Final exam passing time could be reduced

By Natasha Bhuyan
Arizona Daily Wildcat

The Undergraduate Council has recommended reducing the passing time between finals from one hour to half an hour, a change that could take effect as early as spring.

Jennifer Jenkins, chairwoman for UGC and associate professor in the Humanities Program, said before the official exam schedule decision is made, it must go through other campus groups, including the Office of the Provost and college deans. The Faculty Senate will make the final decision, which could take up to six weeks, Jenkins said.

Jenkins would not talk about how or why the recommendation was reached at last night's UGC meeting, saying discussions would be "premature."

But Gall Bard, associate dean for the College of Science and UGC member, said UGC members made the recommendation after debating each of three proposed changes to the final exam schedule and consulting students and faculty for their input.

"Most students polled wanted to reduce the passing time," Bard said.

However, many students said they were not even asked about the changes.

Dustin McDonald, a political science senior, said he did not know the changes were taking place.

McDonald added he did not understand why there is a need to change the final exam schedule, which he described as "in place for years."

UGC, composed of 25 representatives from campus constituencies like colleges, the student body and athletic advisors, was asked earlier this month to consider three proposed changes to the final exams schedule because the current schedule conflicts with some college

UA bids farewell to spokeswoman

By Natasha Bhuyan
Arizona Daily Wildcat

After 21 years as the voice of the UA, spokeswoman Sharon Kha will leave her post at the university next week to focus on her health.

Kha, who was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease last November, said her last day at UA will be Oct. 8 when she will go on disability leave until her retirement next year.

Although Kha did not want to leave the UA, she said she was advised to exercise and care for her health in order to prevent her condition from worsening.

Determined to battle the disease, Kha said she is "still kicking" and has hope for a cure.

Prior to landing her position at the UA, Kha was a reporter, assignment editor and associate news director for KGUN-TV with a work schedule that forced her to miss 30 Christmases with her son.

When Kha came to the UA in 1983, she said she was simply looking for a job that allowed her to spend holidays with her family.

Twenty-one years later, as vice president for strategic communications and director of news services, Kha's job is to oversee news service operations and general university communications.

Paul Alvin, UA Vice President and Provost Janet Napolitano's communications director, will replace Kha.

Alvin was chosen for the position because of his experience in communications at the national, state and local levels. Said Janet Bingham, vice president of University Advancement.

"We had excellent applicants, but Paul had all of the expertise that we dreamed of attracting," Bingham said.

"Sharon has been an extremely loyal UA employee and supporter," Bingham said. "She has given her all to represent the university."

The first from her family to graduate from high school, Kha said she never imagined she would end up working in such a high-caliber academic environment.

"It's the most exciting way to spend your life," Kha said.

Kha said she has had her share...