

focus

'Charting the institution's course for the future'

Michael F. Collins, MD, named chancellor

The University of Massachusetts Board of Trustees voted on Sept. 26 to confirm Michael F. Collins, MD, as chancellor of the University of Massachusetts Medical School, following a search committee's unanimous recommendation to University President Jack M. Wilson in August. Dr. Collins has served UMass Medical School since he was appointed interim chancellor in May 2007, when longtime Chancellor Aaron Lazare, MD, stepped down for health reasons. Collins will continue to serve as the UMass senior vice president for the health sciences.

"What we've seen from Dr. Collins over the last year—a period of time in which he did not simply man the helm of the Medical School but actively set about charting the institution's course for the future—both delighted and impressed the search committee and left us feeling absolutely certain that Michael is exactly the type of leader we need to help the Medical School reach its fullest potential," said Wilson.

Since being named interim chancellor, Collins has worked in partnership with Dean and Provost and Executive Deputy Chancellor Terence R. Flotte, MD, in creating an administrative structure that supports institutional goals and objectives, fosters clear communication and reporting channels and provides administrative discipline.

"It has been a great privilege for me over this past year to serve the University as interim chancellor of the Worcester campus. I have enjoyed building meaningful relationships with the faculty, staff and students of our academic health sciences community, including our clinical partner UMass Memorial Health Care," said Collins. "Learning about and advocating for our tremendous programs and initiatives has been a terrifically rewarding experience. Our future is indeed bright as we continue to fulfill our collective

responsibility to impact health in our local communities, the commonwealth and the world."

Based on consultations with representatives from the Medical School campus, University leadership and the leadership of UMass Memorial Health Care, Collins led the creation of a joint planning effort that resulted in a new strategic plan for the Medical School, complementary to the UMass Memorial strategic plan, for a true academic health sciences center.

In championing the life sciences in Massachusetts, Collins and the Medical School leadership have played a central role in strengthening the commonwealth's global leadership position in the area. In less than a year, UMass Medical School has secured almost \$100 million to develop substantial life sciences investments. The Medical School has received \$8.2 million from the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center for the Massachusetts Stem Cell Bank and the University of Massachusetts International Stem Cell Registry.

To further capitalize on the "life sciences moment," Collins has led efforts to accelerate research growth and campus expansion by developing the innovative concept of the Advanced Therapeutics Cluster (ATC), which is poised to receive \$90 million, the largest state investment in the campus since

its inception, for the construction of a new facility that will house the ATC, to be known as the Albert Sherman Center.

Parallel with the work done in establishing the UMass Life Sciences Task Force and its subsequent recommendations, Collins worked with colleagues across the University to successfully position UMass as a key partner of the commonwealth in the ten-year, \$1 billion Life Sciences Initiative. Beginning with the Worcester campus' leading role in advancing the commonwealth's stem cell initiative, Collins helped establish the principle that there exists no single entity in the state better positioned than the University of Massachusetts to realize the potential created from continued investment in the life sciences and the economy of Massachusetts.

Collins worked closely with the deans of the Graduate School of Nursing and the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences to obtain University board approval for the creation of two important new degree programs: the doctor of nursing practice and the master of science in clinical investigation, respectively. Collins has also established an effort to increase the UMass Medical School course offerings on UMass Online.

"I am thrilled for the opportunity to serve as chancellor and grateful for the trust and confidence of the president, the board of trustees and the campus community. I look forward to working with my Medical School and University colleagues to realize the full potential of the commonwealth's great public medical school," said Collins. ■



Michael F. Collins, MD

Ambros receives Lasker Award

University of Massachusetts Medical School Professor of Molecular Medicine Victor R. Ambros, PhD, has been named co-recipient of the 2008 Lasker Award for Basic Medical Research for his efforts related to the discovery of microRNAs (miRNAs), tiny molecules that are now understood to play a critical role in gene regulation. The prestigious award—considered by many to be the American Nobel Prize—honors Dr. Ambros; long-time collaborator Gary B. Ruvkun, PhD, professor of genetics at Harvard Medical School; and David C. Baulcombe, PhD, of the University of Cambridge, England.

"I feel incredibly honored to receive this award, alongside Drs. Baulcombe and Ruvkun. The award reflects the many opportunities I've had to work with extraordinary mentors, students and collaborators," said Ambros.

The Lasker Awards Program, founded in 1945, is administered by the Albert &

Mary Lasker Foundation, named for pioneering advertising executive Albert Davis Lasker and his wife Mary Woodard Lasker, a champion of medical research. The late Mrs. Lasker is widely recognized for her contribution to the growth of the National Institutes of Health and her commitment to government funding of



Victor Ambros, PhD, speaks at an impromptu reception held in his honor to commemorate the Lasker Award announcement.

medical research in the hope of curing devastating diseases.

The Basic Medical Research Award honors scientists whose fundamental

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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



Translating science

Stem cell workshop held for regional science writers

In September the UMMS Center for Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine, supported with more than \$8.2 million from the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center, hosted a sneak preview for journalists at the center's newly renovated facility in the Rose and Gordon Laboratory Building on the Worcester Foundation campus in Shrewsbury.

More than 25 journalists from across the region enjoyed a hands-on, in-depth workshop focused on human embryonic stem cells (hESCs). Its intent was to educate the writers who, in many cases, serve to translate the basic sciences for lay audiences.

"By immersing these writers in all aspects of our stem cell work, we sought to give them the tools they'll need to report accurately and thoughtfully on the growing importance of stem cells in research," said Gary S. Stein, PhD, the *Gerald L. Haidak, MD*, and *Zelda S. Haidak Professor* and chair of cell biology, deputy director for the UMass Memorial Cancer Center and interim director of the center. "And just as importantly, we want UMass Medical School to be seen as a uniquely

qualified resource for insight and information."

In addition to a comprehensive stem cell biology lesson from Robert Lanza, MD, chief scientific officer at Advanced Cell Technology, and a primer on intellectual property issues presented by Irene Abrams, executive director of the Office of Technology Licensing at Brandeis University, participants spent time in the training lab examining undifferentiated and differentiated cells—even differentiated cardiac stem cells that had begun to beat spontaneously—and stunning fluorescent microscopy images of cells.

The half-day workshop, developed by Maria Borowski, training and education director for the center, in conjunction with the UMMS Office of



Area journalists got a sneak preview of the UMMS Center for Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine, during a workshop at the center's newly renovated facility in the Rose and Gordon Laboratory Building on the Worcester Foundation campus in Shrewsbury.

Public Affairs and Publications, also debuted the International Stem Cell Registry (ISCR), which provides scientists and the general public with a vast searchable database and library on hESCs. Mai Luong, PhD, and Kelly Smith, PhD, assistant professors of cell biology and curators of the ISCR, gave participants an online look at the registry, available at www.umassmed.edu/ISCR.

Marjorie Clay, PhD, director of the UMMS Office of Ethics, gave a very frank and intriguing presentation, describing the process for producing stem cells and defining the point at which a cluster of cells can or can't

become a human being.

The day ended with a lively lunchtime discussion led by Ekaterini Kritikou, associate editor of *Nature Reviews Molecular Cell Biology*, about issues writers face in crafting scientific articles—from weighing the newsworthiness of some research studies to ensuring that their interpretation of the science is accurate. One question the writers may have had at the beginning of the day—how to find appropriate and knowledgeable sources—has been answered.

The center is expected to hold a more formal open house later this month. ■



Campus sustainability

Small changes can make a big difference

The UMMS Sustainability Committee continues to explore, initiate and promote cost-effective options for expanding sustainable practices on the UMMS campuses, using the Governor's 2007 Energy Policy and the State Sustainability Program as guidelines. It's up to all members of the UMMS community to make the sustainability initiative successful. Small changes can make a big difference.

News:

The UMMS Purchasing Department has been working with office supply vendor W.B. Mason to promote the use of paper with recycled content for copy machines and printers. Currently, of the 6,000 cases UMMS purchases annually, only about 4 percent include recycled content. According to calculations provided by the Environmental Defense Fund, producing the amount of non-recycled or "virgin" paper that UMMS purchases annually takes more than 500 tons of wood and creates more than 3 million gallons of waste water and nearly 170,000 pounds of solid waste. If all paper purchased by UMMS had at least 30 percent recycled content, those environmental impacts would also be reduced by 30 percent.

To make choosing paper with recycled content as easy as possible, Purchasing has partnered with W.B. Mason to feature a list on the landing page for UMMS online purchasers that highlights recycled and other

green products available by contract. Buyers are encouraged to explore these products before making their next purchase.

Update:

In January, the Worcester campus expanded its recycling program to include glass, plastic and cans, in addition to the paper recycling that has been in place for several years. Bins for recycling these materials can be found in all elevator lobbies in the Medical School building and in the LRB cafeteria. Since January, more than 2,700 pounds of non-paper materials and 438,000 pounds of paper products have been recycled. For paper, that's an increase of 100,000 pounds since last year. Contributing to that large increase is the LRB cafeteria's conversion to all recyclable products for serving food; the LRB kitchen also recycles all glass, metal and plastic food containers it uses in preparing food.

For a complete list of materials that can be recycled, visit inside.umassmed.edu/recycling. ■



On Sept. 16, a team of senior leaders from UMass Medical School rolled up their sleeves for the Worcester community

during the United Way of Central Massachusetts' annual Day of Caring. The largest one-day volunteer drive in the region, the Day of Caring organizes nearly 1,000 volunteers and 55 companies, unions and student groups to complete more than 100 projects at 59 human service agencies. The UMMS-UMass Memorial team brightened up Emanuel Village on Evelyn Street, a low-income, independent, senior living facility, by raking leaves, trimming bushes and trees, and sprucing up the lawn and parking lot for the elders living there. The team, pictured left to right, included Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences Dean **Anthony Carruthers**, PhD; Office of Technology Management Executive Director **James McNamara**, PhD; UMass Memorial Senior Vice President of Facilities **Dana Swenson**; Vice Chancellor for Development **Charles Pagnam**; Chancellor **Michael Collins**, MD; Associate Vice Chancellor for University Relations **Mark Shelton**; Chancellor's Chief of Staff **Kathleen Powers**; Associate Vice Chancellor for Facilities Management **John Baker**; Administrative Coordinator for University Relations **Glady McReil**; Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance **Robert Jenal**; Associate Vice Chancellor for Finance **Nancy Vasil**; Interim Vice Chancellor for Human Resources **Phil Kerr**; and Special Assistant to the Chancellor **Ryan White**.

UMass Adolescent Treatment Programs link respect with healing

“Respect to me is everything in the world,” is one of the quotes interspersed with drawings and other original artwork in a large, color poster unveiled at the 2008 Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) Provider Forum. DMH created the striking “respect poster” reflecting the artistic contributions of youth from the ten DMH programs statewide, including the four UMass Adolescent Treatment Programs. The youths’ presence at the forum to share their expressions of what respect means to them showcases the culture change underway in how young psychiatric patients are treated as a result of the long-term partnership between UMMS and DMH. “Through collaboration between the Department of Psychiatry, Commonwealth Medicine, UMass Memorial Health Care and DMH, we are bringing together research and clinical experience to enhance care with evidence-based methods,” said Caroline McGrath, RN, executive director of the UMass Adolescent Treatment Programs.

Since 1985, UMMS has operated several long-term hospital and residential adolescent treatment programs at Westborough and Worcester State hospitals under contract to DMH, serving teenagers who suffer from major mental illnesses. With behaviors including violence and self-injury, these young people, most of them

DMH speaks to the shared values and goals that have made positive culture change possible,” said Janice LeBel, EdD, director of program management for DMH Child/Adolescent Services.

The contemporary model for adolescent treatment sensitizes both youth and their care providers to see



Caroline McGrath, RN, and Janice LeBel, EdD, are advocates of a culture change in adolescent psychiatric treatment programs that focus on strengths and skills instead of struggles. Inset: As part of their treatment, adolescents were encouraged to show, through artwork, what respect means to them. At right is a detail from the “respect poster” that highlights their responses.



Being respected by their caregivers as well as respecting themselves and each other are essential to their efforts toward recovery.

victims of trauma and abuse, are among the commonwealth’s neediest and most vulnerable citizens. Being respected by their caregivers as well as respecting themselves and each other are essential to their efforts toward recovery. “The long, continuous collaboration between UMMS and

themselves as persons, not patients—to focus on the individual rather than the condition by asking “What happened?” instead of “What is wrong with you?” By focusing on “strengths and skills instead of struggles, we can foster a more positive self-image and hope for the future among our

youth,” said McGrath. She and LeBel have both earned recognition for achieving an 88 percent reduction in the use of restrictive and coercive interventions in DMH adolescent treatment programs since 2001.

At the forum, speaker Joel Slack shared his story about how respectful, caring treatment from a nurse while he was hospitalized for psychosis as a teenager made a life-saving difference in his recovery. Slack founded Respect International to address the need for persons with psychiatric challenges to

be treated with respect, to experience hope and to be provided with the basic needs to live. DMH and UMass Adolescent Treatment Programs staff are pursuing further positive culture change. “We’re trying to increase youth involvement in every aspect of our programs,” McGrath noted. “We’ve established a youth advisory council and are hiring a peer specialist who is a young adult in recovery from mental illness to serve as both a confidante and role model for our kids.” ■

Lasker Award

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investigations have provided techniques, information or concepts that contribute to the elimination of major causes of disability and death. The Lasker Foundation honored Ambros, Baulcombe and Ruvkun in September at the 63rd Lasker Awards Ceremony in New York City.

Ambros is widely regarded as a

central figure in RNA biology for his work in identifying the function of miRNAs, the very short (approximately 22 nucleotide-long) single-stranded RNA molecules. The first miRNA was discovered by Ambros and his lab in 1993 in a pathway controlling development in the nematode *C. elegans*. Today, Ambros continues his research on miRNA function and gene

regulation during development and is focused on understanding the genetic and molecular mechanisms that control cell division, differentiation and morphogenesis in animals.

“The Lasker Award for Basic Medical Research is a wonderful acknowledgement of the profound impact Dr. Ambros has had on RNA research,” said Michael F. Collins, MD,

UMMS chancellor. “He is an integral member of a remarkable and growing group of RNA scientists here at UMMS who are advancing our understanding of biological mechanisms and opening the door to a deeper understanding of complex cellular processes involved in cancer, aging, inflammatory diseases and normal growth and development.” ■

employees infocus

October Employee of Distinction Award

Vitals

Laurel Post

Administrative Assistant
UMass Family Court Clinic of the Child and Family Forensic Center
Department of Psychiatry

Year started: 2006

Hometown: Douglas

Professionally Speaking

October Employee of Distinction Laurel Post handles multiple responsibilities for the UMass Family Court Clinic, but never calls attention to herself in the process. Her work with staff and clients supports the mission of the clinic to provide judges, attorneys and families in the Worcester and Hampden Probate and Family Court systems with clinical expertise that aids

decision making for the benefit of children. She is often the first face and voice seen and heard by visitors and callers. “Laurel does the work of three people, dealing with individuals who are often angry and stressed, in an intense environment that requires discretion, professionalism and sensitivity,” said Linda Cavallero, PhD, associate professor of clinical psychiatry, and one of several faculty members who nominated Post. “She is meticulous and detail oriented while keeping the big picture of our mission in mind.”

Post’s responsibilities include processing referrals from the courts for evaluations, scheduling appointments, assigning clinicians, scoring psychological questionnaires and transcribing reports, all within strict deadlines mandated by judges. In the past year, she took the lead in coordinating a long-anticipated but potentially disruptive move of the clinic to another location. “Ms. Post’s extraordinary efforts over the last eight

months have allowed faculty to continue to be productive and have ensured the ongoing excellence of our clinical services and appropriate attention to our patients’ needs through a period of extensive transition,” her nominators wrote.

Points of Pride

Post is pleased to make any contribution she can to the Family Court Clinic’s smooth operation. “I try to be helpful and supportive by keeping things on track and on time for staff,” she said. “And I like helping families, especially children, in difficult situations.”



Calendar

■ A film screening and reading by Worcester Poet Laureate and Holocaust survivor Gertrude Halstead, will be held at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 15, beginning with a reception in the Lamar Soutter Library, with the lecture following at 5:30 p.m. in the Arthur and Martha Pappas Amphitheatre (Amph. 1). Halstead will read from her published works, followed by a screening of the film "memories . . . like burrs." The film features interviews with Halstead in which she speaks of her history and writing and reads a selection of her work. The event is sponsored by the Lamar Soutter Library's Humanities in Medicine Committee. For information, contact Nancy Harger at x6-3334 or via global e-mail.

■ The Shining Star Gala and Benefit Auction will be held on Saturday, Oct. 25, at the DCU Center in Worcester. Beginning at 6 p.m., the event includes an elegant cocktail reception, live and silent auctions, dinner and dancing. Hip Pocket Orchestra will perform. Formal attire is recommended. Tickets are \$150 per person; proceeds benefit the UMass Memorial Children's Medical Center S.T.A.R. (Supporting Treatment and Research for Children) Fund, which funds specialized programs and services, purchases equipment and supports research at UMMS. Sponsorship opportunities are available. For information, call x6-5520 or send an e-mail to events@umassmed.edu.

■ The conference "MS Practice Updates: Managing Spasticity in Multiple Sclerosis" will be held on Saturday, Nov. 1, at the Beechwood Hotel in Worcester.

The cost is \$75 for physicians and \$25 for all others. For more information or to register, visit umassmed.edu/Content.aspx?id=56898, call x6-3041 or send an e-mail to continuing.education@umassmed.edu.

■ The MassHealth Training Forum is offering a series of October 2008 meetings that provide information to health care and community agency staff who work with MassHealth members, the underinsured or uninsured. The meetings run from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and include complimentary lunch provided during roundtable discussions with presenters. Meeting locations include Taunton, Holyoke, Tewksbury, Boston and Shrewsbury. For additional information, including the agenda, meeting dates, locations and directions, or to register, visit www.masshealthmtf.org.

■ Human Resources is now accepting fall 2008 and spring 2009 registrations for competency-based Workplace Learning courses for all employees as well as customized courses, courses on request and online courses. For more information, send an e-mail to WPL@umassmed.edu or visit www.umassmed.edu/hr/training/wlwg.aspx to register.

■ Faculty, staff, residents and students are invited to apply for grants of up to \$7,500 from the Innovations in Medical Education Grants (IMEG) Program, administered through the Office of Medical Education, for the development and implementation of new and creative approaches to teaching in all three schools. The deadline to submit grant proposals is November 14. For additional information, visit www.umassmed.edu/ome/grants/ or contact Sherly Jean-Bart at x6-5487 or via global e-mail.

Spudich to present the tenth annual Fred Fay Lecture

James A. Spudich, PhD, the Douglass M. and Nola Leishman Professor of Cardiovascular Disease and professor of biochemistry and developmental biology at the Stanford University School of Medicine, will present the tenth annual Fred S. Fay lecture on Wednesday, Oct. 29, at 3 p.m. in Amphitheater 3, on the 6th floor of the Medical School. Dr. Spudich's lecture "Single Molecule Analysis and the Myosin Family of Molecular Motors as Paradigms of Enzyme Structure and Function" is in honor of the late Frederic S. Fay, PhD, professor of physiology, and his scientific contributions.



Biological movement has been a central theme of physiology since Galvani's finding of frog muscle movement in the late 18th century. Motor proteins play a central role in diverse movements including muscle contraction, cell migration and division, vesicular trafficking and neuronal path finding. Dr. Spudich is a pioneer in studying the function of myosin—the protein in muscles that helps them contract—at the cellular and molecular level. Using the slime mold *Dictyostelium* as a model, he revealed the function of myosin in cell division and migration. His contributions to technological development are now widely used in research on molecular motors.

Spudich received his bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois and his doctoral degree from Stanford University. After post-doctoral training at Stanford and Cambridge University, he joined the University of California San Francisco as an assistant professor and Stanford as a professor in 1977.

grants infocus

□ **Alexei Bogdanov**, PhD, professor of radiology: *Transcription Factor Reporter Technology*, National Cancer Institute, one year, \$323,913; recommended for two more years, \$612,663

□ **Valerie De Crescenzo**, PhD, research assistant professor of physiology: *Regulation and Function of Internal Ca²⁺ Stores in Nerve Terminals Releasing Arginine Vasopressin and Oxytocin*, American Heart Association, one year, \$66,000; recommended for two more years, \$132,000

□ **Richard K. Fleming**, PhD, assistant professor of psychiatry: *Using CBPR to Design and Pilot a Physical Activity Program for Youth with ASB*, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, one year, \$192,386; recommended for one more year, \$213,706

□ **Heinrich G. Gottlinger**, MD, PhD, professor of molecular medicine: *Nef Function in HIV Infectivity*, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases; one year, \$399,650; recommended for three more years, \$1.2 million

□ **Janet F. Hale**, PhD, associate dean for Academic Affairs, director of Interdisciplinary & Community Partnerships and professor of nursing: *Advanced Education Nursing Traineeship*, Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, one year, \$62,943

□ **JeanMarie Houghton**, MD, PhD, associate professor of medicine and cancer biology: *Investigation of Bone Marrow Derived Stem Cell Recruitment to the Colon in Inflammatory Bowel Disease: Direct and Indirect Role in Carcinogenesis*, The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation, one year, \$150,000

□ **Chung-Cheng Hsieh**, ScD, professor of medicine: *Stem Cells and Perinatal Factors for Breast Cancer Risk*, National Cancer Institute, one year, \$389,233; recommended for three more years, \$1.2 million

□ **Hyun-Suk Jong**, PhD, post-doctoral fellow in the lab of **Roger W. Craig**, PhD, professor of cell biology: *Structure of Cardiac Muscle Thin Filaments: Relation to Normal Function and to Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy*, American Heart Association, two years, \$90,000

□ **Daniel L. Kilpatrick**, PhD, associate professor of physiology: *Temporal Regulation of Neuronal Differentiation*, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, one year, \$321,891; recommended for three more years, \$970,593

□ **Hardy Kornfeld**, MD, professor of medicine: *Acquired Susceptibility to Pulmonary TB*, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, one year, \$204,375; recommended for one more year, \$246,000

□ **Nathan Lawson**, PhD, associate professor of molecular medicine, and **Scot A. Wolfe**, PhD, assistant professor of biochemistry & molecular pharmacology: *Using Zinc Finger Nucleases to Manipulate the Zebrafish Genome*, National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, one year, \$411,704; recommended for four more years, \$1.6 million

□ **Tzumin Lee**, MD, PhD, associate professor of neurobiology: *Drosophila Neuronal Temporal Identity*, National Institute of Mental Health, one year, \$367,969; recommended for four more years, \$1.5 million

□ **Stuart M. Levitz**, MD, professor of medicine and molecular genetics & microbiology: *Immune Response to Cryptococcal Infections*, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, one year, \$408,542; recommended for four more years, \$1.6 million

□ **Guozheng Liu**, PhD, research assistant professor of radiology: *Non-invasive Quantitative Beta Cell Imaging by Pretargeting*, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International, one year, \$330,000

□ **Roger S. Luckmann**, MD, MPH, associate professor of family medicine & community health: *Applications to Support an Electronic Pain and Activity Diary*, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, eight months, \$50,000

□ **Joel D. Richter**, PhD, professor of molecular medicine: *RNA and the Etiology of Disease*, National Cancer Institute, one year, \$6,000

focus

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