

# WELCOME PROGRAM

We are pleased to welcome practitioners and educators in the Houston area to the **Forum on Plain English** at the University of Houston-Downtown.

The forum aims to promote informed uses of Plain English guidelines, which are writing standards recommended by several government agencies for improved communications with the general public.

**Our one-day forum will address the following questions:**

What are the historical context and most current status of Plain English, including 2009 legislative actions? What are its directions for expansion? What are legal or ethical implications associated with the use of Plain English?

What are the core principles of Plain English and how are they applied in a variety of fields? In what ways do the guidelines simplify communication practices, benefiting the public in a variety of contexts? What are challenges in applying Plain English guidelines?

**Co-directors:** *Dr. Michelle Moosally and Dr. Natalia Matveeva, UHD*

TIME	TASKS	PARTICIPATING SCHOLARS
8:30-9:00am	<b>Registration and coffee</b>	
9:00-10:15am	<b>Presentation on history and current status of Plain English regulations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>History of the movement and government impetus</li> <li>Status of guidelines in professions such as law and medicine</li> <li>2009 updates on legislative action and new regulations</li> </ul> <b>Question-answer session</b>	Dr. Annetta Cheek
10:15-10:30am	<b>Break</b>	
10:30-12:30pm	<b>Presentation on principles of Plain English</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key elements of Plain English design and writing</li> <li>Application of core principles</li> </ul> <b>Activities in small groups</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis of sample documents</li> <li>Application of principles to samples from variety of fields</li> </ul>	Dr. Tom Murawski
12:30-1:15pm	<b>Lunch (on-site)</b>	
1:15-2:15pm	<b>Forum discussion on limitations/challenges/ethical implications of Plain English</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moderators (co-directors) will introduce key issues</li> </ul> <b>Question-answer session</b>	Dr. Michelle Moosally Dr. Natalia Matveeva
2:15-2:30pm	<b>Closing remarks and evaluations</b>	

# KEYNOTE

## SPEAKERS

# SPONSORS



**Annetta Cheek** is an anthropologist by training, earning a Ph.D. from the University of Arizona in 1974. She worked for the US Federal government from 1980 until early 2007. Most of her

Federal career focused on writing and implementing regulations. She became interested in the Plain Language movement in the early 90s. She spent four years as the chief plain language expert on Vice President Gore's National Partnership for Reinventing Government. She was the chair of the interagency plain language advocacy group, PLAIN, since it was founded in 1995 until she retired from the government. She also administered the group's website, [www.plainlanguage.gov](http://www.plainlanguage.gov). She served for five years as an Executive Assistant to the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration, focusing on

plain language projects and serving on the Web Council. She is the Chair of the board of the private sector Center for Plain Language, a federally tax-exempt cooperation.



**Tom Murawski** is a founder of the Murawski Group. "Close to revolutionary," says the *New York Times* of this national leader in writing improvement.

Dr. Murawski has been making audiences laugh and learn for 30 years, first as an English professor at the U.S. Air Force Academy and now as a consultant. Among his military assignments: a year at the Reagan White House to improve writing in Washington. As a consultant during the Clinton years, he wrote the federal guidelines for drafting clear regulations. When not teaching at Google, Starbucks, or other well-known clients, he translates manuals and more into plain language. He holds a Doctor of Arts degree in English from the University of the Pacific.



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### Contact Information:

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# FORUM

on

# PLAIN ENGLISH

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