A Message from the Editors

Welcome to the inaugural issue of MINEWS, the e-newsletter of the M & I Department, which we plan to distribute three times per year. With this document, we hope to improve communication within the department, as well as give departmental members at every level a forum to share their news and accomplishments. We thank those of you who took the time to contribute news from the past year to this issue, and we hope that we will hear from our newsletter-shy departmental colleagues when we solicit news for the Summer 2008 issue in a few months. This is a work-in-progress, so please feel free to send comments and suggestions to MINEWS@aecom.yu.edu. We really want to know what you think!

Teresa DiLorenzo and Arturo Casadevall

Departmental News from the Chair

Departmental Growth
Our department is in the midst of a major growth spurt. In the past year or so, Drs. Chandran, Gravekamp, Herold, Leyh, Palliser, and Zang have joined our faculty, significantly broadening the research scope of our department. We anticipate recruiting three other investigators in the near future. Faculty recruitment is done by a committee chaired by Dr. Steve Porcelli and composed of Drs. Casadevall, DiLorenzo, Goldstein, Jacobs, Nathenson, Pirofski, Prasad, Putterman and Scharff. The committee was assembled in late 2006 with representation from other divisions/departments that are closely allied with Microbiology and Immunology, such as Cell Biology, Infectious Diseases, and Rheumatology, to coordinate recruitments. Faculty recruitment is a deliberative process that involves screening through dozens of applications, bringing the candidate in for a seminar and interviews, and, for a select few, a second visit. A critical facet of recruitment is to show Einstein as a dynamic and exciting place and we need all students, postdocs, and faculty to attend these recruitment seminars. We anticipate that the recruitment process will continue to run through 2008 and hope to complete it by early 2009.

Price Center
One of the most exciting developments at Einstein this year is the formal opening of the Price Center. The department of Microbiology and Immunology together with the Division of Infectious Diseases is heavily involved in recruiting for the 5th floor of the Price Center. The Laboratory of Dr. Bill Jacobs will move to the fifth floor of the Price Center in the Spring. Two of the three future faculty recruits will also be recruited to the Price Center. A criterion for Price Center recruitment is that the investigator works on one of the A, B, or C NIH priority organisms/areas.

4th Floor Forchheimer Renovation
As everyone knows, the Forchheimer building is showing its age. In the past two years, the two cold rooms and the warm room were renovated. However, ambitious plans are underway for a major renovation of the 4th floor common spaces. We anticipate that the central island will be reconfigured to achieve a better use of common spaces. The timeline for this renovation is a bit uncertain because this work will have to be scheduled among all the other competing
institutional priorities, but we are hopeful that the work will begin in late 2008 or early 2009.

**Student Survey**
Our department is committed to improving the graduate student experience and we have asked students for input. Thus far, only a few have sent in thoughts and suggestions. The survey is still open and we encourage all students to provide input. In the spring the faculty will meet to consider the suggestions and hopefully institute changes.

**Student Invited Speaker**
In the academic year 2008-2009 students will be asked to invite a speaker of their choice. This will be an opportunity for students to interact directly with an investigator from another institution. Please start thinking of suitable candidates.

**New M & I Faculty Members**

**Kartik Chandran** was recruited from Brigham and Women’s Hospital and Harvard Medical School, where he worked in the laboratory of James Cunningham and studied the role of endosomal cysteine proteases in cell entry by the Ebola and Marburg viruses. At Einstein, he will continue to investigate the invasion mechanisms of emerging viruses. His lab is located in Forchheimer 414.

**Claudia Gravekamp** has very recently been recruited from the California Pacific Medical Center Research Institute in San Francisco. She has expertise and interest in a variety of areas, including breast cancer vaccines, tumor immunology and aging, breast cancer stem cells, and bacterial vaccines. We anticipate she will move to the 4th floor of Forchheimer soon after her arrival.

**Betsy Herold** was recruited from Mount Sinai by Einstein’s Department of Pediatrics, and she has a secondary appointment in M & I. Her interests include development and testing of microbicides to prevent transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Her laboratory is in Forchheimer 702.

**Tom Leyh** joined M & I from the Department of Biochemistry. He has multiple research interests, including the biochemistry and enzymology of sulfate adenylation and the mevalonate pathway in *Streptococcus* and Mycobacteria. His lab is located in Ullmann 111.

**Debbie Palliser** came to us from the CBR Institute for Biomedical Research and Harvard Medical School. She worked in the laboratory of Judy Lieberman, where she developed an siRNA-based microbicide against herpes simplex-2. At Einstein, she will use RNA interference to identify novel genes involved in dendritic cell activation. Debbie is currently located in Golding 701 and is expected to move to the 4th floor of Forchheimer soon.

**Xingxing Zang** recently arrived from Memorial Sloan-Kettering, where he worked in the laboratory of James Allison and discovered and characterized B7x, a novel member of the T cell costimulatory family. One of his main interests is the role of B7x and related molecules in immune evasion by tumor cells. Xingxing can currently be found in Golding 703, and we anticipate that he will move to the 4th floor of Forchheimer soon.
Two MERIT Awards for M & I!

Arturo Casadevall and Vinayaka Prasad are each recipients of a MERIT Award from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases of the National Institutes of Health. A MERIT (Method to Extend Research in Time) Award entitles the recipient to receive an administrative renewal of a competitively awarded R01 grant for an additional five years. As described on the NIH website, “MERIT Awards provide long-term support to investigators with impressive records of scientific achievement in research areas of special importance or promise. The MERIT Awards are intended to provide such investigators with long-term, stable support to foster their continued creativity and spare them some of the administrative burdens associated with frequent preparation and submission of research grant applications. Less than 5 percent of NIH-funded investigators are selected to receive MERIT Awards.”

A First Look at the Itinerary for the M & I Departmental Retreat

Jürgen Brojatsch is the faculty organizer for our departmental retreat, to be held on May 12, 2008 at The New York Botanical Garden. Here is the intriguing itinerary:

8:00 AM  Buses leave from Forchheimer
8:30 - 9:15  Breakfast / Poster Set Up
9:15 - 9:30  Welcome and Introduction: Dr. Arturo Casadevall
9:30 - 10:30  Student Presentations
10:30 - 11:00  Break
11:00 - Noon  Student Presentations
Noon - 2:15 PM  Lunch
  Guided Tours (optional)
  Scavenger Hunt (mandatory)
2:15 - 3:00  Guest Speaker: Dr. Craig Roy
3:00 - 3:30  Break
3:30 - 5:00  Postdoc Presentations
5:00  Closing Remarks:
  Drs. Jürgen Brojatsch and Arturo Casadevall
5:00 - 6:30  Poster Session / Cocktails
6:30  Dinner, Prize Announcement and Skits
8:30  Cocktails and Party
10:00  Buses back to Forchheimer

News from the Students

1. Donaldson, Teraya (Kim Lab)

Awards and honors:

Mount Holyoke Alumnae Association Fellowship

Carl Storm Underrepresented Minority Fellowship for the 2007 Polyamines Gordon Research Conference
Meeting presentations:

Oral presentation, Polyamines Gordon Graduate Student Seminar Conference
Poster presentation, Polyamines Gordon Conference

2. Jarchum, Irene (DiLorenzo Lab)

Publications:


Meeting presentations:


MedImmune 2nd Annual Inflammation & Autoimmunity Abstract Competition, November 1-2, 2007, Gaithersburg, MD. Invited speaker.


3. Madrid, Dennis (Kim Lab)

Meeting presentations:

Oral presentation, MSTP retreat

4. Mwakingwe, Agnes (Kim Lab)

Meeting presentations:

Poster presentation, Woods Hole Molecular Parasitology Meeting

5. Sango, Kaori (Goldstein Lab)

Awards and honors:

National Institutes of Health Scholarship for the upcoming Keystone symposium on HIV
Research (March 26-April 1, 2008) to cover travel expenses

Meeting presentations:

Poster presentation, Keystone symposium on HIV Research (March 26-April 1, 2008)

6. Schweitzer, Andrew (Dadachova Lab)

Awards and honors:

Andrew Schweitzer, a medical student at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, was awarded a 1 year Howard Hughes Medical Research Fellowship to work on melanin nanoparticles for radioprotection of cancer patients and joined the Dadachova lab in August 2007. Recently, he has been chosen by HHMI to attend (including all expenses paid trip) the International Achievement Summit of 2008, which will be held in the Big Island of Hawaii on July 2-6, 2008. He will participate in this Summit as one of 100 student delegates that are composed of other Howard Hughes fellows, Rhodes scholars, Truman scholars, Soros fellows, and participants in other fellowships in science, law, politics, and business. Last year, speakers at the summit included Bill Clinton, Elie Wiesel, Desmond Tutu, Nancy Pelosi, Barack Obama, Mohamed El Baradei, three US Supreme Court justices, six Pulitzer prize-winning authors, and prominent/Nobel laureate scientists such as Craig Mello, Ian Frazer, John Mather, Benjamin Carson, Francis Collins, and Elias Zerhouni.

7. Vera, Iset (Kim Lab)

Meeting presentations:

Poster presentation, Woods Hole Molecular Parasitology Meeting

News from the Postdocs

1. Chaparro, Rudy (DiLorenzo Lab)

Publications:


2. Chattopadhyay, Kausik (Nathenson Lab)

Awards and honors:

2008: Keystone Symposia Travel Scholarship Award for the Lymphocyte Activation and Signaling meeting held on Feb 3 - Feb 8, 2008, in Snowbird, Utah, USA.

Publications:


Meeting presentations:

2008: Poster presentation at the Keystone Symposia meeting for Lymphocyte Activation and Signaling, held on February 3-8, 2008, at Snowbird, Utah, USA.

3. **Eisenman, Helene (Casadevall Lab)**

Publications:


Meeting presentations:


4. **Garforth, Scott (Prasad Lab)**

Awards and honors:

American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Postdoctoral Travel Fellowship, 2008

Publications:


**Meeting presentations:**


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

**Awards and honors:**

AECOM Belfer Institute Postdoctoral Poster Travel Award
9th International Congress on Toxoplasmosis Outstanding Oral Presentation Award

**Publications:**


**Meeting presentations:**

Oral presentation, 9th International Congress on Toxoplasmosis
Oral presentation, Woods Hole Molecular Parasitology Meeting
Invited talk, Sociedade Brasileira de Protozoologia, Caxambu, Brazil

6. **Harris, Philippa (Kim Lab)**

**Meeting presentations:**

Poster presentation, 9th International Congress on Toxoplasmosis

7. **Hochman, Sarah (Kim Lab)**

**Meeting presentations:**

Poster presentation, Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) Annual Meeting
8. **Howell, Robertha (Dadachova Lab)**

**Awards and honors:**

Awarded a Research Supplement to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research to Dr. Dadachova's NIAID R01 grant on radioimmunotherapy of opportunistic infections

9. **Jain, Neena (Fries Lab)**

**Awards and honors:**

Abstract and oral presentation at the 2007 American Society for Microbiology (ASM) on "Allergen is a novel virulence gene that is regulated by phenotypic switching in Cryptococcus neoformans" was selected as having merit by both ASM and Medical Mycology Society of the Americas (MMSA) for one of four $500 travel awards funded by MMSA to attend and present the work at ASM General Meeting 2007 held in Toronto, Canada.

**Publications:**


10. **Joseph, Aviva (Goldstein Lab)**

**Awards and honors:**

Travel award to participate in the 8th Annual Symposium on Antiviral Drug Resistance: Targets and Mechanisms (November 11-14, 2007), Richmond, Virginia

Belfer Institute postdoc travel award (December 3, 2007)

Young Investigator Award to participate in the 15th Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI, February 3-6, 2008), Boston, Massachusetts

Travel award to participate in a Keystone Symposium - HIV Vaccines: Progress and Prospects (March 27 - April 1, 2008), Banff, Alberta, Canada

Travel support to participate in the 11th Annual National Center for Aids Research Conference (CFAR, November 8, 2007), San Diego, California

**Publications:**


**Meeting presentations:**

Poster presentation - The 8th Annual Symposium on Antiviral Drug Resistance: Targets and Mechanisms (November 11-14, 2007), Richmond, Virginia

Poster presentation - The 15th Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI, February 3-6, 2008), Boston, Massachusetts

Poster presentation - Keystone Symposium - HIV Vaccines: Progress and Prospects (March 27 - April 1, 2008), Banff, Alberta, Canada

11. **Lagal, Vanessa (Kim Lab)**

**Meeting presentations:**

Oral presentation, 9th International Congress on Toxoplasmosis

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

**Awards and honors:**

Belfer Institute travel award for poster presentation at the Einstein Postdoctoral Symposium

**Publications:**


**Meeting presentations:**


13. **Mukhopadhaya, Arunika (DiLorenzo Lab)**

**Awards and honors:**

Postdoctoral research grant from the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International (JDRF) for 2 years (2008-2010)
Keystone Symposia Travel Scholarship Award for the 'Tolerance in Transplantation and Autoimmunity' meeting held on January 29 - February 3, 2008, Keystone Resort, Keystone, Colorado

Meeting presentations:


News from the Faculty

1. Bonagura, Vincent

Awards and honors:

$40K grant from the Feinstein Institute for Medical Research to study the effect of chimeric, dimeric IgG with human secretory piece, expressed in single cells, in preventing biofilm production in patients with primary immunodeficiency.

$150K grant from the Rodolitz Foundation to study the effect of ILT3 in food and dust allergy.

$50K grant from the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology for a 2nd year fellowship stipend in the Division of Allergy and Immunology at LIJ/SCH.

Publications:


Meeting presentations:

Four abstracts presented at the 25th International Papillomavirus meeting in Beijing China. One was a plenary and another an oral abstract. Three abstracts will be presented in early March 2008 at the American Academy of Allergy and Immunology meeting in Philadelphia.

2. Casadevall, Arturo

Awards and honors:

Rhoda Benham Award from Medical Mycology Society of America 2007
NIH Merit Award 2007 (see story on page 3)
ASM William Hinton Award 2008 (for mentoring scientists from underrepresented groups)
IDSA Kass Lecturer 2008
Albert Einstein College of Medicine Faculty Mentoring Award 2008


**Meeting presentations:**

Co-chair, ASM colloquium on ‘The fungal kingdom: diverse and essential roles in the earth’s ecosystem’

Developer of Division F program for ASM General meeting 2007

Keynote speaker, XIII Fungal Genetics Conference

Keynote Speaker Second FEBS Advanced Lecture Course Human Pathogens

Louisville Distinguished Speaker Lecture

Merck Retreat Keynote Speaker

ASM General Meeting

**Other:**

Co-Chair NIAID Board of Scientific Counselors (2008-2010)
3. **Dadachova, Kate**

**Publications:**


**Meeting presentations:**

Dadachova gave invited talks on radioimmunotherapy of HIV at the Workshop on Alpha-Emitting Radionuclides in Therapy, Aachen, Germany; and on radioimmunotherapy of metastatic melanoma at the Department of Biological Sciences Seminar, Lehman College, NY.

**Other:**

The PLoS One article on the use of ionizing radiation by melanized fungi was featured by National Public Radio:


CBS talked about the radioimmunotherapy of viral cancers:
http://cbs4.com/video/?id=43855@wfor.dayport.com

NIAID devoted a news story to this work:

4. DiLorenzo, Teresa

Awards and honors:

American Diabetes Association Gail Patrick Innovation Award, 2007
Irma T. Hirschl Career Scientist Award, 2008
Acceptance into the Henry Kunkel Society, 2008

Publications:


**Meeting presentations:**

Invited speaker, “CD8 T Cells and Islet Autoimmunity”—Eighth Annual Rachmiel Levine Diabetes and Obesity Symposium, Newport Beach, CA, 1/13/08

5. **Fries, Bettina**

**Awards and honors:**

Pilot grant from George M. O’Brien Kidney Research Centers–Toxin clearance in patients with *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteremia and chronic renal failure
Elected to be a fellow of IDSA (Infectious Diseases Society of America)
Appointed to the editorial board of FEMS Yeast Research
Appointed to the editorial board of Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Infectious Diseases

**Publications:**


6. **Goldstein, Harris**

**Publications:**

7. **Kalpana, Ganjam**

**Awards and honors:**

Recipient of one of four Schwannomatosis Awards granted by the Children’s Tumor Foundation totaling $110,000 to promote pioneering research aimed at treating a tumor disorder that causes severe, untreatable pain. The 2007 discovery of the first candidate gene for Schwannomatosis, INI1, has energized research into the disorder. Dr. Kalpana, who originally discovered INI1 gene, will develop preclinical mouse models of Schwannomatosis and characterize them for INI1 mutations and its downstream effectors. Understanding the molecular basis of Schwannomatosis will facilitate the identification of therapeutic targets. Dr. Kalpana was part of the team that originally identified the INI1 gene, and she has studied its biology for many years. The Children's Tumor Foundation is very excited that she has brought her INI1 expertise to the Schwannomatosis community.

**Meeting presentations:**

Invited to give a Keynote address in the 2008 Neurofibromatosis Conference to be held at Bonita Springs, FL (June 6-10). The conference is organized by the Children’s Tumor Foundation. Dr. Kalpana is one of 5 major speakers delivering a keynote address and her talk will be on “The role of INI1/SMARCB1/hSNF5 in rhabdoid tumors and Schwannomatosis.”

8. **Kim, Kami**

**Awards and honors:**

Elected Chair-Elect ’08-09 for American Society of Microbiology Division AA

**Publications:**


9. Nathenson, Stan

Awards and honors:

R01 Research Grant (Year 42), Molecular and Structural Basis for T Cell Costimulation, 12/15/2007-11/30/2012

2nd Marshall S. Horwitz Faculty Prize for Research Excellence - January 16, 2008

Publications:


10. Prasad, Vinayaka

Awards and honors:

NIH Merit Award (see story on page 3)

Named a new member of the editorial boards of two major journals – Journal of Virology (ASM Press) and Retrovirology (BioMed Central)

Meeting activities:

Jointly organized, with Ganjam Kalpana, “AIDS in India 2007: A Regional Workshop-Symposium to enhance Research Capacity,” a meeting that was jointly supported by the Einstein AITRP and the Einstein/MMC CFAR. The meeting was held at JNCASR, Bangalore, India (July 9th to 13th, 2007).

Other:

Chaired the Fogarty International Center’s Study Section (Special Emphasis Panel) to review the AIDS International Training and Research Program grants held on Nov. 15, 2007.
Named the Chair of the Steering Committee of the newly formed Einstein Global Health Center. Dr. Prasad is responsible, along with other members of the Steering Committee, to establish the Center, formulate its long-term goals and create a viable plan to enhance global health research at Einstein.

Prasad is one of the new members of the Einstein Faculty Senate. He joins Teresa DiLorenzo and Arturo Casadevall, who already represent the Department of M & I.