



# DEAN'S Quarterly

An update on faculty honors & hires in the VCU School of Medicine

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Physiology and Biophysics  
Surgery

### Faculty Recruits

Emergency Medicine  
Internal Medicine  
Physiology and Biophysics  
Surgery

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Please submit news of faculty hires and faculty honors through your chairman's office to Joan Barrett, Assistant to the Dean, at [jmbarret@vcu.edu](mailto:jmbarret@vcu.edu).

## Faculty Honors

Raising our school's profile in the region, the nation and the world

### Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

**Frank Fang, Ph.D.**, was elected as organizer/chair for the 44th SERLC (Southeastern Regional Lipid Conference) to be held at Cashiers, N.C. on Nov. 11-13, 2009.

Department Chair **Sarah Spiegel, Ph.D.**, was named a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in recognition of her discovery of a potent lipid mediator with important roles in cancer, inflammation and allergy. Dr. Spiegel also holds the Mann T. and Sara D. Lowry Distinguished Professorship in Oncology.

### Family Medicine

**Alex H. Krist, M.D.**, of the Fairfax Family Medicine Residency Program, was recently notified that he and his colleagues will be awarded The Society of Teachers of Family Medicine Research Paper Award for this year. This award is considered the most prestigious award in Family Medicine Research. The article, Timing of Repeat Colonoscopy: Disparity Between Guidelines and Endoscopists Recommendations, was published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* in December of 2007 and was co-authored by Krist, Resa M. Jones, M.P.H., Ph.D., Steven H. Woolf, M.D., M.P.H., Sarah E. Woessner, M.D., Daniel Merenstein, M.D., J. William Kerns, M.D., Walter Foliaco, M.D., and Paul Jackson, M.D.

### Emergency Medicine

**Allen Yee, M.D.**, Operational Medical Director of Chesterfield Fire and EMS, was presented with the Governor's Award for Outstanding EMS Physician 2008.

### Internal Medicine

**Steven Grant, M.D.**, has been elected to five-year term as an Associate Editor of *Blood*.

**Shaun Ruddy, M.D.**, has received the Presidential Gold Medal Award from the American College of Rheumatology. This is the highest award the ACR can bestow and recognizes outstanding achievements in rheumatology over an entire career in clinical medicine, research, education or administration. Before his retirement, Ruddy held the Elam C. Toone Distinguished Professorship of Rheumatology.

**Arun Sanyal, M.D.**, has been named the American Association for Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD) president-elect. In addition, he received an honorary life-time membership in the Czech Society of Hepatology for his contributions to the advancement of hepatology education in the Czech Republic.

### Microbiology and Immunology

Department Chair **Dennis Ohman, Ph.D.**, is the president of the American Medical School Microbiology and Immunology Chairs (AMSMIC) Association, from 2009-10. This organization represents and serves all medical microbiology and immunology chairs in the U.S. and Canada.

### Pathology

**Celeste N. Powers, M.D., Ph.D.**, Chair of the Division of Anatomic Pathology, has been named Editor in Chief of the journal *Cancer Cytopathology*. She has been involved with the journal as a reviewer and associate editor since its launch 11 years ago.

**Alphonse Sirica, Ph.D.**, was inducted as a Fellow of the American Gastroenterological Association. This honor was bestowed upon Sirica by the AGA for his personal commitment to and superior professional achievement in research in the field of gastroenterology.

### Pediatrics

The VCU Pediatric Diabetes Program achieved American Diabetes Association Recognition, the highest level of excellence in diabetes education in the U.S.

### Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

**William Walker, M.D.**, received the NIDRR Traumatic Brain Injury Model Systems' Rosenthal bi-annual Award for Best Paper. Walker's paper, titled Occupational Categories and Return to Work after Traumatic Brain Injury: A Multicenter Study, was published in *Archives in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation* in December 2006. Walker holds the Ernst and Helga Prosser Professorship in the department.

### Physiology and Biophysics

Department Chair **Diomedes E. Logothetis, Ph.D.**, was appointed as a member of the Electrical Signaling, Ion Transport and Arrhythmias Study Section for the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. He also will chair a Special Emphasis Panel Review of a Program Project Grant for the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. Logothetis holds the John D. Bower, M.D., Endowed Chair in Physiology.

**Raphael Witorsch, Ph.D.**, has been appointed to the Allocation Committee of the Jeffress and Gwathmey Memorial Trusts within the Virginia Academy of Science.

### Surgery

**Omar Rashid, M.D., J.D.**, who is currently spending two years performing outcomes research with Department Chair Dr. James Neifeld, has been awarded the 2009 Legislative Fellowship from the General Assembly. He is working on the Appropriations Committee's subcommittee on health care expenditures.

## *New Faculty*

Expanding our expertise and opportunities for collaboration

### Emergency Medicine

**Frank Zwemer, M.D., M.B.A.**, emergency medicine chief at the McGuire VA, graduated from the University of Southern California School of Medicine and completed a Transitional PGY-1, Categorical IM PGY-2-4, and was chief resident in IM PGY at Mary Imogene Bassett Hospital, in Cooperstown, N.Y. (a major teaching affiliate of Columbia-Presbyterian). He also received an M.B.A. from the Olin School of Business, Washington University in St. Louis. He was on the emergency medicine faculty at Washington University/Barnes-Jewish from 1996-98. Most recently, he was on the faculty and was vice-chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine at the University of Rochester/Strong Memorial Hospital, 1998-2008.

## Internal Medicine

**Sarah Hobgood, M.D.**, will join the Geriatric Section as an assistant professor in July, providing office-based care and inpatient consults. She received her medical degree from the VCU School of Medicine 2005 and will complete her post graduate residency and fellowship at Eastern Virginia Medical School in Internal Medicine/Geriatric Medicine in June of this year.

## Physiology and Biophysics

**Meng Cui, Ph.D.**, joined the department as an assistant professor in 2008. Cui received his undergraduate degree in chemistry in 1994 from Heilongjiang University and his Ph.D. in physical chemistry in 1999 from Jilin University in China. After completing postdoctoral training in Shanghai Institute of Material Medica, University of Houston and Mount Sinai School of Medicine, Cui joined the faculty at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in 2005.

**Carlos R. Escalante, Ph.D.**, joined the department as an assistant professor in 2008. Escalante completed his undergraduate studies in chemistry at the Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Education in 1985 and received his Ph.D. in Chemistry from Georgetown University in '92. Escalante's postdoctoral training was completed at Columbia University in New York City. He joined the faculty at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York as a research track faculty in 1997.

**Louis J. De Felice, Ph.D.**, joined the department as a professor and director of graduate programs in 2008. De Felice received his undergraduate degree in physics in 1962 and a master's degree in physics in 1964 from Florida State University in Tallahassee. He received his Ph.D. in physics in 1967 from the University of Calgary in Alberta, Canada under the mentorship of Cyril Challice. He completed postdoctoral training in the laboratories of Dr. David Firth at McGill University in Montreal and Dr. Bert Verveen at the University of Leiden in The Netherlands. De Felice joined the faculty at Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta, Ga. in 1971 and the faculty at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn. in 1996. De Felice studies neurotransmitter transporters that cause uptake of molecules such as serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine uptake from the presynaptic terminal. A number of clinically prescribed or abused drugs inhibit neurotransmitter transporters and cause elevated levels of these neurotransmitters at the synaptic cleft. Cocaine and antidepressants are examples of such drugs. De Felice's laboratory aims to understand the molecular mechanisms underlying neurotransmitter uptake by measuring the ionic currents accompanying the transport of the neurotransmitters in combination with classical radio-labeled uptake, amperometry, cell surface markers and correlative structural approaches. Small molecule probes that interact with the transporters and alter their function are being developed in collaboration with medicinal chemists in an effort to identify useful drugs to control the activity of these important molecules. De Felice's research program has received international recognition and his work has been published in the most visible biomedical journals.

**Qinglian Liu, Ph.D.**, joined the department as an assistant professor in 2008. Liu received her undergraduate degree in molecular biology in 1993 from Nankai University. She obtained her Ph.D. degree in biomolecular chemistry in 2002 from the University of Wisconsin at Madison under the mentorship of Dr. Elizabeth A. Craig. She went on to Columbia University to complete postdoctoral training in the laboratory of Dr. Wayne A. Hendrickson.

**I. Scott Ramsey, Ph.D.**, joined the department as an assistant professor in 2008. Ramsey earned his Ph.D. in pharmacology at Vanderbilt University under the mentorship of Louis J. De Felice. Ramsey received his bachelor's degree in biology with a studio art minor from Occidental College and subsequently worked in biochemical pharmacology at Syntex Research in Palo Alto, Calif. Ramsey completed a postdoctoral fellowship in the laboratory of David E. Clapham at Harvard Medical School.

**Lei Zhou, Ph.D.**, joined the department as an assistant professor in 2008. Zhou completed his undergraduate degree in biophysics from Nankai University in 1992. He received his Ph.D. in physiology from the University of Wisconsin at Madison in 2000 under the mentorship of Dr. Bill Chiu. He went on to Columbia University to complete postdoctoral training in Dr. Steve Siegelbaum's lab.

### **Surgery**

**Silas Mbasera Chikunguwo, M.D., Ph.D.**, joined the Division of General Surgery in October 2008. He received his medical degree from Howard University, Washington, D.C. in 2000. He did his surgical residency in general surgery at UMDNJ/Robert Wood Johnson University, Camden N.J. and Brooklyn Hospital Center, Brooklyn, N.Y. In 2006-07, he did a research fellowship at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, Cleveland, Ohio. His fellowship was in molecular and cell biology of obesity and experimental bariatric surgery. Chikunguwo did a surgery fellowship at the Cleveland Clinic in 2007-08 in advanced laparoscopic and bariatric surgery.