

NEWSLINE

School of Medicine Newsletter – January 2002 – Vol 5 , No. 3

Produced by the Office of Faculty and Instructional Development
Medical College of Virginia Campus, Virginia Commonwealth University

Department Chair Search Update

The **Human Genetics Chair Search Committee** (Dr. David Wilkinson, Pathology, Chair) is continuing work and two promising candidates have been interviewed so far.

Ophthalmology Chair Search Committee has begun work under the leadership of Dr. Richard Wenzel (Chair, Internal Medicine). Almost two dozen promising submissions to date.

Orthopaedic Chair Search Committee, negotiations are in progress and a new chair may be announced soon.

SPECIAL ARTICLE: Update on State and VCU Funding Sources for Research ***prepared by George Ford, Ph.D., Assistant Dean for Research, Professor of Physiology, SOM***

There are at least 5 “local” funding sources.

- 2 are available exclusively within the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- 3 are available within VCU.

State Wide Sources

1. **Thomas F. And Kate Miller Jeffress Foundation Trust Funds**

- Supports basic biomedical research
- Current funding levels are \$20,000 for the first year, \$10,000 for the second (competitive) year
- September 1 and March 1 deadlines
- Best source of information is probably the William & Mary web site (<http://www.wm.edu/grants/OPPS/jeffress>)
- Another useful link is via the Virginia Academy of Science web site (<http://www.vacadsci.org/grants.htm>)

2. **Alzheimer’s & Related Diseases Research Award Fund**

- Funded directly by the General Assembly and administered by the Virginia Center on Aging at VCU (views.vcu.edu/vcoa/ardraf)
- Supports research of all types related to Alzheimer’s or dementia
- Current funding level is \$25,000
- Deadline is April 5
- Contact Dr. Constance L. Coogle, 828-1525 or ccoogle@hsc.vcu.edu

VCU Funding Sources

1. **Drug Abuse Center Small Grants Program**

- Funded by NIDA as part of the Center for Drug Abuse grant
- Supports research related to drug abuse
- Current funding Drug Abuse Center small grants program
- Level is up to \$10,000
- Deadline is July 1
- Contact Dr. Robert Balster, Professor, Pharmacology/Toxicology, VCU, 828-8402 or balster@hsc.vcu.edu
- General information is available on the WEB (<http://views.vcu.edu/ospa/drugabuse/>)

2. **American Cancer Society Institutional Research Grant**

- Funded by a grant from the American Cancer Society
- Supports cancer- related research
- Current funding level is \$15,000 but may go up to \$20,000. Ask before submitting your application
- Deadline is October 1
- Limited to junior faculty - no higher rank than assistant professor
- Contact Dr. Thomas Huff, Vice Provost for Life Sciences, 828-5600 or thuff@vcu.edu
- General information also available on the WEB (http://views.vcu.edu/ospa/small_grant/ACS_IRG/)

3. **A.D. Williams**

- Funded by the A.D. Williams Trust Fund and disease related trust funds maintained by the MCV Foundation
- Supports all biomedical research with grants up to \$15,000 (up from \$10,000 in previous years)
- Supports faculty development either to travel to learn a new technique or bring a visiting expert here with grants up to \$2,500
- Supports the release of faculty time (up to \$7,500) to write an extramural grant
- Supports multi-school research projects (up to \$140,000)
- Deadlines are February 1, May 1, August 1 and November 1
- Contact Dr. George Ford, 828-9501 or ford@hsc.vcu.edu
- General information and forms are available on the WEB (<http://views.vcu.edu/adw/>)

For any questions or clarification, please contact Dr. Ford at 828-9501

Mark Your Calendar for Forbes Day Activities March 13 and 14

The Annual Forbes Research Days will be celebrated on March 13 and 14, 2002. Student presentations will take place on Wednesday, March 13 in Room 1-044 Sanger Hall, starting at 1 pm. Awards will be presented on Thursday, March 14 at 3:00 pm in Sanger Hall Room 1-044. Please attend to support and recognize these talented student researchers!

Please Welcome Our Housestaff Interviewees!

During December, January and early February, the residency programs are actively recruiting and interviewing people for next year's class. We know that we are an incredible place to get an education but let's make sure that we show the applicants that we are a friendly place as well. So, please try to go out of your way to help in any way that you can. All programs are very grateful for the time and energy that the faculty spend on interviews and the application process. Thanks to all. We all gain with great residents.

VCU Women in Medicine & Science Professional Achievement Award

Nominations are requested for the WIMS Professional Achievement Award in acknowledgment of special contributions and accomplishments of women faculty in the SOM. Attributes to consider include leadership, scholarly endeavors, teaching expertise, administrative skills, professional accomplishments, clinical excellence, and success as a mentor, role model or promoter of the professional development of women. Nominations should be sent by **February 1, 2002** to Lenore Buckley, MD (Box 9801101, fax 828-3741) and include a 2-page biosketch and 1 – 5 support letters from supervisors, peers, and/or trainees.

The award will be presented at the **10th Annual Women in Medicine and Science “Pathways to Leadership” Conference, Friday, March 1, 2002, Jefferson Hotel**. For full conference brochure and registration information, go to www.medschool.vcu.edu/cme/calendar.html or contact Carole Hetteema, OCME, 828-5416. **Join us for a great event!**

Tompkins-McCaw Library Bits and Bytes

Renovations have begun on the first floors of the Tompkins-McCaw Library for the Health Sciences on the MCV Campus, and at James Branch Cabell Library on the academic campus. The VCU Libraries facilities are being renovated to make them more responsive to the needs of VCU students, faculty and staff and to better serve the University's mission and goals. When renovations are completed, both libraries will have a renovated first floor with upgraded study space, additional computer terminals, and more seating. Additionally, a sprinkler system will be installed throughout both libraries, adding a significant measure of safety and protection for our users and collections.

VCU Libraries plans on maintaining its posted operating hours during the renovations, but users are cautioned that there will be periods of construction noise in both libraries. To find out more about the status of the construction and to view plans of the renovated first floors, please visit the libraries' web site at <http://www.library.vcu.edu/building/> for the latest information.

Library users are encouraged to try some of the VCU Libraries online services to better serve their needs during the renovations. All of these services are available through the VCU Libraries' web site at <http://www.library.vcu.edu>:

- **My Library Record:** Renew selected items online, check the status of recalls, and view your fines at <http://www.library.vcu.edu/mylibrary/>
- **My Alerts:** Sign up for email notices of recently acquired new books and journals at the VCU Libraries at <http://www.library.vcu.edu/mylibrary/>
- **Live Help:** Chat online with a reference librarian Monday – Friday, 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. at <http://www.library.vcu.edu/connect/livehelp.html>
- **Connect from Home:** Configure your browser to access databases and online journals while working from off-campus. <http://www.library.vcu.edu/help/isp.html>

If you have any questions concerning the renovations or any other service, please call the Tompkins-McCaw Library (TML) (828-0636, the Service Desk) or James Branch Cabell Library at (828-1110) for additional information. For special requests or consultation, contact Lynne Turman, 828-0638, lturman@hsc.vcu.edu, TML liaison to the School of Medicine (*submitted by Kimberly Separ, Development and Community Relations Officer, VCU Libraries*).

Over 300 SmartForce e-Courses Available to All Faculty at No Cost

The VCU Center for Teaching Excellence announces the availability of SmartForce, an e-learning website that includes tutorials for students, faculty and staff in word processing, spreadsheet analysis, data management, electronic presentations, website development, and much More. There are over 300 courses available. Students, faculty and staff will be able to progress through various levels of expertise within all the Microsoft products as well as many others at no cost to them. VCU has purchased a site license that gives the entire university community 24-hour access to the site.

VCU purchased SmartForce initially to satisfy a requirement by SCHEV that the university assess the computer competency of its undergraduates. Currently the assessment feature of SmartForce is being used by the College of Humanities and Sciences and the School of Social Work. Other schools also may require this assessment in the future.

The courses are self-paced and move from beginning levels to advanced levels or toward certification. Faculty will be able to refer their students to a self-paced package of programs that will improve their student's computer application skills. Students will be able to document their level of expertise for potential employers.

Go to SmartForce @ VCU User Guide which is located at <http://www.vcu.edu/cte/smartforce/>

You can access SmartForce immediately. All you need is a SmartForce @ VCU ID and password. Your login ID is your original VCU email address (also called your VCU alias). Your password is the last four

digits to your social security number. If you are unsure of your VCU alias, logon to SmartForce @ VCU User Guide and you will be able to obtain your VCU alias.

If you have problems with your login, please contact the AT HELP desk at 828-8227. For more general questions, you should contact the Center for Teaching Excellence at 827-0838 or email CTE@vcu.edu (*information provided by Dr. Joseph Marolla, Director, VCU Center for Teaching Excellence*).

VCU SOM Faculty Travel and Consulting Leave Policies

The tragic national events of 9-11-01 brought to the forefront the importance of adhering to University faculty leave policies. During each workday and especially during times of crisis, departments must be accountable for faculty who are away from the institution for various reasons including vacation, illness, or university business travel, etc.

VCU Human Resources administers a Leave Reporting System for all faculty and staff. It is vitally important that all faculty, regardless of rank or tenure status, report leave used each pay period. University policy requires prior authorization by the Department Chair or designee for the use of annual leave or business travel. It is the responsibility of each faculty member to report vacation, sick, holiday, and other leave used to their respective timekeeper each pay period. Each Department is accountable for enforcing University Leave policies and for accurate and timely submission of faculty leave.

Effective January 10, 2002, all School of Medicine faculty members must also report **Travel Leave** (code TRV) and **Outside Professional Consulting Leave (code OPC)**. **Travel Leave** includes but is not limited to attendance at professional meetings, seminars, conferences, presentations, invited lectures, and other affiliated non-University and non-VCUHS work sites (www.hr.vcu/leave and www.vcu.edu/procurement). **Outside Professional Consulting Leave** is leave permitted for professional consulting and is limited to one day per week or may be accomplished during non-work hours. Outside Professional Consulting is defined and governed by University Policies (www.vcu.edu/ireweb/policies/profact.htm). **Both** types of leave require prior authorization by the Department Chair and **Outside Professional Consulting Leave** also requires prior approval from the Dean. These new Leave types are to be recorded for tracking and reporting purposes only. To submit your leave requests, use the CP-1 form found at www.vcu.edu/provost/forms/rfaoopaaace.pdf

Thank you for complying with these policies. If you have questions, please contact your Department Chair or administrator. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

On-line Scholarship Application

All SOM students can now complete an on-line scholarship application. Together with the extracurricular activities database, this information will be used to award over one million dollars in financial aid and scholarships, including funds from the US Department of Health and Human Services, State funds and also our own Foundation's endowed scholarship funds. The extracurricular activities database will be used to match students to donor criteria and provide content for their Dean's letters. With the next modification, students will be able to format and print professional CV's. All students are encouraged to complete the application at www.intranet.som.vcu.edu/students. Our thanks to Randy Pinkleton and Meenu Tolani for making this idea into reality! (*provided by Judy Cramer, Director of Financial Aid for the SOM*)

Department and Institute News

Department of Internal Medicine

Michael Edmond, M.D., Jennifer Deschenes, M.S. (*formerly with the SOM*), **Maia Eckler, M.S., and Richard P. Wenzel, M.D., M.Sc.**, had a study published in the December 2001 most recent issue of **Academic Medicine**. The study, "Racial Bias in Using USMLE Step 1 Scores to Grant Internal Medicine Residency Interviews," demonstrates that when USMLE Step 1 scores were used to screen applicants, a significantly greater proportion of African-American students were refused an interview. An extensive

discussion section examines the implications of this finding. (*Academic Medicine, December 2001;76:1253-56*).

Steven Grant, M.D., Professor of Hematology-Oncology in the School of Medicine and in the Massey Cancer Center, has an article coming out in an upcoming issue of ***Cancer Research***. (authors: Chunrong Yu, Geoffrey Krystal, Lyuba Varticovski, Robert McKinstry, Mohamed Rahmani, Paul Dent, and Steven Grant)

The study, led at VCU by Dr. Grant, found that combining Gleevec with a new agent, known as PD184352, dramatically increases the lethal effect of Gleevec toward leukemic cells. Gleevec's approval last May for the treatment of chronic myeloid leukemia was met with excitement in the cancer treatment community. More recently, however, enthusiasm has been tempered, as investigators have become aware that resistance to Gleevec represents a major problem. Dr. Grant's studies indicate that by inhibiting a survival pathway in cancer cells known as the MAP kinase cascade, the agent PD184352 has the capacity to overcome resistance to Gleevec. These findings lay the foundation for future clinical trials in which Gleevec may be combined with new agents such as MAP kinase inhibitors to treat CML and other malignancies. PD184352 has already shown the ability to inhibit the MAP kinase pathway in early clinical trials in humans.

Dr. Grant also recently received a \$997,500, four-year award from the National Institutes of Health to develop strategies to combat leukemia by combining differentiation-inducers (DIs) - a type of anticancer agent that works by inducing cancer cell maturation - with agents that inhibit the key regulators of the cell cycle known as cyclin-dependent kinases (CDKs). The study builds on Dr. Grant's recent discovery that flavopiridol, a potent CDK inhibitor, interacts synergistically with DIs in the laboratory to trigger mitochondrial damage and cell suicide. The NIH award will allow Dr. Grant to investigate the interaction between DIs and CDKs to determine how they work together and whether the combination's promise as a new strategy for treating leukemia or other cancers of the blood should be taken to Phase I clinical trials.

Dr. Grant has been asked to serve on the Oncology Initial Review Group (IRG) Study Section Boundaries Review Panel, which advises the National Cancer Institute and the National Institutes of Health on the design/composition of Study Sections that review all oncology-related grants submitted to the NCI/NIH.

Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

The Department is observing the **50th anniversary of inpatient rehabilitation care** at the MCV Hospitals in 2002. The program started in 1952 in Memorial (also known as South) Hospital under the leadership of Dr. Herbert Park. The Department and the Rehabilitation and Research Center are planning a variety of presentations, displays and special events during the year to commemorate 50 years of progress in assisting persons with disabilities return to independence.

Faculty from the **Department and the Departments of Physical Therapy, Biomedical Engineering, and Health, Fitness and Education on the West Campus are working together on a research development group with common interests of human performance, studying fitness issues, movement control and biomechanics.** Dr. Paul Wehman is organizing this interdisciplinary effort.

David X. Cifu, M.D., the Herman J. Flax, M.D. Professor and Chairman of PM&R, has been elected to the Board of Governors of the American Academy of PM&R. He has been actively involved in a number of committee and leadership positions with the AAPM&R for the past 10 years. Dr. Cifu has also secured a 2-year grant from the Hartford Foundation and American Geriatrics Society to produce a "Geriatric Rehabilitation Study Guide" for the American Academy of PM&R, to be published in the Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (anticipated publication Spring 2004). Dr Cifu was one of 40 nationwide leaders in Brain Injury rehabilitation who was invited to attend the 2nd Annual Galveston (TX) Brain Injury Conference from Nov. 1-4, 2001. Dr. Cifu was one of three conference leaders in this concentrated workshop focusing on the development of a minimum dataset for individuals with TBI.

Jeff Ericksen, M.D., Director of the PM&R Consultation Service, has been awarded a VCU Center for Teaching Excellence Grant to obtain specialized 3-D software for teaching anatomy and biomechanics to residents and students and enhance PM&R faculty and resident's ability to present anatomy concepts in lectures around the region and country.

Jeff Johns, M.D., Medical Director of Outpatient PM&R and Associate Medical Director of the Rehabilitation and Research Center at MCVH, has been selected and received funding as one of only 23 physiatrists across the nation to be a participant in the Academy of Academic Physiatrists "Academic Leadership Development Seminar," to be held in late February in Las Vegas.

Bill McKinley, M.D., Director of Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation, has been promoted to Vice Chairman for Education. Bill will continue as co-Director of the Residency Program (with a focus on education and research).

Bill Walker, M.D., Medical Director of Rehabilitation Services at the McGuire VAMC, has been promoted to Vice Chairman for Clinical Care. Bill will lead PM&R in the development of more uniform Clinical Practice Guidelines and templates.

Department of Preventive Medicine/Community Health

Dr. Jack O. Lanier, Associate Vice President for Health Sciences for Public Health and Professor of Preventive Medicine, has been appointed to the State Board of Health by Governor Gilmore. The term is four years, effective July 1, 2001 and ending June 30, 2005. Dr. Lanier also was selected as the recipient of the 2002 Special Recognition Award by the Association of Teachers of Preventive Medicine. The award will be presented at the ATPM annual meeting March 22, 2002, in Washington, DC. Congratulations to Dr. Lanier on the state and national recognition.

Department of Radiation Oncology

In October, **Olubunmi K. Abayomi, M.D.**, joined the faculty as Associate Professor. A graduate of the College of Medicine at the University of Lagos in Lagos, Nigeria, he completed his residency and clinical fellowship training in radiation oncology at Tufts-New England Medical Center in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1980. He served on the medical faculties at Tufts University, Temple University, Howard University, and Loyola University before arriving at VCU. He was also the Director of Residency Training in Radiation Oncology at Howard University Hospital in Washington, D.C. and at Loyola University Medical Center in Maywood, IL. Dr. Abayomi, who is serving as the Director of Clinical Research for the department, has expertise in gynecological malignancies, head and neck cancers, and the delayed effects of irradiation.

On January 12-14, 2002 in New Orleans, **Douglas Arthur, M.D.**, Associate Professor, will be jointly offering a workshop on breast brachytherapy through the American Brachytherapy Society. Dr. Arthur is one of only a few experts in the country offering this new and innovative treatment approach for selected early stage breast cancer patients. This treatment approach allows women to be treated with radiation over five days as opposed to the traditional six weeks of therapy. Part of the first brachytherapy school for breast cancer ever held, Dr. Arthur's workshop will include a description of the MCVH of VCU experience, a discussion of the technique used here, as well as a hands-on workshop.

Later this month, Dr. Arthur will appear on WTVR-TV News 6 for the "BuddyCheck 6" program, a partnership between the American Cancer Society, MCVH/Massey Cancer Center, Ford Motor Company, and WTVR-TV News 6 striving to raise women's awareness about the importance of being informed and the importance of early detection of breast cancer. Dr. Arthur will discuss the use of brachytherapy in the treatment of breast cancer and the opportunity to reduce the treatment length from 6 weeks to five days.

In July, **Danny Y. Song, M.D.**, joined the faculty as Assistant Professor. He received his M.D. from the Medical College of Georgia and completed residency training in radiation oncology at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. His clinical and research interests include central nervous system tumors

(adult and pediatric), brain metastases, lymphomas, total body irradiation, and body and brain stereotactic radiosurgery.

In November, **Dorin A. Todor, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor, joined the clinical physics faculty of the Department. Dr. Todor was a Post-Doctoral Fellow at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York City, where he was involved in radiological physics research in brachytherapy, creating a novel method for real-time intraoperative dosimetry of permanent prostate implants, and external beam portal image processing and enhancement. He received his Ph.D. from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, where his work included collaboration with the Radiation Oncology and Biophysics Departments at EVMS. Dr. Todor will be serving as a clinical physicist for our programs at MCVH, Hanover Medical Park, Stony Point, and the McGuire V. A. Medical Center.

This fall, **Taryn G. Torre, M.D.**, joined the faculty as Assistant Professor. A graduate of the College of William and Mary, she received her M.D. in 1994 from Eastern Virginia Medical School. After an internship in internal medicine at Norfolk General Hospital, she completed her radiation oncology residency at Johns Hopkins Hospital, where she served as chief resident during her final year in 1998. A Clinical Assistant Professor at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York City for three years before joining the faculty at VCU, Dr. Torre has clinical expertise in the areas of prostate brachytherapy and genitourinary, breast, lung, and gastrointestinal malignancies. She and her husband Dr. Mayer Grob, who recently joined the VCU Department of Surgery, plan to work together on implants for the treatment of prostate cancer.

Department of Radiology

Ellen Shaw de Paredes, M.D., Chief of the Department of Radiology's Breast Imaging Section has been named the beneficiary of a gift from the estate of Veronica Donovan Sweeney, who passed away in April 2001. Mrs. Sweeney left the bequest in recognition of her great respect for Dr. Shaw de Paredes' contribution to the international breast imaging community and her service to her patients.

Monies from the generous fund will endow several different endeavors at VCU/MCVH. In addition to establishing the Veronica Donovan Sweeney Professorship for the Chief of Breast Imaging, the gift will allow the creation of the Blanton-Sweeney Breast Imaging Research Endowment. This endowment named in honor of Dr. Erika Blanton, who was instrumental in the establishment of the trust, will be utilized for supporting research related to breast imaging. Additionally, the trust will endow the Ellen Shaw de Paredes, MD, Breast Imaging Scholars Fund to be used for awards in recognition of research contributions in breast imaging by radiology residents and medical students.

Many congratulations to Dr. Shaw de Paredes on receiving a gift that will serve to strengthen the endeavors of the Radiology Department's Breast Imaging Section for many years to come.

Mary Ann Turner, M.D., Professor of Radiology, and **Ann S. Fulcher, M.D.**, Associate Professor of Radiology, will serve as expert presenters to a National Institutes of Health State-of-the-Science Conference to be held Jan. 14-16 at the NIH in Bethesda, MD. The conference is organized under the NIH Consensus Development Program, a focal point within the NIH, designed to improve the lines of communications from the health research community to practicing physicians and the public.

The conference's focus will be on Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography (ERCP), which first came into use about 30 years and has been applied to the diagnosis and management of a variety of gastrointestinal disorders. However, the value of ERCP relative to other means for diagnosing and treating these diseases has not been firmly established. The conference will examine the current state of knowledge regarding the use of ERCP in clinical practice and will identify directions for future research. At the conclusion of the conference, a scientific panel will draft a statement and a press release summarizing the panel's conclusions will be distributed.

According to James Tatum, M.D., departmental Chairman, the invitation to Drs. Turner and Fulcher to participate in the conference is a significant sign of recognition. Their inclusion is particularly impressive

because they are the imaging experts in what is really a GI driven conference. Drs. Turner and Fulcher will present information on radiological procedures used to diagnose GI disorders.

Virginia Institute for Psychiatric & Behavioral Genetics

Cynthia Bulik, Ph.D., Carol Prescott, Ph.D., and Kenneth Kendler, M.D., all with the Virginia Institute for Psychiatric and Behavioral Genetics, published their second report on the connection between childhood sexual abuse (CSA) and the risk for developing psychiatric or substance abuse disorders later in life. Their studies of 412 female survivors of CSA who participate in the Virginia Twin Registry found that greater risk was associated with attempted or completed intercourse, the use of force or threats, abuse by a relative, and a negative response by someone who was told about the abuse. They found no evidence that particular types of abuse could predict the development of specific psychiatric disorders, but they did learn that the magnitude of risk can be modified by protective factors, such as whether reporting the abuse was met with a supportive response that effectively put an end to the abuse. They published their findings in the November issue of the *British Journal of Psychiatry*.



**Office of Faculty and Instructional Development
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Newsline is designed to better inform the faculty about activities and plans affecting the School of Medicine and to encourage open communication. So much that happens is a moving target, so we'll do our best. Send comments and questions and we'll try to find the folks who know the answers (if they'll tell us...) You can submit items for the newsletter to Kathy Kreutzer, Box 980565 or e-mail kkreutzer@vcu.edu.

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