

Community Update

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Staying in Touch

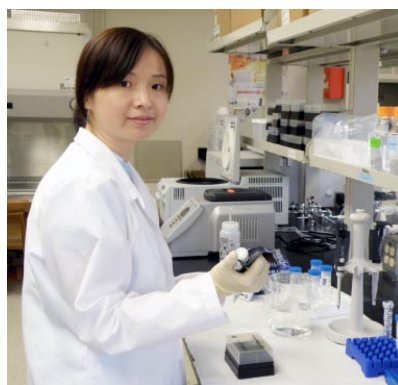
WELCOME TO THE SPRING 2010 EDITION OF THE GNL COMMUNITY UPDATE.

The recent Community Advisory Board meeting on April 8 was very well attended. The group heard from [UTMB leadership regarding the new health care reform law](#) and its potential impact on UTMB, a campus construction update and recent developments regarding research, including activities in the Galveston National Laboratory. We hope you enjoy this edition of the e-newsletter. As always, should you have any questions or ideas on something you would like to see highlighted in future editions, please let us know.



EMERGING STARS IN INFECTIOUS DISEASE RESEARCH

In each e-newsletter we try to highlight some of the important infectious disease research ongoing at UTMB. In this edition we'd like to introduce you to another



Tian Wang, Ph.D.

one of our emerging stars. Dr. Tian Wang

is an assistant professor, departments of Microbiology & Immunology and Pathology. She is working to develop a better understanding of the immune response to West Nile virus infection. This virus has resulted in annual outbreaks of viral encephalitis in North America since 1999, and has caused severe disease and even death here in Texas.

Dr. Wang uses a mouse model of the infection to try to determine which host immune responses are helpful, and which are counterproductive. Aging is a known risk factor for West Nile virus induced brain disease. The general decline in immunity seen among the elderly is a significant contributor to increased risk of West Nile disease, and is a specific risk factor she is studying in the laboratory. Her work aims to provide the knowledge needed to develop an effective human vaccine against this virus.

GNL COMMISSIONING/RESEARCH UPDATE

The GNL's associate director for research, Dr. Joan Nichols, reports that the commissioning and certification of the GNL laboratories is near completion. In early March, the GNL received approval from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Division of Select Agents and Toxins for the GNL BSL4 laboratories. This approval was a key milestone toward the realization of the facility's mission, and the research team is now working diligently to get those laboratories operational and open for business later this summer. The remaining hurdle to clear is CDC Select Agent approval for the GNL's BSL3 laboratories. The CDC successfully inspected these facilities in January/February and their final approval is expected soon.

Curious to know what these CDC inspections entail? You may be interested to learn that they are quite extensive and a very necessary step toward the GNL's goal of providing safe, functional systems and facilities that meet and maximize the design intent of this amazing research facility. Nearly all of 2009 was spent preparing for and/or undergoing these inspections. They involved property inventory, installation and commissioning of hundreds of pieces of scientific equipment, as well as rigorous staff training, orientations and development of standard operating procedures. The impressive progress of this effort involved nearly everyone inside the GNL and numerous people affiliated with the UTMB research enterprise, all with the final goal of getting the GNL fully operational later this summer.

NEW GNL/IHII LEADERSHIP NAMED



LeDuc



Weaver

As mentioned in the January edition of this newsletter Dr. Stanley M. Lemon, the Director of UTMB's Institute for Human Infections and Immunity (IHII) as well as the GNL, is soon leaving his post to return to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Dr. Garland D. Anderson, UTMB executive vice president and provost, and dean of the School of Medicine, recently announced the new leadership appointments for the GNL and the IHII. Dr. James W. LeDuc, a professor in the department of Microbiology & Immunology and formerly the GNL deputy director, has been appointed as the lab's director; Dr. Scott C. Weaver, a professor in the departments of Pathology and Microbiology & Immunology, is the new director of the IHII and the scientific director for the GNL. We hope you'll join the UTMB community in welcoming Drs. LeDuc and Weaver to their new roles.

CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

- In March, UTMB became the 49th institution to be named a member of the Texas Medical Center. The membership formalizes numerous and long-standing research, education and patient care collaborations between UTMB and TMC institutions, and expands opportunities to improve the health of the entire Houston/Galveston region.
- UTMB is putting the finishing touches on its Specialty Care Center at Victory Lakes. The new facility, which will open to the public in May, will offer university-level, multidisciplinary care to patients and referring physicians in the rapidly growing areas of northern Galveston and southern Harris counties. The 110,000-square-foot facility in League City will feature advanced imaging services (including 3 Tesla MRI capability), an outpatient surgery center, the Breast Health Center, the Center for Obesity and Metabolic Surgery, the Orthopaedic and Rehabilitation Center, the Pelvic Health and Continence Center, surgical specialty care and vascular lab.
- The UTMB Vascular Lab has achieved accreditation by the Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Vascular Laboratories (ICAVL), in recognition of its commitment to providing a high level of patient care and quality testing for the diagnosis of vascular disease.
- Match Day, when graduating medical students learn where they'll spend their residency years, was a great success at UTMB. Of the 215 UTMB students who will enter residency training next year, 59 percent matched to a program in Texas, 33 percent matched to a UT System program and 13 percent matched to UTMB. Forty-five percent chose primary care residencies.
- UTMB's School of Nursing celebrated its 120th anniversary in March. Opening in 1890 as the privately operated John Sealy Hospital Training School for Nurses, it was the first school of nursing in Texas. In 1896, the school came under the umbrella of the University of Texas, becoming the first American nursing school directly affiliated with a state university. More than 5,000 nurses have graduated from the school.
- The Emmett and Miriam McCoy Foundation of San Marcos has awarded \$100,000 to a UTMB laboratory that's working to engineer the body's stem cells into insulin-producing islet cells to help beat Type 1 diabetes. During the next 18 months, the director of the university's Emmett and Miriam McCoy Diabetes Research Laboratory, Larry Denner, and his research team will also receive \$150,000 from the Jerome Lejeune Foundation to support their work to engineer more stem cells into insulin-producing cells.
- Researchers from UTMB, UCLA, Harvard University, the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases and Cornell University have teamed up to develop and test a broad-spectrum antiviral compound capable of stopping a wide range of highly dangerous viruses, including Ebola, HIV, hepatitis C virus, West Nile virus, Rift Valley fever virus and yellow fever virus, among others.
- Eye doctors may soon administer drugs into patients' eyes using pulsing light instead of needles. Groundbreaking research at UTMB's department of ophthalmology and visual sciences has yielded promising results in laboratory tests, according to Chairman Bernard Godley. Millions of eye patients could benefit from the noninvasive method for treatment of infections, age-related macular degeneration and other problems. "It would be a breakthrough in the treatment of eye diseases," said Godley.



UPCOMING CAB MEETING DATES

Please plan to join us on the following upcoming CAB meeting dates from 8 a.m.–10 a.m. in the Caduceus Room located on the sixth floor of the UTMB Administration Building:

AUGUST 4, 2010

Email reminders will also be sent out prior to each meeting.