Highlights of CIMD 2010 Accomplishments

2010 marked the 10th year since AMC reorganized its basic science departments into IRCs, and CIMD is proud to share its continued success:

- New institutional rankings for NIH funding in fiscal year 2009 were published and CIMD ranked 43 out of 96 for all Microbiology/Immunology departments in the nation.
- Our Center obtained $8.4M in NIH funding in 2009. CIMD contributed 55% of all grant funding in Albany Medical College for 2010. The median value for all medical school departments nationally is 5%.
- Five faculty members received NIH multi-year grants (including two career development grants) and one single-year grant. They were: Dennis W. Metzger, Ph.D. ($2.6M), Chandra Shekhar Bakshi, D.V.M, Ph.D. ($316K), Girish Kirimanjeswara, D.V.M., Ph.D. ($584K), Keer Sun, Ph.D. ($100K), and Nadine Hempel, Ph.D., ($228K)
- Dana R. Crawford, Ph.D., was promoted to Associate Professor (non-tenure track)
- Timothy J. Sellati, Ph.D., was promoted to Associate Professor (tenured)
- Girish Kirimanjeswara, D.V.M., Ph.D., was appointed to Assistant Professor (non-tenure track)
- Nadine Hempel, Ph.D., was appointed to Assistant Professor (non-tenure track), pending Board Approval in March 2011
- Four Ph.D. degrees were awarded to: Douglas Durrant, Amanda Melillo, Kristen Porter, and Xiaoyun Wen.
- CIMD faculty published a total of 33 publications in peer-reviewed journals
- CIMD faculty sat on a total of 19 NIH Study Sections, Review Panels, and Advisory Boards
- CIMD graduate students received four awards at AMC’s 2010 Graduate Student Poster and Research Awards Day. The recipients were: Maninjay Atianand (Dr. Harton), Xiaoyun Wen (Dr. de Noronha), Anthony Franchini (Dr. Fuller), Amanda Melillo (Dr. Melendez)
- Two postdoctoral fellows, Laurieann Casey, Ph.D. and Anju Singh, Ph.D., received trainee travel awards
- The CIMD Annual Research Retreat was held in August at the River Stone Manor, Scotia, NY. Oral presentations were given by Dr. de Noronha, Dr. Sahay, and Kathleen Busman-Sahay. Poster presentation awards were given to Nicole Flaherty (Dr. Melendez), John Hamayun Sharifi (Dr. de Noronha), Don McCarthy (Dr. Melendez), Kathleen Busman-Sahay (Dr. Drake), Maninjay Atianand (Dr. Harton), and Bhuvana Katkere (Dr. Drake)
- The 13th Annual Upstate New York Immunology Conference, supported in part by an NIH grant, was held in October at The Sagamore Resort. CIMD sent sixteen individuals, many of whom presented posters and/or gave oral presentations. There were 100 attendees from more than ten institutions. The Keynote speaker was Paul W. Kincade, Ph.D., from Oklahoma Health Science Center.
- Congratulations to CIMD staff who celebrated the births of three boys and one girl!
Arturo Casadevall, M.D., Ph.D., was the guest lecturer for CIMD’s 2010 Theobald Smith Annual Lecture at Albany Medical College on November 30, 2010.

Dr. Casadevall is the Leo and Julia Forchheimer Professor of Microbiology & Immunology at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University in the Bronx, NY. His major research interests are in fungal pathogenesis and the mechanism of antibody action. In the area of Biodefense, Dr. Casadevall has an active research program designed to understand the mechanisms of antibody-mediated neutralization of Bacillus anthracis toxins. He has authored over 450 scientific papers.

Since joining the Einstein faculty in 1992, Dr. Casadevall has mentored dozens of graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and junior faculty.

Dr. Casadevall’s presentation entitled, “Rethinking Microbial Virulence,” was well attended by individuals from Albany Medical College, as well as other institutions. Following his presentation, invited guests had an additional opportunity to interact with him at a reception and dinner held in his honor at the University Club, Albany, NY.

Keer Sun, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, received Pfizer’s 2010 ASPIRE Young Investigator Award in Antibacterial Research in the amount of $100,000 to support one year of her research entitled, “The Potential Benefit of Linezolid in Host Defense Against Post-Influenza Bacterial Pneumonia.” Dr. Sun is one of only five recipients of this national Award.

Kathleen Busman-Sahay, CIMD Graduate Student, received a $300 Predoctoral Travel Award from the American Society for Cell Biology (ASCB) to present her research poster entitled, “Identification and Regulation of the Endocytosis Motifs for the B cell Receptor,” at its Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, PA, December 11-15, 2010.
(Mentor: Dr. James Drake)

The medical school rankings for FY 2010 NIH funding have now been published. Again, CIMD has done extremely well, with funding of $5,543,000 (non-ARRA funding only, does not include stimulus money) and a ranking of 41 out of 96 medical schools that report in the Microbiology-Immunology category. We continue to increase our funding and our ranking, from 43 in 2009, 50 in 2008, 52 in 2007, and 55 in 2006!

AMC’s overall medical school rank moved up one slot to 102, with total NIH funding of $12,876,000.

Great job everyone!

Dennis W. Metzger, Ph.D., has been invited to join the Editorial Board of PLoS ONE as an Academic Editor. PLoS ONE, from the Public Library of Science, is an interactive, open-access journal for the communication of all peer-reviewed scientific and medical research.

“PLoS One’s services and beliefs are those that you would expect from any scholarly journal but reflect improvements offered by the internet publishing age, as demonstrated by the journal winning the ALPSP Award for Publishing Innovation, 2009—a major industry award and a testament to the rapid pace of innovation that the journal has pioneered in the 3 years since launch.”
Conferences, Meetings and Study Sections

Edmund J. Gosselin, Ph.D., was an invited speaker at the 8th Annual Vaccine All Things Considered Meeting in Washington, DC, November 8-9, 2010. Dr. Gosselin’s presentation was entitled, “Fc Receptor-Targeted Vaccines: From Potential to Mucosal Protection.”

Timothy J. Sellati, Ph.D., and Karsten R.O. Hazlett, Ph.D., were invited to give oral presentations at the 45th Annual Northeast Regional ASM Meeting, in Albany, NY, November 9-10, 2010. Presentation titles were, “Effects of Host Adaptation on Innate Defense Against Francisella tularensis,” and Host-Adaptation of Francisella tularensis,” respectively. At the same meeting, Postdoctoral Fellows, Radha Gupta, Ph.D., and Jennifer Wilson-Welder, Ph.D., were invited to give poster presentations entitled, “Characterization of Arginine Deiminase System in Pathogenesis of Pneumococcal Otitis Media,” and “Mice Lacking IgA Exhibit Defective IgG Antibody Responses to Polysaccharide Conjugate Vaccine, respectively.

Dennis W. Metzger, Ph.D., was asked to serve as a Member of the NIH/National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases “Working Group for B and T Cell Epitope Discovery Contracts,” in Bethesda, MD, November 15-17, 2010.

Girish Kirimajeswara, D.V.M., Ph.D., was selected to give a poster presentation of his research entitled, “Exploiting the Synergy Between Cytokines and Antibodies to Treat Tularemia,” at the Chemical and Biological Defense Science & Technology Conference, in Orlando, FL, November 15-19, 2010.

James R. Drake, Ph.D., was invited to give a presentation entitled, “Opposing Effects of Fever Range Hyperthermia and Francisella tularensis on MHC Class II-restricted Antigen Processing and Presentation,” to the Department of Microbiology & Immunology at Wake Forest University, in Winston-Salem, NC, November 17-18, 2010.

J. Andres Melendez, Ph.D., was invited to give a seminar entitled, “Redox-signaling Parallels in Cancer, Aging and Immunity,” at the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation, in Oklahoma City, OK, January 19-20, 2011.

Peer-reviewed Publications


(Continued on page 4)
CIMD Annual Holiday Party

The Center for Immunology & Microbial Disease held its Annual Holiday Party at the Mohawk River Country Club in Rexford, NY on December 9, 2010. There were approximately 80 attendees, including guests, who were treated to a wonderful assortment of appetizers and a buffet dinner. Dr. Metzger highlighted the Center’s many accomplishments in 2010, including grant funding, degrees awarded, and new appointments. (See front page for more information).

CIMD Staff Celebrate Births

Ashanti and Anthony Lewis welcomed their son, Anthony Jr., (7 lbs., 3 oz., 20.6” long) on January 16, 2011.

Shannon and Dave Zilles welcomed their son, Ethan Joseph, (7 lbs.) on January 24, 2011.

Upcoming CIMD Seminars

January 31, 2011

Dana Crawford, Host

Rebecca A. Bader, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Biomedical & Chemical Engineering
Syracuse Biomaterials Institute
Syracuse University

*Old Concepts and New Insights in the Treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis*

March 28, 2011

James Drake, Host

Paul A. Roche, Ph.D.
Senior Investigator, Experimental Immunology
Branch and Head, Cell Biology Section
Center for Cancer Research
National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health

*TBA*

www.amc.edu/academic/research/imd.html