Sanders named VP for Information Technology

Sheila M. Sanders has been named vice president for information technology, effective immediately. Sanders has been interim vice president since 2002.

“In her more than 20 years at UAB, Sheila has worked to build a technology infrastructure that is unparalleled in the state,” said President Carol Garrison. “I am confident she will continue to keep UAB at the forefront by providing information technology services that allow the institution to achieve its goals.”

While serving as interim vice president, Sanders oversaw the development and implementation of a comprehensive overhaul of UAB’s financial and human resource systems and the upgrade of the communications infrastructure for the university. Under her leadership, central IT services have been expanded to include a centralized help desk, common e-mail and calendar systems, which support 18,000 mailboxes for faculty, staff and students, a central directory system and single secure sign-on authentication for most major systems via the BlazerID.

Sanders’ appointment is timed to coincide with the restructuring of the IT functions at UAB. Under the new organization, the chief information officer of the

Expansion of weight shortens life span 5-20 years

Obesity rates doubled in 25 years, causing chronic illness and death

Trends in obesity, which have worsened substantially in developed nations, threaten to reduce life expectancy by the end of this century, according to a special report in the March 17 issue of the New England Journal of Medicine.

“If trends continue, the life-shortening effect of obesity could easily be two-to-five years in coming decades,” said Professor David Allison (Biostatistics), co-investigator of the study and director of UAB’s Clinical Nutrition Research Center.

Assuming current trends associated with obesity continue, researchers estimate the life-shortening effect of obesity to be one-third to three-fourths of a year by century’s end. “Our estimate, a conservative one, is clearly consequential,” Allison said. “Already, it’s larger than the negative effect of accidental deaths on life expectancy, and it easily could rise. It’s a troublesome possibility that should not be ignored.”

Findings are contrary to a recent projection by the Social Security Administration that life expectancy at birth in the United States will steadily increase from 77 years now to about 85 years later this century. “This projection is based on historical trends and does not take into account current trends in health and mortality, such as the rising rate of obesity and obesity-related deaths in this country,” Allison said.

Today, two-thirds of adults in the United States are obese or overweight. “Obesity rates have increased 100 percent since 1980, leading to significantly increased risks of chronic illnesses, such as diabetes and heart disease, and shortened life span by five to 20 years,” Allison said. “Currently, it’s estimated that obesity accounts for approximately 365,000 deaths a year.”

Researchers hope the study will serve as a catalyst for change in the prevention and treatment of obesity in this country. “We’re not saying this will happen; we’re saying this could happen,” Allison said. “We hope society will prove us wrong.”

The study, funded in part by grants from the National Institute on Aging and the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, was led by S. Jay Olshansky, professor of epidemiology at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Where can you go without having to leave?

EDITORS NOTE: This is the third in a series of stories that detail some of the career services available for UAB employees. Next week we will examine services offered for persons with disabilities.

MARCH 14: RELOCATING SPOUSES AND PARTNERS
MARCH 7: FINDING JOBS FOR DISPLACED WORKERS

BY LORI HERRING
Reporter Staff

Six years ago, Office Services Specialist III Rosalind Taylor (Media Relations) wanted to upgrade her existing job. Her boss told her she was making plans to leave UAB, so Taylor, who didn’t want to leave, put in a transfer application. Two months later, she landed a job that not only challenged her more, but paid her more as well.

“UAB is such a large employer that you don’t need to leave and go to another company,” Taylor said. “Plus, they offer free classes if you want to upgrade your skills. It’s up to the employee to utilize them.”

Two years into her new position, Taylor found that the position wasn’t working out for her as well as she’d hoped. So she applied for another transfer – and another job upgrade – and got one after four months.

“At a small company, you’ve got to leave or you’re...