Pilot Grant Awardees

The Center for Molecular Studies in Digestive and Liver Diseases Pilot Project program is proud to announce the following awardees for the award period July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011:

Russell Carstens, MD  
Associate Professor of Medicine  
Renal Division, Department of Medicine  
University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine

Sunil Singhal, MD  
Assistant Professor  
Division of Thoracic Surgery  
Department of Surgery  
University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine

Terri M. Laufer, MD  
Associate Professor of Medicine  
Rheumatology  
Department of Medicine  
University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine

Christopher Hunter, PhD  
Professor and Chair,  
Department of Pathobiology  
University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine

Mei-Lun Wang, MD  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Pediatrics  
The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia
Center Member Recognition

Provost Vincent Price announced the appointment of Center Member Dr. Klaus H. Kaestner, Professor of Genetics in the School of Medicine, to the Thomas and Evelyn Suor Butterworth Professorship.

A Professor at Penn since 1997, Dr. Kaestner is an internationally recognized developmental geneticist and an integral member of Penn’s Institute of Diabetes, Obesity and Metabolism. Dr. Kaestner’s research employs mouse genetic models and genomics to provide insights into mechanisms of liver, pancreatic, and intestinal development, and the regulation of glucose and lipid metabolism.

The Thomas and Evelyn Suor Butterworth Professorship was created by the Trustees in 2000 to support research in the field of genetics. The late Dr. Thomas Butterworth was a Penn alumnus (C’25, GM’32) and practicing dermatologist who was notably chief of the departments of dermatology at the Pennhurst State School and the Reading Hospital. He was a prolific author, publishing in the fields of dermatology and genodermatology.

The late Dr. Richard Spielman (genetics) was the first recipient of the Butterworth Professorship (Almanac May 26, 2009).

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Cell Culture Core Changes

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Erle Robertson, Professor of Microbiology and Director of Tumor Virology of the Abramson Cancer Center, has assumed the role of Director of the Cell Culture Core as of July 1, 2010. The new location is 202A/B Johnson Pavilion, 3610 Hamilton Walk Philadelphia, PA 19104-6076

**Erle S. Robertson, PhD**, has over 20 years of experience in Molecular Biology and 15 years of experience specifically in the field of viral oncology with a focus on gammaherpesviruses. He completed his post-doctoral training and was an instructor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Division of Infectious Disease, before moving to the University of Michigan Medical School as an independent investigator. Dr. Robertson is the Director of the Tumor Virology Training Program at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and the program leader of the Tumor Virology program of the Abramson Comprehensive Cancer Center. He directs a lab with a focus on infectious agents and mechanisms of oncogenesis mediated by viral agents leading to development of cancer. He has broad expertise in viral oncology and has also been investigating the role of tumor viruses and regulation of tumor suppressors and metastatic suppressors by viral proteins. He has been instrumental in developing strategies for identifying oncogenic viruses in a number of human cancers related to EBV and KSHV, and is currently investigating the roles of HPV and HCV in contributing to the carcinogenic process. He has trained numerous post-doctoral fellows with a number of them successfully moving on to independent faculty positions throughout the world.

The Cell Culture Core would like to introduce their new Research Specialist - Meghan Shirley, who graduated this past May with degrees in Biological Anthropology and Spanish from Temple University. Megan began working in the Robertson lab in July. She will start with working on using virus’s to alter expression of gastrointestinal cancer cell genes.

We are grateful for the many years of service and commitment to the Center provided by Dr. Carl June, former Director, and Dr. Richard Carroll, former Technical Director, as their responsibilities have increased even more so with the pending move of Immunotherapy to the new Translational Research Building in 2011.