



A MULTI-INSTITUTIONAL CONSORTIUM AT WEILL CORNELL MEDICAL COLLEGE WITH: Cornell University, Ithaca
 Cornell University Cooperative Extension, New York City / Hospital for Special Surgery / Hunter College School of Nursing
 Hunter Center for Study of Gene Structure and Function / Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center / NewYork-
 Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center / Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences

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WELCOME to the Fall 2011 issue of the CTSC eNewsletter! The CTSC is proud of the progress made in furthering our mission to promote inter-disciplinary and inter-institutional research collaborations, with the persistent goal of developing new and ever-more-effective treatments for patients. We also continue to nurture and encourage the next generation of translational research scientists and, in the process, advance the capabilities of health care services to the underserved in our neighboring communities.

The CTSC recently received an administrative supplement grant to support our Comparative Effectiveness Research (CER) Program. As you will read, the grant was also applied to fund curriculum development and two researchers conducting CER as part of the CTSC's Masters Program in Clinical Investigation. In March, we held our second Translational Research Bazaar and announced another round of Seed Funding Awards for 2011. You will also read about a CTSC researcher who received a Seed Funding Award, and recently won a Small Business Innovation Research grant for the work he began as part of our Masters Program. The Weill Cornell Autism Research Program (WCARP) has some exciting announcements in this issue, including new research developments.

This issue will also detail exciting new collaborative research on Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML) in elderly patients. Adding to the list of achievements in this issue, a CTSC researcher was featured in the Fall/Summer 2011 issue of the NCR Reporter for her work with silica nanoparticles. And lastly, the CTSC is proud of a growing program to support and educate National Guard citizen-soldiers on maintaining and restoring mental health. We continue to be impressed by our investigators and we are endlessly proud of their achievements!

Julianne Imperato-McGinley, MD

Associate Dean, Translational Research and Education
 Program Director, Clinical and Translational Science Center
 Abby Rockefeller Mauzé Distinguished Professor of Endocrinology in Medicine
 Chief, Division of Endocrinology

CTSC Research Updates

CTSC Announces Spring 2011 Seed Funding Award Recipients

Over this past summer and fall, the CTSC announced the Pilot, Planning, and Community Engagement Award recipients from its most recent Seed Funding Award RFA. This is the sixth award cycle since the CTSC was funded by the National Institutes of Health in September 2007. A total of over \$400,000 for 1 or 2-year grants was awarded in support of 11 multi-institutional, multi-disciplinary projects involving over 40 investigators from over 20 departments, including all CTSC partner institutions. Virtually all Lead PIs were junior faculty or mentored trainees. This brings the number of awards to 126 – 68 Pilot, 18 Planning, 15 Community Engagement, 23 Novel Research & Methodology, and 2 Informatics Research Fellowships – for a total of over six million dollars in Seed Funding Awards since the CTSC's inception. In keeping with the CTSC's mission, the awarded projects run the gamut of the translational and clinical research spectrum, covering human, animal, and basic science studies. The research also ranges from community-based studies involving

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CTSC Research Updates

Seed Funding Award

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the elderly, and medically-underserved populations; to outcomes studies of ethics and healthcare cost-effectiveness; to cutting-edge surgical treatments.

For more information about the most recent and past awardees, please visit: med.cornell.edu/ctsc/funding_opportunities/past_seed_funding_awardees.html

Translational Science and Technology Join to Serve Those Who Serve



JoAnn DiFede, PhD

Post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, has become a term the American public is increasingly familiar with, in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks, and as a consequence of the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Along with that increasing familiarity is a growing understanding—in both the medical community and the general public—that service members need more support in preparing for and returning from deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq. Nearly 40% of today's military is made up of National Guard citizen-soldiers, and the New York Guard is the fifth largest in the nation, with more than 16,000 members. These citizen-soldiers face the same difficulties and challenges as active duty

soldiers, but without the formal support network of their full-time colleagues. Up to 18% of veterans develop PTSD—and the related increased risk of suicide, marital trouble, occupational problems,

Up to 18% of veterans develop PTSD and the related increased risk of suicide, marital trouble, occupational problems, and unemployment

and unemployment—and in response the medical community is adapting modern technology to bring high-quality services to our citizen-soldiers.

With the support of an administrative supplement award from the NIH, Weill Cornell's Clinical & Translational Science Center (CTSC) has partnered with the Program for Anxiety and Traumatic Stress Studies (PATSS) to expand high-quality mental health education and support for New York National Guard bases in remote locations. The program—led by Dr. JoAnn DiFede, internationally-recognized and award-winning director of PATSS; Dr. Julianne Imperato-McGinley, program director of CTSC in the development of the "Participant Driven Interactive Health Communication Network"; and Dr. Megan Olden, PI in the CTSC-funded study "Treatment of PTSD via Telemedicine"—will use sophisticated video conferencing technology to bring mental health professionals and service members together in an interactive setting. Building on the success of a similar program already underway in New York, the collaboration between PATSS and CTSC will enhance soldiers' knowledge of stress management, build psychological skills for daily use, increase awareness of symptoms, and decrease the stigma of seeking treatment.

Service members participating in the workshops will develop stress-management techniques, as well as techniques for improving all around mental health. Guard members on remote bases in NY State will link directly with medical experts using live-stream, bi-directional videoconferencing to develop dialogue between them. The program will

take advantage of motion-controlled cameras to track speakers, a zoom camera to monitor audience members, and advanced video capturing equipment to record and synchronize presentations in real time. Through a series of six 3-hour workshops facilitated by the videoconferencing technology, the service members will develop psychological health skills, occupational stress management techniques, and will learn about anger and addiction as it relates to stress and PTSD. In addition, they will learn how to build motivation to address stress-related problems, as well as the importance of exercise, nutrition, and sleep in combating the effects of stress. Having already achieved success with a similar program in Brooklyn and Queens, NY, this team will surely make an impact in the lives of service members who have sacrificed so much.

Fostering Careers in Clinical Research: Dr. Carl Imhauser and the CTSC

Since its inception, the mission of the Clinical and Translational Science Center has been to create an environment that efficiently and effectively utilizes the growing resources of its partner institutions, to bring translational research from bench to bedside and to the community. The CTSC's support and development of clinical research is perhaps best exemplified through the accomplishments of Dr. Carl Imhauser, post-doctoral fellow and instructor of Applied Biomechanics in Orthopaedic Surgery at Weill Cornell, and Department of Biomechanics investigator at Hospital for Special Surgery, under the leadership of Timothy Wright, PhD.

The Weill Cornell CTSC supports both pre- and post-doctoral students in pursuing a master's degree or certificate in clinical and translational research through the Clinical and Translational Education Program (CTEP). Dr. Imhauser arrived at the CTSC in 2008 when he secured a CTEP KL2 Scholars Award, allowing him to pursue didactic training in translational research, and research on anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) knee injuries and the effects

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CTSC Research Updates

Careers in Clinical Research

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reconstruction has on knee mechanics.

At the conclusion of his CTEP grant, Dr. Imhauser was awarded a master's degree in Clinical Investigation. The CTSC awards a number of seed funding grants each year, encouraging innovation, collaboration, and community engagement through grant offerings. In 2010, he successfully applied for a seed funding grant for his study, "New Method to Assess Multi-Directional Knee Stability after ACL Reconstruction," a clear extension of his work through the CTEP grant.

The study began by acknowledging that current tests do not allow doctors to effectively measure whether ACL reconstruction can restore knee function and prevent the onset of osteoarthritis. In collaboration with Dr. Tho-

"If those loads [on the knee] are altered, over time you see the onset of osteoarthritis. But if we can characterize how loads are transferred and target surgeries that best restore normal patterns, then maybe we can help people avoid going down that path."

-Dr. Carl Imhauser

mas Wickiewicz (orthopaedic surgeon, Hospital for Special Surgery, and professor of clinical orthopaedic surgery, Weill Medical College) and Dr. Andrew Pearle (orthopaedic surgeon, HSS), Dr. Imhauser then began work developing a new method of assessing the stability of the knee, using a specially-designed three-dimensional mechanical linkage, taking full advantage of his doctoral degree in Mechanical Engineering from Drexel University.

Following the successes of his seed funding grant, Dr. Imhauser continued with his research in knee reconstruction with a CER fellowship, awarded in 2011. Dr. Imhauser was then able to further advance the CTSC's mission by comparing his new device for assessing



Dr. Carl Imhauser, pictured with his knee mobility device.

knee stability with pre-existing clinical methods, thus building the medical community's knowledge base, and ultimately improving outcomes and quality of life for patients.

In 2011, Dr. Imhauser was awarded a Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grant by the NIH to continue development of his three-dimensional knee linkage system. With this Phase I SBIR grant, Dr. Imhauser will focus on further developing his device into a more clinically usable, real-time tool for evaluating and predicting outcomes in patients with reconstructed, non-reconstructed, and healthy ACLs. The data collected from this study will also be used as part of an ACL patient registry, dramatically improving the registry's effectiveness. Success in Phase I of the SBIR grant will open doors for further funding, an exciting prospect for Dr. Imhauser, his colleagues, and the patients and fellow medical professionals who will benefit from his work.

Dr. Imhauser's career has taken him through many stages of the CTSC's programs, developed to educate and support clinical investigators. The path he has cut—beginning as a member of the first class of CTEP graduates, and progressing through to his recent SBIR grant—demonstrates the value of the CTSC's mission and the myriad to patients, contributions of clinical and

translational science the medical community, and society as a whole.



Nanoparticles Improve Cancer Treatment

Clinician-scientist Michelle Bradbury, MD, PhD, of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, is featured in the Summer/Fall 2011 issue of the NCCR Reporter.

Dr. Bradbury, in collaboration with Dr. Ulrich Weisner of Cornell University, has high hopes for the innovative silica nanoparticles—called Cornell dots, or C-dots—she and her colleagues have developed to greatly improve doctors' ability to find and track the movement of cancer cells in the body.

For the full article, please visit:
http://www.palladianpartners.com/NCCR_Reportersummer-fall2011/cancertreatment.asp

CTSC Collaborative Research Team to Improve Outcomes for Elderly AML Patients

Expanding its mission to support novel “bench to bedside” research, the CTSC is proud to announce an exciting collaboration between investigators at CTSC partner institutions. Dr. Ari Melnick of Weill Cornell Medical College, Dr. Ross Levine of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, and Dr. Martin Carroll of the University of Pennsylvania have been awarded an administrative supplement grant through the CTSC to develop methods for accurately predicting treatment effectiveness for elderly patients with Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML). The award, allocated to the National Institutes of Health through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, will allow Drs. Melnick, Levine, and Carroll to pursue research on newly identified genetic and epigenetic markers to aid doctors in predicting



From L-R: Dr. Ari Melnick (WCMC), Dr. Ross Levine (MSKCC), and Dr. Martin Carroll (UPenn).

the appropriate course of treatment for elderly patients suffering from AML. By studying biomarkers recently identified among younger patients (under 60 years of age) with AML, the research team hopes to address a currently unmet medical need to predict which patients will benefit from chemotherapy.

Acute Myeloid Leukemia is the most common acute leukemia in adults in the United States, and the incidence of AML increases with age. However, despite the disease's prevalence, and the fact that the median age of diagnosis in the US is 68 years of age, a significant portion of elderly AML patients are not treated with remission as the goal. Due to issues such as comorbidity (multiple co-existing diseases or conditions), advanced age, or simple patient preference, many of these patients experience worse outcomes than their younger counterparts. With a goal of improving quality of life, better tailoring treatment options, and increasing remission rates, the team's study combines newly developed genomics methods, state of the art computer and mathematical models, and the integration of genetic and epigenetic data. Physicians will then be able to predict those patients who will respond positively to chemotherapy, and those likely to suffer from primary refractory AML (PR-AML), or chemo-resistant AML. The collaboration brings together the knowledge and resources of three CTSC partner institutions already making great contributions to the advancement of medical research, and together the three are well-positioned to advance the field.

The study of AML in the elderly represents an exciting

moment in the progression of the CTSC mission and method—to bring investigators and institutions together to expand research, and funnel it to those who most need it. Drs. Melnick, Levine, and Carroll have met bi-weekly to discuss progress on their research, and also hold bi-weekly joint laboratory meetings to share information, allow post-doctoral students to present research, and coordinate their efforts to maximize the results of the study. By building strong inter-institutional bonds, and combining the efforts of talented researchers at all three institutions, the research team is promoting the CTSC's mission to support innovative research that will directly contribute to improved patient care and outcomes.

Weill Cornell Autism Research Program

WCARP Research Update

The Weill Cornell Autism Research Program (WCARP) supports four different basic science projects. By combining clinical components, supported by CTSC research coordinators and nurses, with mouse models and studies of proteins derived from collected blood samples, WCARP researchers seek to identify molecular changes that occur in autism, and to understand how alterations in genetic material may translate to the clinical features of individuals on the Autism Spectrum.

WCARP Principal Investigator Joseph J. Higgins, MD, and colleagues have recently reported their work on a mouse model of human intellectual disabilities and autistic behaviors in the journal *Behavioural Brain Research*. Their previous studies demonstrated that a mutation in the cereblon gene causes intellectual disabilities, while a deletion of one copy of the cereblon gene results in autistic behaviors in humans. The cereblon protein is abundantly expressed in brain regions such as the hippocampus and neocortex. It serves a number of functions in human brain development, including the regulation of ion channels at the neuronal synapse, and the mediation of developmental programs by ubiquitination (protein inactivation via ubiquitin attachment). To better understand the functions of the cereblon protein within the brain, Dr. Higgins and his colleagues designed and generated mice lacking the cereblon gene, in addition to mice with inactivated cereblon in specific brain regions known to be involved in memory and learning. Their results show that the mice have selective hippocampal-dependent deficits in associative learning. This research supports the use of these mice as models to study the functional consequences of cereblon aberrations on memory and learning, and may serve as models for human intellectual disabilities and autism.

Anjali Rajadhyaksha, Ph.D, leads a second WCARP project to better understand the critical role of calcium in childhood brain development. The study, “Calcium Signaling in Mouse Models of Autism,” aims to identify mutations in genes that are involved in communicating calcium signals in the brain. This study also utilizes mouse models of genes implicated in autism to better understand how aberrant calcium in the brain can result in autism. Recently Dr. Rajadhyaksha has identified a unique calcium channel (CACNA1C)-deficient mouse model of autism-associated anxiety, a condition often observed in children suffering from autism. To explore therapeutic avenues, Dr. Rajadhyaksha is the co-recipient of a new, three-year The Hart-

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WCARP Research Update

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well Foundation Collaboration Award with Dr. Andrew Pieper, MD, PhD, from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, TX. They will utilize an innovative drug discovery approach developed by Dr. Pieper to identify and test novel compounds that will ameliorate the anxiety in Dr. Rajadhyaksha's mouse model. The collaboration provides an exceptional opportunity to discover new drugs for treating anxiety associated with autism in children.

In addition to developing animal models of autism, WCARP also recruits families of autistic individuals to participate in a one-day study visit that includes neuropsychological assessments, family history questionnaires, and a blood draw. CTSC Research Aides coordinate subject visits at two study sites, the CTSC Pediatric Outpatient Unit at Weill Cornell Medical College, and the Northeast Regional Epilepsy Group in Hackensack, NJ. Using studies of platelets and blood from WCARP families, investigator Barbara Hempstead, MD, PhD, examines the hypothesis that misregulation of a nervous system protein, known as brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), occurs in autistic patients through a marked over expression in serum. With support from the Simons Foundation, the Hempstead lab focuses on defining abnormalities in peripheral BDNF homeostasis in autism spectrum disorder patients.

The research of Armin Alaedini, PhD, also falls under the WCARP umbrella, with a study focused on defining the prevalence and molecular specificity of the immune response in autism, specifically the anti-gluten and anti-casein response. Dr. Alaedini will also analyze the autoimmune molecular mimicry between gliadin and nervous system proteins in autism and related disorders. By linking DNA and protein studies to phenotypes, determined through standardized assessments with research psychologists and pediatricians, WCARP projects continue to work towards an improved understanding of ASD through both clinical and basic science research.

WCARP Autism Symposium

The Clinical and Translational Science Center (CTSC) co-sponsored an Autism Symposium with the Weill Cornell Autism Research Program (WCARP) and the Hunter College Autism Research Center, titled "Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder: From Basic Science to Intervention." The symposium, held on April 16, 2011, was designed as a unique educational opportunity and was attended by over 200 parents, families, and professionals. Featured speakers ranged from basic and translational scientists investigating the biochemical roots of Autism Spectrum Disorders, to researchers involved in clinical evaluations and the development of intervention programs.

The next Autism Symposium, "Growing Up with Autism: Life Transitions," will be held on May 11, 2012. It will address the day-to-day and broader life transitions affecting children and young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Included will be panel discussions, breakout groups and an interactive tabling session with transition service providers.

For information on the 2012 symposium, and video clips from the 2011 symposium, please visit the WCARP website: nyp.org/komansky/wcarp/



**Growing Up With Autism:
Life Transitions**

SAVE THE DATE: AUTISM SYMPOSIUM 2012
FRIDAY, MAY 11, 2012
Sign up for our e-mail list at
weillcornellautism@med.cornell.edu

Educational and Research Opportunities

Comparative Effectiveness Research Program Brings Exciting Opportunities

The Clinical and Translational Educational Program (CTEP) is the centerpiece of training and education in clinical and translational research at Weill Cornell. With the addition of an administrative supplement grant to the Clinical and Translational Science Award, the institution is well positioned to strengthen the educational opportunities available in Comparative Effectiveness Research (CER), and will offer an additional year of training to clinical and translational research students and graduates.

The supplemental funds were applied to build upon the already strong educational program CTEP offers. With the new funds in use, the program will grow to include three new CER courses in: Methods for CER; Decision Sciences and Simulation Methods; and Methods for Analysis of Electronic Medical Records, Large Datasets, and Registries for Research. The new courses will enable trainees to take the helm focusing on comparing medical interventions to the current standard of care, and the practical application of research findings to medical practice and health policy. The field of CER, with its potential to vastly expand the evidence available to medical professionals, will ultimately improve patient-centered decision making processes. With the national debate on healthcare reform increasing, CER and the CTSC are positioned to offer novel solutions, through education and research, to improve the quality of care and the affordability and effectiveness of treatment methods.

In addition to the CER didactic program, the new CER fellowship has already been applied to fund two CTEP researchers for a third year. Dr. A. Gabriella Wernicke, assistant professor of radiation oncology at Weill Cornell, is studying two treatment methods—*intraoperative brachytherapy* and *stereotactic radiosurgery*—for tumors among brain cancer patients. The aim of the study is to compare the two treatment methods in relation to quality of life and patient satisfaction, as well as to analyze the cost effectiveness of each treatment method. The second study, led by Dr. Carl Imhauser, will compare his device for measuring knee stability with pre-existing clinical methods.

For more information on CTSC's educational and research funding opportunities, including CER, please visit us online at: weill.cornell.edu/ctsc/funding_opportunities/seed_funding.html

Educational and Research Opportunities

2011 Translational Research Bazaar



Potential collaborators meet at the CTSC's 2011 Research Bazaar.

The Clinical and Translational Science Center hosted its second Translational Research Bazaar on Friday, March 18, 2011. The CTSC played “matchmaker” to 36 basic scientists and clinicians by pairing participants with multiple potential collaborators to translate their work from bench to bedside.

The speed-networking event brought together investigators from the CTSC partner institutions, including Weill Cornell Medical College, and Graduate School of Medical Sciences, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Hospital for Special Surgery, Hunter College Center for Study of Gene Structure and Function, Hunter College School of Nursing, and Lincoln Medical Center. Over 75% of event attendees found a potential collaborator at this event and, of these collaborations, at least 85% were cross-institutional. New teams who met at the Bazaar were eligible to apply for a \$10,000 Research Bazaar award to develop novel research ideas with an interdisciplinary and inter-institutional focus. In addition, all investigators who found a “match” at this event were eligible to apply for

“Our lab has been eager to pursue the possibility of targeting mTOR in prostate cancer because of the common occurrence of PTEN mutations, which lead to the activation of mTOR. The lack of experience with prostate cancer and prostate cancer cells has been a deterrent to making the project a reality.”

-Dr. David Foster

future CTSC funding opportunities as well as any number of CTSC services.

The 2011 Research Bazaar award was given to Drs. David Foster and Yuan-Shan Zhu for their project, “Novel strategies for targeting mTOR survival signals in prostate cancer.” Dr. Foster is the Rosalyn Yalow Professor at the Hunter Gene Center and studies cancer cell survival signals mediated by mTOR and phospholipase D (PLD).

“Our lab has been eager to pursue the possibility of targeting mTOR in prostate cancer because of the common occurrence of PTEN mutations, which lead to the activation

of mTOR,” says Dr. Foster. “The lack of experience with prostate cancer and prostate cancer cells has been a deterrent to making the project a reality.”

The Translational Research Bazaar provided Dr. Foster with the opportunity to meet Dr. Zhu, Associate Professor of Medicine at WCMC, who has extensively studied the effects and mechanisms of androgens in prostate development and prostate pathogenesis, as well as androgen-estrogen interactions in prostate cancer prevention and therapy. His lab’s background in prostate cancer research will add a novel aspect to Dr. Foster’s research, and expand it’s scope.

The complementary expertise provides an ideal opportunity to generate the preliminary data that could provide a strong rationale for pursuing more traditional funding to target mTOR survival signals in prostate cancer. Since PLD activity is apparently elevated in androgen-independent prostate cancer cells, the collaboration could facilitate the translational application of targeting PLD signal transduction for the treatment of hormone refractory prostate cancer.



Researchers at the iTP event.

Investigator Training Program

Investigators from five partner institutions participated in a two-day Investigator Training Program (iTP), hosted by the CTSC in collaboration with Pfizer Pharmaceuticals. The program is an initiative designed by Pfizer to educate clinical trial research teams. Sixty investigators, research coordinators, pharmacists, and laboratory technicians attended the iTP. Through both lectures and smaller break-out group sessions, the workshop served as a forum for research personnel with a diverse range of research experience to share tips and best practices. This interactive format encouraged networking among investigators and provided an opportunity for multi-disciplinary collaboration.

The diversity of backgrounds and perspectives led to an enriching discussion on a wide range of topics. From the researcher already involved in clinical trials, to one testing the waters of clinical trials research, attendees were able to find information applicable to the respective stage of their research careers. Aliza Solomon, DO, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at Weill Cornell Medical College, attended the program to better prepare for her role as Principal Investigator on an upcoming Industry-sponsored clinical trial. “I wanted to be knowledgeable on all aspects of clinical trials,” she said, “to better prepare my research time.” The hands-on educational modules, including budget formulation, recruitment strategies, and regulatory requirements, allowed Dr. Solomon to formulate a structured plan of action moving forward with her research.

Judith Aponte, RN, DNSc, Associate Professor at the Hunter College School of Nursing, is traditionally a community-based researcher but attended the workshop to find out more about clinical trial design for investigational new drug studies. “Since I have never conducted or participated in a study with

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Educational and Research Opportunities

Investigator Training Program

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drugs or medications,” Ms. Aponte said, “I was curious to learn more about how those types of studies are conducted.” The program outlined the drug development process and identified the key elements of trial design.

The iTP gave investigators the ability to learn directly from leading Industry professionals about clinical trials. Over 90% of attendees reported that the iTP improved their understanding of the planning, conducting, and reporting of clinical trials. At the conclusion of the workshop, 98% of attendees stated that they would recommend the program to a colleague.

For more information on future training programs, or questions regarding iTP resources, please e-mail James Holahan at jph2003@med.cornell.edu.

“IP & Pizza” Event Helps New Inventors



More than ever, successful innovations are needed to fuel economic growth and job creation in the United States. This past October, President Obama issued a memorandum outlining his initiative to accelerate technology transfer and commercialization of federal research over the next 5 years. Universities across the country are responding to the call by educating their researchers and dispelling the mysteries surrounding the commercialization process.

In an effort to promote innovation, the Cornell Center for Technology Enterprise and Commercialization (CCTEC) and the Clinical and Translational Science Center (CTSC) are hosting events throughout the year aimed at familiarizing researchers with the resources available at CCTEC and the CTSC. Recently, CCTEC and the CTSC hosted an “IP & Pizza” event led by Dr. Alan Paau, Executive Director and Vice Provost for Tech Transfer and Economic Development. Dr. Paau, an inventor himself, provided attendees with an overview of intellectual property (IP), and highlighted some of the frequent complica-

tions that come with invention.

Laura Cima, Manager for Outreach and Economic Development and Director of the CornellBEST Program, emphasizes the importance of collaboration between CCTEC and Cornell researchers at the earliest stages of innovation. “It is important for our office to have clear and open communication with our faculty and researchers, and the earlier the communication the better,” she says. “Early communication can ensure a better evaluation of an invention’s market potential, and whether we need to file a patent application prior to publication to protect the intellectual property rights. Our ‘IP & Pizza’ events are just one of the ways we share information and strive to keep open communication channels.”

The complexity of IP law may deter would-be inventors from pursuing plans for commercialization. CCTEC provides Cornell inventors with the resources to ease the burden of this endeavor, and helps inventors navigate through IP rights, connect with investors, ensure the invention is protected, and fosters transfer to the marketplace. In the last year alone, about \$21 million went to Cornell inventors for their innovations. While big money-maker drugs are profitable for the inventor and university, CCTEC wants to encourage researchers with inventions of all levels to consider technology transfer. Last year there were 135 new Cornell inventions, most of which were small inventions.

CCTEC values a product’s potential for social and economic impact more so than its potential for profitability. The primary objective for CCTEC is to ensure that an invention will get maximum utilization. Innovations with maximal utility are more likely to lead to start-up companies, new jobs, and much more.

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