

Weill Cornell Medical College Hosts The Methodist Hospital for Second Research Symposium

On November 30, faculty from The Methodist Hospital in Houston joined their Weill Medical College colleagues for a two-day symposium. Hosted by Dr. David P. Hajjar, executive vice dean of the Medical College, the symposium was aimed to promote further collaborations between the two affiliated institutions and provide updates on the joint research projects already underway.

Forty scientists from Weill Cornell and 25 from The Methodist Hospital (TMH) convened at the New York Academy of Sciences to give presentations of their work in five selected areas: stem cell and developmental biology; health outcomes; translational and clinical research; imaging, nanomedicine and bioengineering; and proteomics. In addition, the seven groups that received seed funding for collaborative research projects following the first symposium, which took place in Houston in March 2005, gave updates on their work and showed that considerable progress has been made.

A strategic planning session concluded the successful two days, and produced numerous ideas on how to foster new collaborations between the two institutions. Both Weill Cornell and TMH contributed equally to \$500,000 in seed funding for joint research projects following this symposium.

The following is a list of the seven ongoing collaborations.

A Bilateral, 8-Channel Radio Frequency Coil Array for Fast, Reliable 3.0T Magnetic Resonance Imaging of Atherosclerotic Plaques in Lower Extremity Blood Vessels

Dr. Yi Wang, P.I. (WMC)

Dr. Allen Lumsden, co-P.I. (TMH)

In-Vivo Intraplaque Macrophage Identification Using PET in a Porcine Model of Complex Atherosclerosis

Dr. Juan Granada, P.I. (TMH)

Dr. Shankar Vallabhajosula, co-P.I. (WMC)

Role of SMAD3 in Arterial Remodeling

Dr. Greg Kaluza, P.I. (TMH)

Dr. Bo Liu, co-P.I. (WMC)

Induction of p53-Mediated Cell Death in Retinoblastoma Cells Via MDM2 Inhibition

Dr. Lee Thomas, P.I. (WMC)

Dr. Patricia Chévez-Barrios, co-P.I. (TMH)

Aldosterone Receptor Blockade to Promote Adaptive Arterialization of Venous CABG

Dr. Daniel Catanzaro, P.I. (WMC)

Dr. Craig Pratt, co-P.I. (TMH)

The Role of P38 Mapk in the Resistance to Arsenic Trioxide-Induced Apoptosis in Myeloma Cells

Dr. Jeff Chang, P.I. (TMH)

Dr. Douglas Ballon, co-P.I. (WMC)

Combined Functional Imaging and Electrophysiological Mapping of Birdsong

Dr. Santosh Helekar, P.I. (TMH)

Dr. Henning Voss, co-P.I. (WMC)

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Holiday Greetings From Dean Gotto

As the end of the year approaches, it is a very good time to reflect on our many accomplishments at the Medical College in the last twelve months. In the face of the many challenges that have confronted us, we have remained committed, as a community, to our threefold mission of education, innovative research, and exceptional medical care.

Looking forward to 2006, let us remember to have compassion for the suffering of others, to express gratitude for our own personal blessings, and to renew our dedication to achieving our highest goals.

Wishing you health, happiness, and peace in this holiday season,

Dean Antonio Gotto Jr.

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WMC Alumni Association Leaders in First Visit to WCMC-Q

During their first official visit to WCMC-Q in November, leaders of the Cornell University Weill Medical College Alumni Association met with medical students to explain the breadth of purpose of the Association, and to extend a warm welcome to the young physicians-in-training ahead of their graduation in 2008 and 2009.

They discussed ways to bring the students more closely in touch with the work of the Association, including a proposal to change the by-laws of the Board so that each medical class at WCMC-Q would have a representative at Board meetings. The arrangement could be accommodated if meetings were conducted by videoconferencing.

President of the Alumni Association Dr. Kenneth Swan, '60, and vice president Dr. Gene Resnick, '74, were accompanied on the visit by their wives, Betsy and Susan, and by Larry Schafer, vice provost of development at Weill Cornell, and Adee Shepen, director of alumni relations and giving at the Medical College in New York.

During the three-day visit, they also met with faculty, toured the facilities, tried their hand at some of the high-tech learning tools, notably the virtual microscope system, and explored some of Qatar's attractions.

Interviewed following a luncheon with the medical students and faculty, Dr. Swan noted the importance of opening the channels of communication with the WCMC-Q community: "The sooner the medical students become aware of the importance of the Alumni Association, not only to them but also to their alma mater, the better. Hopefully, we can attract their interest in participating while they are still students."

Alumni Association a Trendsetter at Cornell

Drs. Swan and Resnick gave a presentation outlining the structure and work of the Association, which was formed in 1904 – the first purely professional alumni association of Cornell University – "to support and promote the mission of the College and students, and to sustain the collegiality of the alumni."

With 5,000 alumni who are graduates of the Medical College, the Association has members who live and work in all parts of the United States and in many areas overseas. Extending the offer of membership to graduates of WCMC-Q would be a logical step.

Among the benefits that membership brings is access to the host program, which offers local contacts when a member goes for an interview or takes up a new post; regular class reunions; and the chance to exchange notes and advice with colleagues.

The Alumni Association also works hard to advise and support succeeding generations of medical students, and this could be a role of central importance for WCMC-Q's graduates, who will be the first "home-grown" physicians in the State of Qatar.

Part of this work is fundraising: \$3.4 million was raised last year to assist students in New York

through loans and scholarships. In addition, there are social events, a Family Day, where parents experience a day in the life of a medical student, advisory sessions on managing money, and a series of careers nights each year.

Advice and Encouragement to Medical Students

Dr. Resnick, who is president and CEO of a company specializing in translational research, as well as adjunct assistant professor of medicine at Weill Cornell, suggested that the careers nights could be recorded and sent to WCMC-Q.

Getting the full picture from experienced professionals is useful, he said: “The careers nights are a chance to interact with people who have had positive and negative experiences.”

Dr. Swan, who is professor of surgery at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey-New Jersey Medical School, said that he was questioned by a female student at WCMC-Q about the challenges faced by women who combine a career in surgery with family commitments.

“I responded that ‘Yes, it is challenging, no question about it,’ but I also told her that half of our residents in surgery are women, and most women want to have children and they do, including during their residency. I tried to emphasize that you should never be restricted, or say ‘I can’t be a surgeon because I’m a woman.’”

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Awards & Honors

Jaehon Kim, '07, is one of two Korean-American medical students to be awarded a \$1,000 scholarship for academic achievement in scientific research from the Korean American Medical Association. Working with Dr. Oheneba Boachie-Adjei, associate professor of clinical orthopaedic surgery, Kim has been investigating the mechanism behind gene therapy to stimulate bone growth. He will be presenting his study on "BMP-Induced Noggin Expression in Mesenchymal Cells" at the 23rd annual scientific meeting of the Korean American Medical Association in Palm Beach, Fla., on December 27-31.

Dr. Bruce Schackman, assistant professor of public health, was awarded the 2005 Research in Action Award by the Treatment Action Group, a non-profit organization dedicated toward finding a cure for AIDS by advocating for larger and more efficient research efforts. The award recognizes Dr. Schackman's longstanding commitment in HIV/AIDS research, including treatment and care-cost-effectiveness analysis, quality-of-life measurement, and access to care by underserved populations. The award ceremony was held December 11 in New York City.

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