

BIOCHEMISTRY & MOLECULAR BIOLOGY TODAY

FEBRUARY 2006 NO. 211



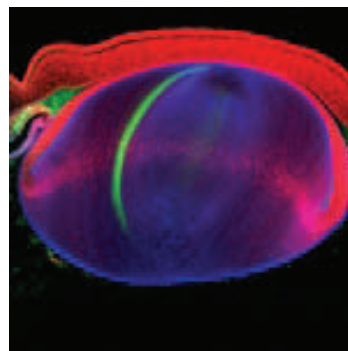
Chairman's Message

The beginning of the year coincides with several events that suggest a busy time ahead. First of all, we are pleased to announce that Ms. Marianne Miller will be joining us on February 22nd as Administrator for the Department and the Sealy Center for Molecular Science. While Ms. Miller comes to us from New York, she has roots in Austin and so is a Texan come home. Shortly after her arrival we will have an occasion for all to get to know her personally. She has a background in administration in a chemistry department, and we are very much looking forward to hav-

ing her on board. This is a good time to thank both Margie Wronski and Ernest Leal for having performed double duty since September during a time when increased bureaucratic demands were placed on both the Department and the Center. I know they are looking forward to what we hope will be a more normal pace -- or am I just engaging in wishful thinking?

As many of you know, the School of Medicine has asked that we design both faculty and staff compensation plans that are performance-based.

Also, based on the "You Count" responses, it appears that staff members do not feel quite sure as to what future expectations might be. We are grateful that several staff members volunteered to help



Administrator's Notes

I want to thank the faculty, staff and students for the excellent job they have done entering their effort reports for the 4th quarter of FY2005. The number of corrections that had to be made was

greatly reduced and the Administrative Office was able to turn them back to Compliance within one day. Keep up the good work!

Sponsored Programs is asking that we be proactive rather than reactive in the management of grants that are at the end of a competitive cycle. To assist in this

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Special points of interest:

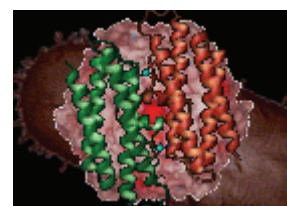
- Dr. Konkell's column can be found online at www.bmb.utmb.edu/department/rcc/

Chairman's Message (cont.)

us design such a compensation plan. Progress has been made, and we hope soon to have ready to present to the administration a finished product that is transparent, fair and useful to all. On this subject, we have received approval for a SOM faculty compensation plan. Again, at this stage I am working with Margie Wronski and Ernest Leal to try to make sure that the plan we have designed meets all of the UT requirements. Over the next couple of faculty meetings and newsletters I will let you know how it is going.

Another administrative note is that all PIs will be receiving monthly summaries provided by the SOM Research Office as to the state of their accounts. Please note that these are not up to date. That is, we have just now received and will be forwarding the account summaries for December. Please review these, reconcile them with your own accounts, and sign off on them, asserting that they are correct to the best of your knowledge. At the Departmental level, we are trying to supply more up to date information for your use.

The next month or so will be demanding on all of us as we both continue our faculty recruitment effort and participate in recruitment of next year's group of new graduate school students. Our faculty recruitment effort is going very well. Outstanding candidates have come, and more will come; as Jim Lee's recent update indicated, we are in the midst of arranging second visits for many of these. As many of you know, space on the sixth floor of BSB is to be renovated for some of the successful candidates; plans just this week passed the 95% inspection stage, and construction should start in March. I am assured that all work will be finished by the end of June. If we can sign on some new faculty in early March, they will be able to provide input into the final plans for this space. I am happy to report with not a small amount of pride that the main factor that makes most faculty candidates find our Department an attractive place for their future career development is the "ambiance of camaraderie and collegiality" they have encountered during their visits. I guess it's what we call "Texas friendliness." I cannot think of higher praise for all of you -- faculty, staff, students and postdocs alike. Thank you, and carry on!



As part of UTMB's joint effort in drug development with UT Austin, a number of outstanding UT faculty have been appointed as Adjunct Professors in BMB. You will find information on our new partners following this message.

[Adjunct Faculty from UT Austin](#)

At a recent meeting of the Dean's Advisory Council, there was a presentation of the more elaborated medical student teaching allotment of faculty salaries. I requested a copy of the PowerPoint presentation, which is also [appended to this message](#). I would like us to discuss this at our next faculty meeting.

A research retreat has been announced for late February. Not as encompassing as past retreats, this one will address selected topics to be considered by the Dean's Research Task Force in drafting a research strategic plan for the School of Medicine. I would also like to discuss this topic at this month's faculty meeting.

As David Konkel keeps telling us, October 1 looms ahead as the first occasion when we will all be submitting grants to NIH online. While the expectation is that the Research Office will be all geared up in time for the occasion, I have asked Margie Wronski and Ernest Leal to work with Dr. Konkel and several of our staff to make sure that should the SOM Research Office not be able to carry this out efficiently and effortlessly for the October 1 deadline, we have "a plan B" for our faculty. I have also asked them to consult with other administrators in other departments so we can do this in a rational fashion. I do realize that there is some angst, and admit to share a little of that feeling myself. We are doing our best to make sure the deadline does not catch us by surprise.

Chairman's Message (cont.)

To end on a more positive note, I am pleased to announce that plans for a totally revamped and awesome departmental WEB page are almost complete. Again thanks to all of the members of the Committee for a job well done. This means that we will now have such a glitzy web page that it might be useful to have really up-to-date and exciting content. Yes, content. To that end, you are encouraged to engage the members of your individual research groups to provide ideas, pictures, and of course, up-to-date bibliographies. The goal is to show off both our science and our people. Please contact Lisa Pippet if you want details. This is an important tool to attract faculty, postdocs and students.

Finally, I wish you all a

Administrator's Notes (cont.)

process a new status of "Pre-Closing" is being activated in PeopleSoft. This status will be reflected in the Grants Module on the Award Profile and Account Status Inquiry pages to identify those awards that have expired. This new status will **not** permit the addition of **new** requisitions. An error message will be received: "The status of pre-closing for project XXXX prevents additional transaction (9000,419.)" At the end of a competitive cycle please remember to

stop automatic charges and/or redirect costs from Service Centers to another account that allows for the charge. Close all PO and open commitments for potential costs that are not allowable or allocable under federal guidelines.

Just a reminder - Compliance Training. When these requirements are completed, please print a copy of the certificate and forward to the Administrative Office. It will help us during the

summer when Compliance tells us that classes are incomplete and we know that they are. This was a big problem last year, and one that we are trying to avoid by keeping paper copies.

February 20th is a holiday - Presidents' Day. If you want to work this holiday, please forward your supervisor's approval to Mary Boyle in the Administrative Office and the day can be taken at a later time.

Margie

**Happy
Valentines
Day**

WELCOME NEW EMPLOYEES

Miland Misra, Postdoctoral Fellow in Dr. Schein's lab.

Rajendra Sharma, Postdoctoral Fellow in Dr. Awasthi's lab.

Yuanrong Shi, Volunteer in Dr. Hilser's lab.

Gloria Cross, Senior Administrative Secretary for Drs. Bujalowski and Rajarathnam.

Karen Jones, Assistant Director for Research, with Sealy Center for Structure Biology, Dr. Hilser.

Amber Zwernemann, Senior Research Assistant with Dr. Carney's lab.

Faculty on the Road

Dr. D. Wayne Bolen

- January 31, 2006, Baltimore, MD to do research collaboration.

Dr. Werner Braun

- January 25, 2006, Friendswood, TX to judge the Friendswood High School Science Fair.

Dr. Darrell H. Carney

- October 03-04, 2005, Bethesda, MD to attend the Wound Healing Guidelines Consensus Conference at the National Institutes of Health.

- December 10-13, 2005, San Francisco, CA to attend the American Society for Cell Biology 45th Annual Meeting and to give two presentations entitled, "Effect of Thrombin Peptide TP508 on Chondrocyte Differentiation in Mouse Embryonic Limb Bud Cells and ex vivo Cultures of Mouse Embryo Metatarsals" and "Use of Complimentary Peptides to Characterize Potential new Binding Sites for Thrombin and the Thrombin Peptide, TP508".

Dr. David G. Gorenstein

- December 07, 2005, Houston, TX to attend the Keck Progress Review.

- December 12, 2005, Houston, TX to attend the monthly Keck meeting.

- December 13, 2005, Houston, TX to attend the BioHouston breakfast forum.

- January 05-06, 2006, Houston, TX to attend the Academy of Medicine Engineering and Science of Texas meeting.



Dr. Jason Hall

- January 30-31, 2006, Lawrence, KS to give the seminar "Characterization of Bacterial Transport Systems involved in Dicarboxylate and Urinary Solute Metabolism" to the Department of Molecular Biosciences at the University of Kansas.

Dr. James C. Lee

- December 12-16, 2005, San Francisco, CA to attend the 45th Annual meeting of the American Society of Cell Biology (ASCB).

Dr. Bruce A. Luxon

- December 08-10, 2005, San Francisco, CA to attend the Bio-Rad Life Science Tools Symposium.

- January 27, 2006, Houston, TX to visit with a grant collaborator at Rice University with the seminar speaker.

Dr. Olivera Nestic-Taylor

- December 13-18, 2005, Pacific Grove, CA to attend the Eleventh International Symposium on Neural Regeneration and present the poster entitled, "Dysfunctional Astrocytes and Sci-Induced Neuropathic Pain".

Dr. J. Regino Perez-Polo

- December 14-17, 2005 to attend the Eleventh International Symposium on Neural Regeneration and give the lecture entitled, "Increasing Inflammation is Beneficial for Neural Repair and Outcome".

- January 21-27, 2006, Steamboat Springs, CO to attend the Winter Conference on

Faculty on the Road (cont.)

Brain Research and present a talk entitled, "The Dark Side of Aging: Cholinergic Signaling and Cognition".

Dr. Jeffrey P. Rabek

- December 09, 2005, Austin, TX to conduct interviews for the UTMB/UT Austin combined Degree Program.

Dr. Joerg Roesgen

- January 16-19, 2006, Bethesda to collaborate at the National Institute of Health.

Dr. Catherine H. Schein

- December 09-11, 2005, Atlanta, GA to tour the enter for High-Throughput Screening in the Chemistry labs, to attend the Steven A. Benner Symposium and give the presentation, "Stereohysicochemical variability plots highlight frctionally and immunologically important reas of pathogenic virses ad bacterial toxins" at Emory University.

- January 25, 2006, Friendswood, TX to judge the Friendswood High School Science Fair.

Dr. Satish K. Srivastava

- November 10-12, 2005, Arlington, TX to collaborat with investigator at UT-Arlington.

- November 13 -17, 2005, Dallas, TX to attend the 2005 American Heart Association Scientific Session.

Dr. E. Brad Thompson

- January 10-15, 2006, Oxford, UK as an invited participant in the Texas/United Kingdon Collaborative Research Initiative-Oncology Workshop" The Molecular Signature of Cancer-From Bench to Clinic and Back Again" at St. Anne's College, Oxford University to present the "Gene Array Analysis of Clonal Leukemic cells' Response to Glucocorticoids".

Dr. Cheryl S. Watson

- December 18-19, 2005, Kansas City, KS to atted the ELAM (Executive leadership in Academic Medicine) regional leadership workshop.



February Birthdays

Jason Allison – 14th

Joann Broz – 15th

Dr. Ovidiu Ivanciuc – 25th

Dr. David Konkel – 20th

Ping Liu – 11th

Song Liu – 28th

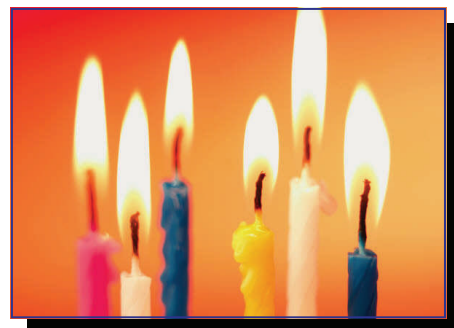
Dr. Munia Mukherjee – 28th

Dr. Olivera Nesic – 11th

Bi-Hung Peng – 7th

Dr. Abha Sharma – 13th

Dr. Rong-sen Shen – 9th



CONGRATULATIONS!!

To the following employees who have reached an anniversary milestone between March 01st, 2005 through August 31st, 2005:

25 Years of Service:

John Bergman
Edward Ezell

15 Years of Service:

Terry Campbell
Lucy Lee

5 Years of Service:

Craig Bush
Kerry Fuson
Diane Strain

The first quarter of the TEXAS Program - Terrific Employees eXcel in Attendance Stewardship for fiscal year 2005-2006 is complete. 2,351 classified employees are eligible for the Quarter I drawing. These employees have maintained a perfect attendance record from August 27th through November 18th, 2005. Employees from the Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology eligible for the Quarter I drawing to receive a \$1,000 award for setting an outstanding example on our campus include:

James Amaning
John Bergmann
Nataliya Bulayeva
Terry Campbell
Wilma Frye
Maria Jezewska
Olga Kolokoltsova
Aaron Miller
C.J. Orlea
Anoma Somasunderam
V. Thiviyanathan
David Volk

The TEXAS Program drawings will take place on Friday, February 24th.

To VINCENT J. HILSER, Ph.D., on his promotion from Associate Professor, with tenure, to Professor.

To CATHERINE SCHEIN, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, non-tenure track research, on her promotion to Associate Professor.

To ANDY KURTZ, Ph.D., former Graduate Program in HBC&G student, for being the Science and Public Health Policy Workshop organizing committee chairman **and** for his selection as a 2005-2005 National Institutes of Health Science Policy Fellow through a program sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He is one of 11 fellows placed at the NIH in Bethesda, MD.

To Jason Vertrees, BSCB Graduate Assistant, has been awarded the Who's Who Award and will be honored at the 2005-2006 Who's Who Reception given by the Graduate School on January 31, 2006 in the Cauduceus Room.

PUBLICATIONS, GRANTS & AWARDS**Grants:**

"Health Care and Other Facilities". Principal Investigator: Dr. David G. Gorenstein; Agency - Health Care and Other Facilities; Type: 1C76HF06378-01-00, Period: 09/01/05-08/31/06.

"Fetal Hypoxic Brain Damage, Molecular Mechanisms and Prevention by Magnesium Sulfate" Principal Investigator: Dr. J. Regino Perez-Polo; Agency - Binational Science Foundation Type: BSF 2003-166, Period: 09/01/04-09/30/06.

"Anti-Apoptosis Treatment for Hypoxia-Resuscitation". Principal Investigator: Dr. J. Regino Perez-Polo; Agency - Shriners Hospital for Children Type: Grant 8540, Period 01/01/06-12/31/06.

"Use of Genetic Transfer of Growth Factor Genes to the Treatment of Burn Trauma". Principal Investigator: Dr. J. Regino Perez-Polo; Agency - Shriners Hospital for Children; Type: Grant 8720, Period 01/01/06 - 12/31/06.

"Novel Role of the NF- κ B Inducing Kinase in Respiratory Syncytial Virus infection". Principal Investigator: Sanjeev Choudhary; Agency: American Heart Association (AHA); Type: Scientist Development Grant; Period: 01/01/06-12/31/09.

"Genomics and Proteomics Analysis of Organellar Dysfunction". Principal Investigator: John Papaconstantinou; Agency: The Clayton Foundation; Period: 01/01/06 - 12/31/06.

"Aldose Reductase: A Regulator of Inflammatory Signals". Principal Investigator: Dr. Kota V. Ramana; Agency - NIH, National Institutes of General Medical Sciences; Type 1 R01 GM071036-01A1, Period: 02/01/2006 - 01/31/2007.

"Spatial and Temporal Blood-Spinal Cord-Barrier Dysfunction in Chronic Spinal Cord Injury". Principal Investigator: Dr. Olivera Nesic-Taylor; Agency- Texas Institute for Rehabilitation Research Foundation, Period: 09/01/2005 - 08/31/2007.

"Glial Activation in Spinal Cord Injury-Induced Neuropathic Pain" Principal Investigator: Dr. Olivera Nesic-Taylor; Agency - Texas Institute Rehabilitation Research Foundation, Period: 09/01/2005 - 08/31/2007.

"Metabolic Studies in Normal and Cataractous Lenses". Principal Investigator: Dr. Satish K. Srivastava; Agency - NIH, National Eye Institute; Type 5 R01 EY01677-30, Period 12/01/02-11/30/06.

"The human glucocorticoid receptor, its gene and actions". Principal Investigator: Dr. E. Brad Thompson; Agency - NIH, National Cancer Institute; Type: 5R01 CA041407-19, Period: 2/01/2006 - 1/31/2007.

"Computational tools for T- and B-cell epitope prediction". Principle Investigator: Dr. Werner Braun; Agency: National Institutes of Health; Type: RO1 AI064913; Period: 02/01/06 -1/31/07.

"Dynamics of DNA Recognition by DNA Repair Polymerase". Principal Investigator: Dr. Wlodek Bujalowski; Agency - NIH, National Institutes of General Medical Sciences; Type: R01 GM58565-08, Period: 02/01/06 - 01/31/07.

"Role of IL-8 Monomer-Dimer Dynamics in Neutrophil Recruitment". Principal Investigator: Dr. Krishna Rajarathnam; Agency - John Sealy Memorial Endowment Fund for Biomedical Research; Period: 02/01/06 -

PUBLICATIONS, GRANTS & AWARDS (cont)

01/31/07.

"Molecular Mechanism of Renal Na⁺ Dependent Cotransport". Principal Investigator: Dr. Ana M. Pajor; Agency NIH, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases: Type: 5 R01 DK046269-14, Period: 05/01/1993 - 12/31/2006.

Graduate Program Notes — Lillian Chan

New awards:

Applause, applause and more applause for three of our outstanding graduate students!

- **Payal Sheth**, for giving one of the top 3 posters at the 2006 James T. McLaughlin Colloquium and winning one of the three pre-doctoral Travel Awards. (Payal got married in December at her home in India and the wedding festivities lasted for days!)
- **Brian Tieu**, on being awarded a T32 pre-doctoral fellowship in Toxicology, as well as a McLaughlin pre-doctoral fellowship. Furthermore, Brian also received a McLaughlin Travel Award. All these awards are highly competitive and prestigious.
- **Suzanne Tomlinson**, on being awarded a T32 pre-doctoral fellowship from the NIH sponsored "Computational and Structural Biology in Biodefense" training grant. Suzanne is a new second year student in our Program, so this award is especially noteworthy.

Policy regarding supplementing graduate student fellowships:

Because the dollar amounts of the stipends awarded by some fellowships, such as the NIH T32's, may be less than that of the GSBS graduate student stipends, Regino Perez-Polo, Chair, Dept. of B&MB, recently approved the following resources for supplementing student stipends in such cases:

- 1) From the Departmental reserve funds belonging to the student's Supervisory Professor,
- 2) From the GSBS funds allocated to the Department each year.

Recruitment and Admissions:

The B&MB Admissions and Recruitment Committees are working hard on this year's applications. The BBSC Recruitment weekends are starting: the first one is on Feb 9-10th, 2006 and there will be three more in March.

Student Seminar Course:

This year's Student Seminars are starting on February 3rd, 2006. They will be held every Friday from 12-1 PM in the BSB Auditorium (2.212 BSB). To encourage more faculty attendance at these student seminars, the B&MB Curriculum Committee has recommended that:

1. Program faculty members will be assigned to attend a subset of the seminars.
2. Teaching "points" or "credits" for class-room teaching activity will be given to those faculty members who attend the student seminars and participate in the discussion.

An e-mail detailing these measures will be forthcoming.

Monthly Seminar Series

THE DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY & MOLECULAR BIOLOGY,
THE SEALY CENTER FOR MOLECULAR SCIENCE
and THE SEALY CENTER FOR STRUCTURAL BIOLOGY
Seminar Schedule - February 2005
Held in Room 2.212 - Basic Science Building (BSB Auditorium)

04:00 p.m.

February 02, 2006

Dennis R. Petersen, Ph.D.

Professor

Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences

School of Pharmacy

University of Colorado

Denver, CO

Seminar Title: "The Interactions of Endogenous Electrophiles with Protein Chaperones and Antioxidant Proteins"

February 09, 2006

Richard Santen, M.D.

Professor of Internal Medicine

Associate Director, Clinical Research

Department of Internal Metabolism

Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism

University of Virginia Health System

Charlottesville, VA

Seminar Title: "Adaptive Hypersensitivity of Breast Cancer Cells: Role of Non-Genomic Estrogen Receptor Actions"

February 16, 2006

Dr. Franz Schmid

Professor

Biochemisches Laboratorium

Universitaet Bayreuth

Bayreuth, Germany

Seminar Title: "The Gene-3-Protein of Filamentous Phage: A Host for Evolutionary Protein Stabilization and A Model to Study Prolyl cis/trans Isomerization in Protein Folding and Function"

February 23, 2006

Dr. Rolf Konig

Associate Professor

Department of Microbiology

The University of Texas Medical Branch

Galveston, TX

Seminar Title: "The Role of cAMP Signaling Pathways in T Cell Function"

Graduate Program Notes (cont.)

Student Seminar Schedule*:

February 3	Corey Theriot (<i>Mitra</i>)
February 10	Rodrigo Maillard (<i>Lee</i>)
February 17	Sergio Santa Maria (<i>L. and S. Prakash</i>) and Xu Zhao (<i>Gorenstein</i>)
February 24	Ping Liu (<i>Brasier</i>) (ROOM CHANGE: 1.102 SAH/SON)
March 3	Paul Evans (<i>Liu</i>) and Tzuni Garcia (<i>Oberhausser/Braun</i>)
March 10	Andy Chen (<i>Evers</i>)
March 17	Diana Ferrari (<i>Perez-Polo</i>) and Jennifer Rodriguez-Rivera (<i>Dineley</i>)
March 24	Jason Vertrees (<i>Hilser</i>) and Suwei Wang (<i>Hilser</i>)
March 31	Kerry Fuson (<i>Sutton</i>) and Kristen Lamb (<i>Watowich</i>)
April 7	Song Liu (<i>McAdoo</i>)
April 14	Julie Hou (<i>Brasier</i>) and Brian Tieu (<i>Brasier</i>)
April 21	Marsha Tallman (<i>O'Connor</i>)

*Student (Lab Affiliation)

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Molecular Biology
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Our Department is home to a broad spectrum of research activities and expertise. Our most singular quality is a culture of interdisciplinary research and collaboration. We believe that teaching and research are interdependent activities, and so give high priority to the education of our graduate students and postdoctoral fellows.

