

Zamore to receive the Schering-Plough Research Institute Award

Phillip D. Zamore, PhD, Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator, the *Gretchen Stone Cook Chair in Biomedical Sciences* and professor of biochemistry & molecular pharmacology, is among eight scientists to be honored by the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBMB) for their outstanding achievements and contributions to science.

The ASBMB will honor Dr. Zamore with the Schering-Plough Research Institute Award, which was established to recognize young investigators for outstanding research early in their careers. A pioneer in the study of RNA silencing in eukaryotes, Zamore's laboratory has played a role in many of the major breakthroughs in the field.

"I am honored to have our laboratory's work recognized by the ASBMB. The Schering-Plough Award highlights the hard work and creative efforts of the students and post-docs who have participated in our efforts to understand the mechanism and biology of RNA silencing," said Zamore.

An international leader in the science of RNA interference (RNAi), the ability of double-stranded RNA to "silence" targeted genes, Zamore's experiments have shed light on how RNAi works at the molecular level, specifically identifying

that it was the *small* double-stranded RNA, the result of an enzymatic chopper called dicer, that precisely guided the silencing reaction of the process. He now focuses his investigations on the biochemical analysis of *in vitro* extracts to study the machinery of RNAi, in hopes of applying this phenomenon to human disease.

"Dr. Zamore has been a pioneer in both our fundamental understanding of RNAi and in the development of new therapies based on RNAi. We are extraordinarily proud to have him here at UMass Medical School, and I can think of no one more deserving of this prestigious award," said Terence R. Flotte, MD, executive deputy chancellor, provost and dean of the School of Medicine.

A member of the UMMS community since 1999, Zamore earlier this year was named a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator, one of the most



Phillip Zamore, PhD, is the 2009 recipient of the Schering-Plough Award, which was established by the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology to recognize young investigators for outstanding research early in their careers.

esteemed scientific designations in the world. He was also named a 2000 Pew Scholar in Biomedical Sciences by the Pew Charitable Trusts and, in 2002, was a grant recipient under the W. M. Keck Foundation's Distinguished Young Scholars in Medical Research Program. ■

UMMS joins Pfizer research consortium

As more and more children and adults in the United States are diagnosed with type 2 diabetes and obesity, researchers worldwide are re-examining insulin signaling in adipose cells, also known as fat cells, to increase understanding of the relationship between type 2 diabetes and obesity. UMass Medical School (UMMS) researchers recently joined the effort with colleagues at other research institutions as part of the Pfizer's Insulin Resistance Pathway (IRP) Project.

IRP, a three-year, \$14 million project funded by Pfizer, enables UMMS to work with researchers from the University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB), California Institute of Technology (Caltech) and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) as well as Entelos, a biopharmaceutical company, to identify new pathways that cause cells to become insulin resistant, with the desired outcome being development of new drugs for obesity and type 2 diabetes.

"There is an open spirit of collaboration within this consortium that enables us to take on many different and new approaches to identify pathways that lead to insulin resistance in cells," said Norman Kennedy, PhD, assistant professor of molecular medicine, who will lead the effort at UMMS. "I believe we'll see progress as we provide expertise and share our data with one another. The end result of this research will define new tar-

gets for this medical need and ultimately, provide patients with better treatments."

Dr. Kennedy and his lab, along with researchers from Pfizer and MIT, will examine insulin signaling in fat cells; their research will then be applied to the development of models by MIT, Caltech and UCSB. Kennedy's lab will define conditions that enable fat cells to become insulin resistant and examine the role specific proteins play in the regulation of insulin signaling. Kennedy's research will initially focus on the role of the JNK pathway in glucose metabolism and may expand to include studying additional pathways.

Kennedy communicates with the other participating labs on a weekly basis, and meets monthly with his counterparts at MIT and twice a year with researchers from all three research institutions. The collaboration allows Kennedy and other researchers to publish and patent their basic biology



Norman Kennedy, PhD, assistant professor of molecular medicine, (left) analyzes data with Research Associate Michael Noujaim.

discoveries. If the three-year phase proves beneficial, Pfizer will implement an additional two-year phase that will allow Kennedy and his lab to continue their research and study other insulin-related areas.

"This is a new, global approach to research, and there are many opportunities for the consortium to serve as a model for future collaborations between research institutions and drug companies," said Kennedy. ■

Get in Focus

Have a story idea, a faculty, student or staff achievement, or a campus-wide event for the calendar? Send it to the *Focus* editor at focus@umassmed.edu



Luippold appointed director of public safety and police chief

John “Jack” W. Luippold Jr. has been appointed director of public safety and chief of police for UMass Medical School (UMMS). Luippold succeeds William Carey, who retired after a decades-long career in law enforcement capped by 15 years of service to UMMS.

In his previous role as deputy chief of police, Luippold was responsible for the daily activities of the police department and managed law enforcement operations and services for UMMS and UMass Memorial Medical Center–University Campus. As director and chief he will develop programs to enhance the safety of people and property, as well as enforce federal, state and local laws and university policies. In addition, Luippold will continue to work directly with UMMS and UMass Memorial senior leadership on public safety issues for all campuses.

Luippold earned a master’s in public administration from UMass Amherst and a bachelor’s in criminal justice from Westfield State College. In 1977, he began his career in

law enforcement at UMass Amherst. During his 24-year career he was promoted through the ranks and in 1992 became chief of police and director of public safety. In 2001 he became the senior investigator for the state’s Department of Mental Retardation Investigation Unit for Western Massachusetts prior to coming to UMMS in 2006.

Chief Carey was a strong proponent of community policing and focused during his tenure at UMMS on officers’ professional development to meet the challenges of maintaining order and safety at a large facility frequented by thousands of students, faculty, staff, patients and visitors each day. University police officers attend the Massachusetts Criminal Justice Municipal Police Officers Academy



New Public Safety Director John “Jack” Luippold (left) with retiring Director William Carey

and, as trained law enforcement professionals, adhere to the public safety standards for academic health centers set by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations while providing a friendly, personal face to the force.

“I am honored to have to been chosen to continue the legacy of professionalism established by Bill Carey and proud to lead our force of talented and dedicated police officers and public safety professionals,” said Luippold. ■

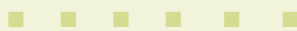


The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland and UMass Medical School have a commitment to undergraduate and graduate medical education, as well as dynamic and growing research enterprises. Representatives of both institutions, pictured here, recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding to foster collaboration.

achievements

■ **Carol Jaffarian**, MBA, instructor in nursing, was recently elected to a second two-year term on the Executive Committee of the United Nations Non-Governmental Organization Committee on HIV/AIDS, this time as secretary. Jaffarian’s previous work with the UN led to the establishment of the HIV Education and Prevention Project, a collaboration between UMass Worcester and the Armenian Relief Society that is grant funded by the World AIDS Foundation.

■ The Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation recently named 14 new Damon Runyon Fellows, among them **Elaine M. Youngman**, PhD, post-doctoral fellow in the lab of **Craig C. Mello**, PhD, Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator, *Blais University Chair in Molecular Medicine* and professor of molecular medicine and cell biology. The recipients of this prestigious, three-year award are outstanding post-doctoral scientists conducting basic and translational cancer research in the laboratories of leading senior investigators across the country.



Following are faculty who have joined UMMS as professors or associate professors or who have been promoted to those ranks, as reported by the Office of Faculty Administration:

■ **April Chunling Deng**, MD, PhD, appointed associate professor of pathology
 ■ **Amanda Jenkins**, PhD, appointed associate professor of pathology

■ **Neeta Garg**, MD, promoted to clinical associate professor of neurology
 ■ **William R. Kobertz**, PhD, promoted to associate professor of biochemistry & molecular pharmacology

■ **Petrus H. Pretorius**, PhD, promoted to associate professor of radiology

UMMS to collaborate with Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

The University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMMS) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland (RCSI) to explore mutually beneficial collaborations between the two institutions. RCSI has played a major role in medical education and training in Ireland since its founding in 1784. Today the RCSI Research Institute is internationally recognized as a leading biomedical research institution.

The MOU is envisioned to be comprehensive, underscoring the strong synergies that exist between the two institutions. Under the terms of the MOU, UMMS and RCSI will explore collaborative opportunities in research; undergraduate and graduate medical education exchange; and international clinical services. Each institution brings to this emerging partnership a long tradition of, and commitment to, undergraduate and graduate medical education, as well as a dynamic and growing research enterprise. RCSI is particularly interested in joining forces with UMMS investigators who are pioneering development of RNAi-based delivery systems for therapeutics to target specific diseases, including rheumatoid arthritis, Huntington’s disease and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

This partnership will benefit from the institutions’ access to large patient populations to participate in clinical trials that will help translate RNAi

therapies from the laboratory to patients. RCSI has developed a global reach, establishing educational, research and service programs in Dubai, Bahrain and Malaysia, as well as in Ireland. UMMS, like RCSI, is committed to strengthening existing, and establishing new, international partnerships. Through this MOU, the two institutions will look at ways in which they can collaborate on international initiatives, including in China where UMMS and the University of Massachusetts already have a presence.

“We are proud to become affiliated with an entity of RCSI’s caliber and worldwide reach,” said Interim Chancellor Michael F. Collins. “Our combined resources create extraordinary opportunities to strengthen educational opportunities for our students and to advance lifesaving translational research and improve health care around the world.” ■

Imaging advances aid UMMS researchers

UMass Medical School (UMMS) researchers and clinicians who observe and track the progress of pulmonary, cardiac, neurological and other diseases non-invasively now have access to a host of specialized imaging techniques at the Advanced MRI Center, which opened last year under the direction of Mitchell S. Albert, PhD, professor of radiology and director of MRI Research.

The Advanced MRI Center, home to a new Philips Achieva 3.0T X-series MRI, utilizes innovative imaging techniques to reveal functional and physiological information, thus helping researchers develop new therapeutic treatments and, ultimately, helping clinicians treat patients.

ple, with a 3T MRI, researchers can record images and brain functions that reveal subtle details or changes. One UMMS study seeks to map the areas of the brain in smokers that respond to nicotine. The hope is that by comparing these functional brain images to those of nonsmokers,

“This is a huge asset for researchers and boosts our ability to do basic and clinical science in a number of different areas.”

Mitchell S. Albert, PhD

“With these techniques we’re able to see parts of the body or functions better than with a conventional 1.5T MRI scan,” said Dr. Albert. “This is a huge asset for researchers and boosts our ability to do basic and clinical science in a number of different areas.” The 3T MRI machine can also image faster and with more detail than the more common 1.5T MRI. For exam-

researchers may be able to develop better therapies for people who want to quit smoking.

Albert is one of the pioneers of hyperpolarized gas MRI, which uses a high-powered laser to align the nuclei of helium or xenon as an aid to imaging. He received a Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers and nine patents for the

invention of this technology. Using hyperpolarized helium MRI, researchers can view lung function and stage the progress of treatment for pulmonary diseases such as cystic fibrosis, asthma and emphysema, which is not possible with conventional proton MRI. The advantage of hyperpolarized gas MRI over conventional imaging such as CT or x-rays is that it’s less invasive. “Because it doesn’t use radiation researchers can repeatedly scan during treatment,” said Albert. “This can be used to monitor the progression of the disease over time and track the effectiveness of treatments more accurately.”

Albert is exploring the potential to use hyperpolarized xenon to visualize cognitive brain function. The use of xenon to see brain function as opposed to a conventional fMRI image allows for much higher MR signals without background noise. Advancement of this imaging technique could lead to further insights into the progress of mental illnesses or other brain diseases such as multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer’s and stroke.

Albert, who joined UMMS from



Mitchell Albert, PhD, director of MRI Research and the Advanced MRI Center

Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women’s Hospital, is currently assembling a multidisciplinary team of researchers, scientists, engineers and clinicians that will advance research at UMMS and bring this new technology to clinical settings. ■

New shuttle service between UMMS Worcester and South Street (Shrewsbury) campuses

Over the last few years, a number of UMass Medical School administrative units have relocated to the South Street campus at 333 South Street in Shrewsbury. Among them are Human Resources, Information Services and Finance; many Commonwealth Medicine departments are also located there.

To facilitate employee travel between the UMMS Worcester and South Street campuses, a shuttle service has been started.

A 14-passenger van, labeled “South Street Medical School Shuttle,” now runs Monday through Friday. The shuttle departs the Worcester campus every forty minutes beginning at 8 a.m. and ending at 4:40 p.m. It departs the South Street campus every 40 minutes beginning at 8:20 a.m. and ending at 5 p.m. Travel time between campuses is about 20 minutes.

Pick-up and drop-off at the Worcester campus is on First Road adjacent to the plaza in front of the Medical School entrance (across from the First Road Parking Garage). Pick-up and drop-off at the South Street campus is at the building’s front entrance.

For a complete schedule of departure and arrival times, visit inside.umassmed.edu/Parking/transportation/ and click on “South Street Shuttle.” The number of shuttles and frequency are subject to change based on ridership levels. If transportation is needed for larger groups, contact Bill Tsaknopoulos, director of auxiliary services, at 6-6508 at least 24 hours in advance. ■

employees infocus

August Employee of Distinction Award

Vitals

Pamela MacLeod

Senior Program Development Associate
The Office of Program Development and the Enterprise Project Management Office, Commonwealth Medicine

Year started: 2003

Hometown: Arlington

Professionally Speaking

After serving nearly three years as director of Revenue Operations and Special Programs at the Center for Health Care Financing at Commonwealth Medicine (CWM), Pamela MacLeod joined the Office of Program Development and the Enterprise Project Management Office (OPD/EPMO) as a senior program development associate in 2006. MacLeod assists clients through project management and by assessing, developing, implementing and improving health care and business services through innovative management and clinical and busi-

ness expertise. “Pam is a valuable addition to the Office of Program Development,” said Joyce A. Murphy, MPA, vice chancellor and chief operating officer, and Louise Eichman, PMP, MA, director of OPD/EPMO, both of whom nominated MacLeod. “Her work ethic is an inspiration to all around her. She is perceptive, capable, accomplished and diligent. The volume of work she produces is invariably of excellent quality.”

Points of Pride

During her two years at OPD/EPMO, MacLeod has applied her project management skills to various efforts, including CWM’s first annual report, *Values in Action*; the pilot program for geriatric consultation services in Worcester; and the recent joint strategic planning initiative. She recently contributed to the institution’s workforce development goals through her work with the Massachusetts Academy for Life Sciences, which encourages high school students to pursue careers in life sciences and health industries: MacLeod facilitated discussions

among participants from UMMS, other colleges and universities, and non-profit organizations; prepared a proposal; and, with the support of her project team, secured funding from various sources, including \$1.1 million from the Life Sciences Bill recently signed by Governor Deval Patrick.

“CWM encourages team work, collaboration and innovation. Since joining the Office of Program Development, I’ve enjoyed working with my colleagues to find new, creative solutions for our clients as well as coming together for a common goal,” said MacLeod.



Calendar

information infocus

Human Resources moves to South Street

The UMMS Human Resources Department has moved from the Shaw Building on the University campus to the South Street campus at 333 South St. in Shrewsbury.

New Hire Orientations will be held at the South Street campus in the third floor amphitheater.

University Campus Satellite Office

HR will operate a satellite office four afternoons a week in the Shaw Building on the University campus, staffed by both Benefits and International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) personnel.

Hours of operation are:

Benefits 12:30–4:30 p.m., Tuesday through Thursday

ISSO 12:30–4:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday

Personnel Action Forms (PA)

All PAs should be sent to Personnel Action Control (PAC) at South Street. There will be no change to internal courier service currently in place for PAC.

Contact Information

All phone and fax numbers and e-mail addresses remain the same.

Shuttle Service

For information about a new shuttle service between these campuses, see page 3. ■

■ The Human Resources Workplace Learning Group will sponsor an open information session on the Assumption College graduate and undergraduate and Clark University graduate programs that are offered at reduced rates for UMMS employees. Representatives from Assumption and Clark will be in the Medical School lobby on Tuesday, Aug. 8, from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information, visit inside.umassmed.edu/hr/training/wlep.

■ Child Passenger Safety Seat Education will be offered on Thursday, Aug. 21, from 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the UMass Memorial Health Care EMS Garage at 23 Wells Street in Worcester. The program, sponsored by UMass Memorial Medical Center, educates parents and care givers about child passenger safety. Technicians are available to check car seats and help parents install them. The inspections are open to everyone, but appointments are required. To schedule an appointment or for information, call Carol Carpenter at 4-0626.

■ Support your local farmers by visiting the Greater Worcester Farmer's Market on the plaza in front of the Medical School lobby from 1 to 5 p.m. on Tuesdays through the end of October. Sponsored by UMMS and UMass Memorial Health Care, the market hosts vendors offering fruit, vegetables, flowers, honey, baked goods and gift certificates. For information about the farmer's market, visit www.greaterworcesterfarmersmarket.com.

■ *You and Me and What Was Missed*, an exhibit of conceptual photography, is the latest installment of the Lamar Soutter Library's Artist in Residence Series. The exhibit features the photography of Gregory Seward, MSHCA, director of the Tobacco Free Initiative & Tobacco Consultation Service and Tobacco Research coordinator at UMass Medical School and UMass Memorial Medical Center. The show runs through Friday, Sept. 5 and is located on the first floor of the Lamar Soutter Library. The library is open seven days a week. For information, contact Nancy Harger at 6-3334 or via global e-mail.

■ The tenth annual Walk to Cure Cancer will be held Sunday, Sept. 28, beginning at noon on the UMass Medical School campus. The five-mile walk around Lake Quinsigamond, sponsored by Massachusetts AFL-CIO in partnership with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, supports cancer research programs at UMMS. Registration begins at 10 a.m. Michael Damian, recording artist and star of "The Young and the Restless," will give a pre-walk concert hosted by WSRS, 96.1 FM. For more information, call event manager Tamara Hampton at x6-5512 or visit www.walktocurecancer.com ■

Correction

One page 4 of July *Focus*, the caption for photo 5 misidentified the graduate; her name is Tora Mitra Ganguli (not Gangul).

grants infocus

□ **Ingolf Bach**, PhD, associate professor of molecular medicine: *Roles of LILM Cofactors for Regulating ERalpha During Oncogenesis and Development*, National Cancer Institute, one year, \$337,188; recommended for four more years, \$1.3 million

□ **Rebecca L. Bernados**, PhD, post-doctoral fellow in the lab of **Marc R. Freeman**, PhD, assistant professor of neurobiology: *Regulation of Neural Stem Cell Fate in Drosophila*, American Cancer Society, three years, \$138,000

□ **Becky Briesacher**, PhD, assistant professor of medicine: *Impact of MMA Part D on Medicare Residents in Nursing Homes*, Changes in Health Care Financing & Organization, a program of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 18 months, \$219,432

□ **Robert E. Collins**, PhD, post-doctoral fellow in the lab of **David G. Lambright**, PhD, professor of molecular medicine and biochemistry & molecular pharmacology: *RabGDI Displacement Factors: Mechanism and Role in Membrane Traffic*, The Jane Coffin Childs Memorial Fund for Medical Research, three years, \$137,500

□ **Benedicte Delaval**, PhD, post-doctoral fellow in the lab of **Stephen J. Doxsey**, PhD, professor of molecular medicine, biochemistry & molecular pharmacology and cell biology: *Primary Role for the Centrosome in Cilia Formation and Ciliopathies*, PKD Foundation, one year, \$50,000

□ **Joseph DiFranza**, MD, professor of family medicine & community health: *A Study of the Onset of Nicotine Dependence in Relation to Lifetime Tobacco Use Using the HONC and the New Loss of Autonomy Over Smoking Checklist*, Centre Hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal, two years, \$30,000

□ **Warren J. Ferguson**, MD, associate professor of family medicine & community health: *Weaving Public Health Education into the Fabric of a Family Medicine Residency Curriculum*, Association of American Medical Colleges and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, eight months, \$25,000

□ **Patricia Franklin**, MD, MBA, MPH, the *Joy McCann Professor for Women in Medicine*, associate professor of orthopedics & physical rehabilitation and family medicine & community health: *Patient eHealth Tools to Guide Treatment Choices and Assess Outcome*, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, two years, \$198,684

□ **Mary Gilchrist**, PhD, professor of medicine: *Establish Triage Protocols for Samples Potentially Contaminated with Unknown Select Agents*, United States Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, one year, \$483,077

□ **JeanMarie Houghton**, MD, PhD, associate professor of medicine and cancer biology: *Consortium Planning Grant*, American Gastroenterological Association Institute, four months, \$10,000

□ **Sandra Mayrand**, director of the Regional Science Resource Center, *Intel Math Pilot 2 Program*, Intel Foundation, one year, \$35,000

□ **Teresa V. Mitchell**, PhD, assistant professor of psychiatry: *The Balance Between Top-Down and Bottom-Up Attentional Processes in Autism*, March of Dimes Foundation, three years, \$149,224

□ **Rebecca Moles**, MD, assistant professor of pediatrics: *UMass Child Protection Program/CJC*, Massachusetts Children's Alliance, two years, \$41,500

□ **Barry Saver**, MD, associate professor of family medicine & community health: *Patient Decision Making and Personalized, Multifactorial Risk Information*, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, two years, \$149,998

□ **Sean D. Speese**, PhD, post-doctoral fellow in the lab of **Vivian Budnik**, PhD, professor of neurobiology: *Novel Wingless Signaling in Synapse Development*, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, one year, \$46,826



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