**A Message from the Editors**

This issue of MInews marks the one-year anniversary of the e-newsletter of the MI Department. We hope you agree that MInews has both increased communication within the Department and helped to foster a sense of community. We thank all of you who took the time to share your news. Please continue to send comments and suggestions to MInews@aecom.yu.edu. Enjoy!

**Departmental News from the Chair**

**The MI Recruitment Committee Completes its Work**

The MI recruitment committee (Steve Porcelli, Chair, Teresa DiLorenzo, Harris Goldstein, Bill Jacobs, Stan Nathenson, Vinayaka Prasad, Matty Scharff, Liise-anne Pirofski, Chaim Putterman, and Arturo Casadevall) has completed its work, which began in 2006.

I would like to share with you some numbers.

- Number of applications reviewed: 120
- Number of people interviewed: 20
- Number of people brought back for a second visit: 11
- Number of offers made: 10
- Number of offers accepted: 6 (Kartik Chandran, Felipe Diaz-Griffero, Claudia Gravekamp, Gregoire Lauvau, Deborah Palliser, Xingxing Zang)

In addition, the committee also played a helpful role with the transfer of Tom Leyh from Biochemistry to MI.

Recent faculty recruits having secondary appointments in MI are Vyacheslav (Slava) Adarichev, Johanna Daily, and Betsy Herold. Johanna was recruited to ID by Liise-anne Pirofski and Slava to Rheumatology by Chaim Putterman. Harris Goldstein was instrumental in the recruitment of Betsy to Pediatrics.

I think we were very successful in recruiting top people. At the completion of this process, I have some thoughts.

- Of the 4 people that did not accept, ALL turned us down for personal reasons.
• The recruitment committee was remarkable in having representation from four departments (MI, Medicine, Pediatrics, and Cell Biology). This was extremely helpful in projecting to the applicants that Einstein has an integrated faculty. It also allowed wide input that helped select the best applicants. We compared favorably to competing institutions since it was clear that there was no 'silo mentality' here.
• Of the 6 recruits, 3 do research that is primarily within the realm of 'immunology' and 3 are primarily 'microbiologists.' I use these labels with caution since many work with both microbe and host, but their research emphasis helps maintain balance in the department. We have strengthened our portfolio in virology, bacterial pathogenesis, and cellular immunology.
• Recruitments to MI took into account the needs of centers, in particular the Cancer Center, the Diabetes Center, and the Center for AIDS Research (CFAR). The recruitment of Drs. Zang and Gravekamp helped the needs of the Cancer Center, while Drs. Palliser, Chandran, and Diaz-Grieffo add to the faculty resources of CFAR. Dr. Zang also contributes to the faculty of the Diabetes Center. In turn, having such centers helped us in recruitment since they were viewed as a real asset of our institution.

As this process comes to an end, special thanks are in order:

• Kudos to Steve Porcelli who chaired the committee. Steve screened every application and showed great leadership in making decisions and forging the committee into an effective recruiting tool. Steve did his homework and was there through the entire process, including helping during the critical negotiation steps. Steve showed great insight and I give him the lion's share of the credit for the success of this entire process.
• Thanks to each of the committee members who gave of their time and brought great expertise and experience to the process. I note that many committee members devoted at least 31 days to interviews, chalk talks, dinners, etc. This is a tremendous effort by any measure.
• Thanks to Deans Spiegel and Burns without whose support none of this would have happened. The Dean's office was very responsive and supportive through the entire process. This was enormously helpful since applicants got the sense our institution was special. For example, we were able to get letters out quickly and to respond to their requests within days. That made us look very good relative to other institutions.
• Thanks to Gina DeFilippi who managed the logistics of the entire process. She received all applications, acknowledged them, arranged for interviews, and generally made sure that the interview process, visits, etc. worked smoothly. Gina's efforts gave our recruitment drive a sense of professionalism that helped us look good.
• Thanks to Susan Nuccio and the MI office for answering the numerous questions from applicants. Their responsiveness helped reassure candidates and provided key information critical to successful recruiting efforts.
• Thanks to CFAR and the Cancer Center, and specifically to their PIs Harris Goldstein and David Goldman, for their efforts. The center framework at Einstein was a major asset in attracting top people.
Thanks to the many faculty who helped MI with these tasks. The following people helped with the interview process: Drs. Adarichev, Almo, Baker, Brojatsch, Burns, Chan, Chandran, Dragic, Edelman, Feldmesser, Goldman, Kalpana, Kielian, Kim, Lai, Lenz, Macaluso, Macian, Massini, Sellers, Skoultchi, Snapp, Spiegel, R. Stanley, Steidl, Vijg, Weiss, Wilson, and Zang.

On May 22, 2009, MI will hold an all-day symposium to celebrate the completion of our recruitment work and to showcase the primary and secondary faculty who have been recruited to the Department over the past two to three years. The symposium will be held in the Robbins Auditorium and will feature short talks by new faculty members Drs. Slava Adarichev, Kartik Chandran, Johanna Daily, Felipe Diaz-Griffero, Claudia Gravekamp, Betsy Herold, Gregoire Lauvau, Thomas Leyh, Deborah Palliser, and Xingxing Zang. Please join us as we officially welcome our new faculty and celebrate this unprecedented expansion of our Department.

Forchheimer Renovations
A plan was finalized for renovations whereby the center section would be modernized in three phases. We are still currently waiting for a date for the work to begin.

2008 NIH Award Data: MI Ranks Second in NYC
The Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research has compiled 2008 NIH award data for basic and clinical science departments at US medical schools. In terms of NIH award dollars (direct plus indirect costs), Einstein’s MI Department ranked second in New York City and eighteenth in the nation among medical school Microbiology departments. You can review the ranking tables at http://www.brimr.org/NIH_Awards/NIH_Awards.htm

ASM Student Chapter at Einstein Presents: The Science of Wine

Magdia De Jesus (Casadevall lab) has submitted the following update on the American Society for Microbiology (ASM) student chapter at Einstein:

With great pleasure the ASM student chapter at Einstein will be hosting its second student invited speaker on Thursday, March 26, 2009. We have invited wine microbiologist Dr. Ramón Mira de Orduña, Associate Professor of Enology from Cornell University Department of Food Science & Technology. He will be giving a lecture entitled “Wine microbiology or the art of spoiling grapes” in the Forchheimer third floor lecture hall at 4:00 p.m. After the lecture we will have a wine and cheese student and faculty mixer. We will be sending and posting announcements with all the details. We are currently planning his itinerary and need faculty to meet with him throughout the day. As part of Dr. Mira de Orduña’s visit we will have a student lunch at 12:00 noon and would like for students in the department to meet with him as well. If you are interested in meeting with him please contact Magdia De Jesus at mdejesus@aeom.yu.edu or Teraya Donaldson at tdonalds@aeom.yu.edu. For more information on Dr. Mira de Orduña, see the following link: http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/fst/faculty/orduna/
MI Postdocs Shine at Belfer Ceremony

At a ceremony held in December 2008, six Einstein postdocs were awarded a Prize for Outstanding Postdoctoral Research from the Belfer Institute for Advanced Biomedical Studies. Two of the six winners were from MI: Eszter Lazar-Molnar (Nathenson lab) and Arunika Mukhopadhaya (DiLorenzo lab). Two of the ten Travel Awards also went to postdocs from MI labs: Manjunatha Venkataswamy (Porcelli lab) and Neena Jain (Fries lab). Congratulations to all! Read the full story at http://www.aecom.yu.edu/home/fullstory.asp?id=269

South African Research Institute for Tuberculosis and HIV

The Howard Hughes Medical Institute has committed $50M over the next 10 years to support the development of a research institute in South Africa to combat the tuberculosis and HIV epidemics in the region. Dr. Bill Jacobs will be heavily involved with the new institute, to be located in Durban. One of its goals will be to develop improved diagnostics, therapies, and vaccines for tuberculosis and HIV. Read about Bill’s vision for the institute at http://www.aecom.yu.edu/home/news.asp?id=321

News from the MI Office

Jackelyn Kronengold, HHMI administrative assistant for Bill Jacobs, recently left Einstein to take a position at HHMI at Yale University, just 20 minutes from her home in Connecticut. Jackie has been replaced by Linda Long, an experienced HHMI administrative assistant from Columbia University. Below is a photo of the MI office as they welcomed Linda and bid farewell to Jackie.

Pictured from left to right are Linda LoParrino, Susan Nuccio, Laura Vallone, Maria Gasparino, Jackie Kronengold (front), Gina DeFilippi, Maria Ortiz, Georgia Veroutis, Loretta Garin, Louisa Gonzalez, and Linda Long.
News from the Students

1. **Gao, Hua-Xin (Puttermann Lab)**


2. **Jarchum, Irene (DiLorenzo Lab)**


Irene is a recipient of a 2009 Julius Marmur award.

Irene has accepted a postdoctoral position at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in the laboratory of Eric Pamer, M.D., Chief, Infectious Disease Service.

3. **Madrid, Dennis (Kim Lab)**


4. **Mwakingwe, Agnes (Kim Lab)**

Agnes won the 2008 Young Investigator Award at the annual meeting of the American Society for Tropical Medicine and Hygiene for her presentation entitled "Real-time in vivo imaging of liver stages of *Plasmodium yoelii*: GFP/luciferase reporter parasites." She also won a travel award to attend the meeting. See [http://mstp.aecom.yu.edu/](http://mstp.aecom.yu.edu/) for a picture of Agnes presenting her work.
5. **Ramalingam, Dhivya (Prasad Lab)**

Dhivya presented a poster at the Antiviral Drug Resistance conference held in Richmond, VA in November 2008.

6. **Sango, Kaori (Goldstein Lab)**


**News from the Postdocs**

1. **Arora, Pooja (Porcelli Lab)**

Pooja received a travel scholarship of 100,000 JPY to present her work at the 5th International Symposium on CD1/NKT Cells, held in March 2009 in Kamakura, Japan, and organized by the RIKEN Research Center for Allergy and Immunology.

2. **Chattopadhyay, Kausik (Nathenson Lab)**


3. **Gissot, Mathieu (Kim Lab)**


Mathieu is now a faculty member at Institut Pasteur, Lille, France.
4. **Joseph, Aviva (Goldstein Lab)**


Aviva received a scholarship to attend the Prevention of HIV/AIDS Keystone symposium, held in Colorado in March 2009, where she presented a poster entitled, “Gene therapy using a lentivector expressing the anti-HIV-1 2G12 broadly neutralizing antibody protects humanized mice from *in vivo* HIV-1 challenge.”

Aviva was elected co-chair of the postdoc senators of the Einstein senate.

5. **Lazar-Molnar, Eszter (Nathenson Lab)**


6. **Vigdorovich, Vladimir (Nathenson Lab)**


**News from the Associates**

1. **Ting, Li-Min (Kim Lab)**


**News from the Technicians**

1. **Adjei-Afasu, Denise (Gravekamp Lab)**

News from the Instructors

1. **Bryan, Ruth (Dadachova Lab)**


Ruth will present a poster entitled "Radioimmunotherapy is a more effective treatment than amphotericin in experimental systemic infection with melanized and non-melanized Cryptococcus neoformans" at the Annual ASM meeting in May in Philadelphia, PA.

2. **Hassani, Morad (Jacobs Lab)**

Morad presented a poster at the Keystone Symposium on "Tuberculosis: Biology, Pathology and Therapy" (January 2009; Keystone, Colorado). The title of his poster was "A Δ*hupB* mutant of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* is attenuated and has reactivation defects in mice."

News from the Faculty

1. **Casadevall, Arturo**


2. **Chandran, Kartik**

Kartik was awarded an R21 grant from NIAID to investigate how a new class of small molecule inhibitors blocks Ebolavirus entry.

3. **Dadachova, Ekaterina**

Kate received a $50,000 pilot award from CFAR/Cancer Center for a project entitled "Treatment of HPV associated head and neck cancer with novel RIT targeting viral antigens." She was also nominated by Einstein to submit a grant to the Dana Foundation to support her work on radioimmunotherapy of brain metastases from metastatic melanoma.

Invited speaker: Kate delivered a Topical Lecture at the Annual AAAS meeting in Chicago in February 2009 entitled "Novel approaches to the therapy of infectious diseases." Read about this lecture at http://www.aecom.yu.edu/home/news.asp?id=301


In February 2009, TV Channel 1 in Russia showed a 1.5 hr documentary entitled "The Mold" during prime time. This documentary is about the interaction between fungi and humankind throughout history. It includes interviews with Kate and with Arturo Casadevall. The English-language version of the movie will be shown at the upcoming Cannes Film Festival on May 13-24, 2009 and is available from Kate.

Rebecca Phaeton, a Gynecology Medical Research Fellow in the Dadachova lab, will present a specially highlighted poster entitled "Biodistribution of 188-Rhenium labeled antibody to E6 viral protein in experimental cervical tumors: A potential highly selective tumor-specific treatment for HPV-related cervical cancer" at the upcoming AACR meeting in April in Denver, CO.

4. **DiLorenzo, Teresa**


Teresa served on two NIH Special Emphasis Panels that reviewed “member conflict” applications for the Hypersensitivity, Autoimmune, and Immune-mediated Diseases (HAI) study section. She is also a member of the panel that reviews F30 (predoctoral) and F32 (postdoctoral) fellowship applications for NIDDK.

Ari Geliebter, an Einstein medical student, was awarded a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Research Training Fellowship to conduct research under Teresa’s mentorship for one year beginning in August 2009.
5. **Goldstein, Harris**


6. **Gravekamp, Claudia**


7. **Kim, Kami**


As of April 2009, Kami will be co-section editor of Parasitology for PLoS Pathogens.
8. **Nathenson, Stan**


9. **Nosanchuk, Josh**


Josh received a Hirschl/Weill-Caulier Career Scientist Award for the study of *Candida parapsilosis* hydrolytic enzymes.

Josh was elected to the status of Fellow in the American College of Physicians. Read more about the significance of this honor here: [http://www.aecom.yu.edu/medicine/news.aspx?id=17410](http://www.aecom.yu.edu/medicine/news.aspx?id=17410)

10. **Palliser, Debbie**

following intravaginal application of siRNAs targeting both a viral and host gene. Cell Host Microbe 5:84-94.

This paper was discussed by Reuters, Forbes, Comcast.net News, Science Daily, The Dallas Morning News, and Agence France Presse. Find links to the press coverage at http://www.aecom.yu.edu/home/addCoverage.asp?id=52

11. Prasad, Vinayaka

The New York State AIDS Advisory Council urges the creation of a New York State HIV/AIDS Research Initiative modeled on a successful California HIV/AIDS Research Program (CHRP). With the second highest AIDS case rate in the country and abundant AIDS expertise, such a program can position New York State to attract more NIH funds for AIDS research relevant to the state. A group of eminent AIDS researchers in New York State have come together to try to convince the state legislators to include in the NYS budget, $1M for the first year as start-up and $5M for the subsequent 2-3 years for AIDS research. The money will be used to give out pilot and feasibility grants to individuals as well as other types of grants to promote AIDS research by in-state investigators to help them attract larger NIH grants. In a meeting held in December 2008 at the Center for Drug Use and HIV Research (National Development and Research Institutes) in New York entitled “Setting an HIV/AIDS Agenda for New York State,” NYS AIDS experts gathered to discuss priority areas for funding in four areas: Basic Research; Social, Behavioral and Prevention Research; Clinical Research; and Health Policy Research. Prasad chaired the Basic Research group and helped develop initiatives to be recommended to the State by the NYS AIDS Council.

Prasad has been named to the Editorial Board of Journal of Global Infectious Diseases. He is currently on the Editorial Boards of Journal of Virology, Retrovirology, AIDS Therapy & Research, and RNA Biology.

Prasad and Ganjam Kalpana edited a book, HIV Protocols, 2nd edition, that was published by Springer in early 2009. The book includes chapters by a large number of well known HIV researchers worldwide. The contributors include MI faculty members such as Prasad, Kalpana, Harris Goldstein, and Joan Berman. The book is available in the Library and it is also accessible electronically at the Library site with the following link: http://www.springerprotocols.com/BookToc/doi/10.1007/978-1-59745-170-3

Prasad chaired an NIH Study Section to review applications submitted to the “Integrated Preclinical and Clinical Program” in November 2008 and was a member on two recent NIH Study Sections – one was to review Center for AIDS Research applications (November 2008) and the other was the AIDS Molecular and Cellular Biology (AMCB) study section (March 2009) on which he served as an ad hoc member.
12. Steinberg, Bettie

In December 2008, Bettie received a 5-year R01 grant from the NIH (1R01DC008579-01) entitled, “Human Papillomavirus Infection and Expression of COX-2.”

Her abstract entitled "COX-2 and PGE-2 - Targets in Recurrent Respiratory Papillomas" was accepted for oral presentation at the International Papillomavirus Workshop to be held in Malmo, Sweden in May 2009.

13. Zang, Xingxing