

THE POST

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THE



Many Countries, One UF

Page 12

UF Health Science Center
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Dedicated ⁷
to diversity

They're with ¹¹
the **band**

Helping ²³
parents (and kids)

On the Cover

With faculty, staff and students from across the globe, the UF Health Science Center is an international community. This month, the POST takes a closer look at the lives of some of the people in that community and how they help shape the HSC. Cover art by Janet Hicks.

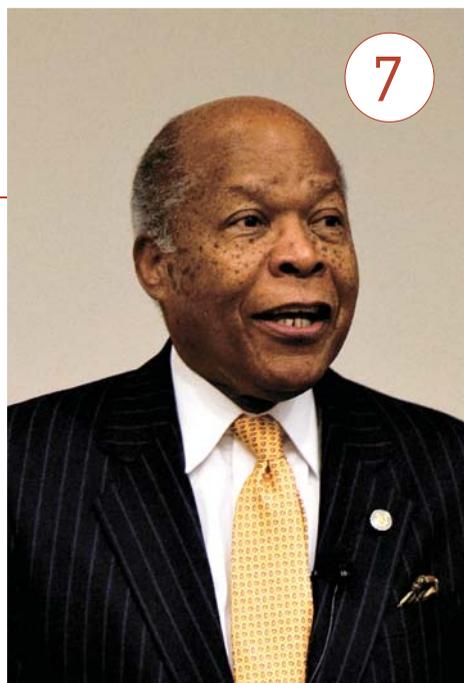


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Difficult DECISION

In October, Shands HealthCare officials announced a plan to relocate all programs and services currently housed at Shands AGH to Shands at UF and the new cancer hospital. The move, which came on the heels of budget cuts and financial losses at Shands AGH, will occur in about one year. Shands AGH lost \$12 million in government funding in 2007, and \$50 million more was needed for renovations at the hospital, which was built in 1928. Many of the hospital's 1,150 employees will be moved to Shands at UF or will be able to apply for new jobs created at the cancer hospital, Shands leaders said at a press conference announcing the decision. "We've struggled over how to offer the best care to our patients and community given our health system's existing resources," said Timothy Goldfarb, CEO of Shands HealthCare, who is shown here with Janet Christie. "A poor financial outlook ahead and growing health-care industry challenges have forced us to make this very difficult decision." After the announcement, College of Medicine Dean Michael Good, M.D., said UF is committed to providing health care to all of the community's citizens and is now involved in intensive planning to ensure patient care needs are met. **P**

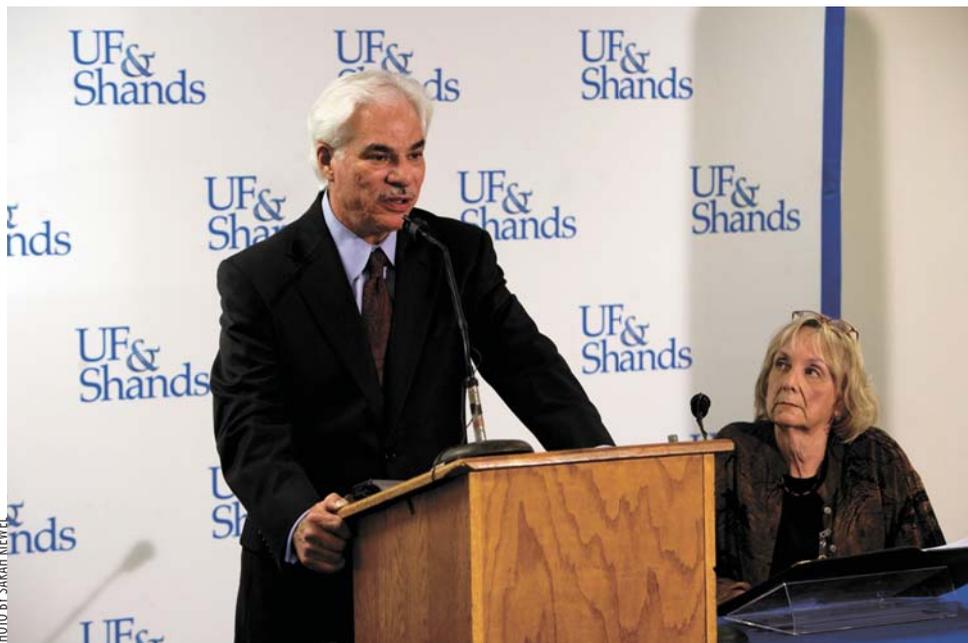
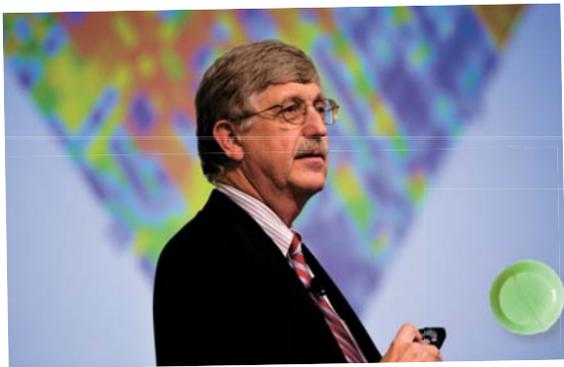


PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL



THE MEDICINE OF YOU

Francis Collins, former director of the National Human Genome Research Institute, talked about his dream of personalized medicine during a presentation to about 500 people Oct. 29 in the PHHP auditorium.

His message? Save Rhonda.

"Can you tell I've been to a Beach Boys concert?" Collins said.

In his example, Collins weaves a story in which a fictional Rhonda works with enlightened physicians and insurance providers, learns after her genome is sequenced at age 21 in 2018 that she potentially has cardiac problems and embarks on a designer program of prevention, not a generic, one-size-fits-all approach.

As the story unfolds, at 75, Rhonda's "smart shirt" alerts doctors about a potential heart attack. Health-care workers intervene, and she lives into the 22nd century. Then he told the same story without the happy ending. It was replete with missed opportunities, uninformed decisions and provider problems.

"We can't be complacent here people," said Collins, who was delivering the feature address at the UF Genetics Institute's annual symposium. "The whole story can be summed up in two words: Save Rhonda. Because Rhonda is you and me and our families and friends and our children and grandchildren. And today we have a chance to transform medicine into a much more effective way to treat people." Photo by Sarah Kiewel.

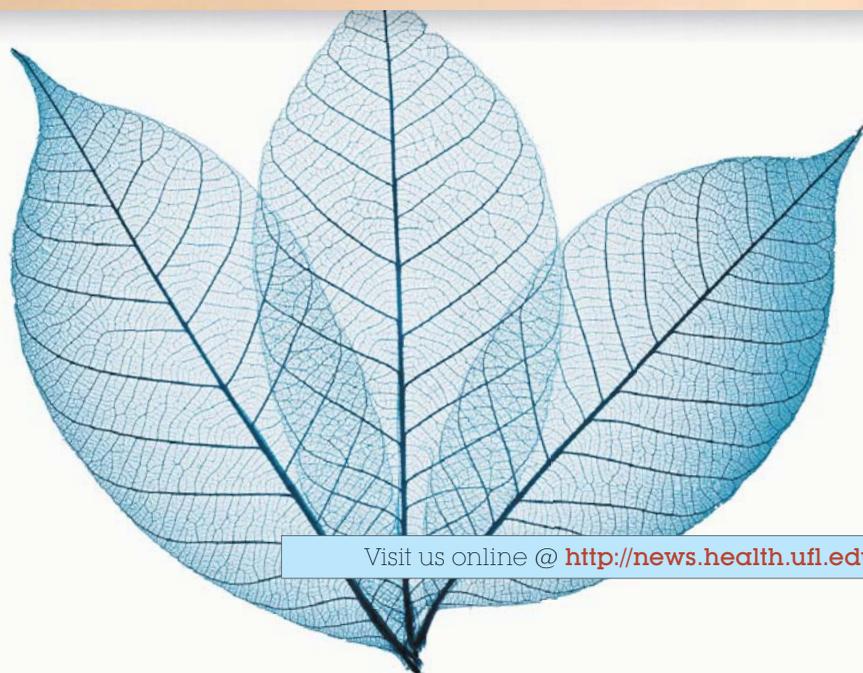
POM-POMS? ✓ HEALTH SCREENING? ✓

Hey football fans, want an easy way to get valuable health information and screenings before the Gators take on Citadel Nov. 22? Then check out the Great Gator Health Fest, beginning four hours prior to kick-off at the J. Wayne Reitz Union Colonnade. UF pharmacy students and other health-care professionals will provide free cholesterol testing, diabetes screening and bone density testing for osteoporosis. This year's event will also include new health resources for smoking cessation, and exercise and fitness. The annual event is sponsored by the Florida chapter of the American Pharmacists Association Academy of Student Pharmacists. Information from the APhA national projects Operation Diabetes, Operation Immunization, Heartburn Awareness and Poison Prevention will be available. For more information, call Vicky Montoya at 768-423-3698 or e-mail vmmr@ufl.edu. Photo by Tom Munyer.



DOES YOUR CAR FIT?

The UF department of occupational therapy will offer CarFit, a free national program that gives older adults the opportunity to check how their personal vehicles "fit" them. CarFit will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Nov. 14 in the parking lot at Carrabba's Italian Grill, 3021 S.W. 34th St., Gainesville. Trained occupational therapy students will lead mature drivers through a 12-point checklist with their vehicles, recommend personal vehicle adjustments and adaptations, and offer community resources and activities that could make personal vehicles "fit" better or enhance drivers' safety. For more information, or to schedule a vehicle check, call Desiree Lanford at 352-392-8850.



SCIENCE CAN BE PRETTY, TOO

Bacteria on your hands? Gross. Bacteria under a microscope? Art. Whether it's a photo of the glittering night sky taken with a telescope or a microscopic image of a blood cell, science can be beautiful. That's why the HSC Libraries is co-sponsoring the Elegance of Science contest with the Marston Science Library. The contest is looking for the best two-dimensional images produced "during the course of research or that incorporate the tools and concepts from science." Prizes range from \$150 to \$50, and faculty, students and staff are eligible to enter. The deadline is Dec. 19. For more information, visit www.uflib.ufl.edu/msl/art.

Hope after heartbreak

Son's death spurs Gainesville couple to help improve patient safety



PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

By Karen Dooley

Horst and Luisa Ferrero, whose 3-year-old son Sebastian tragically died last year due to a series of medical errors at a UF outpatient clinic, had an important message for first-year medical students Oct. 29.

The Gainesville couple asked the students to learn from the mistakes that resulted in their son's death and encouraged them to become the first generation of doctors to benefit from a four-year medical school curriculum focused on preventing medical errors.

The Ferreros' appearance at the College of Medicine's Patient Safety Grand Rounds was one of the first elements of this new comprehensive quality and patient safety curriculum, which the college implemented after Sebastian's death.

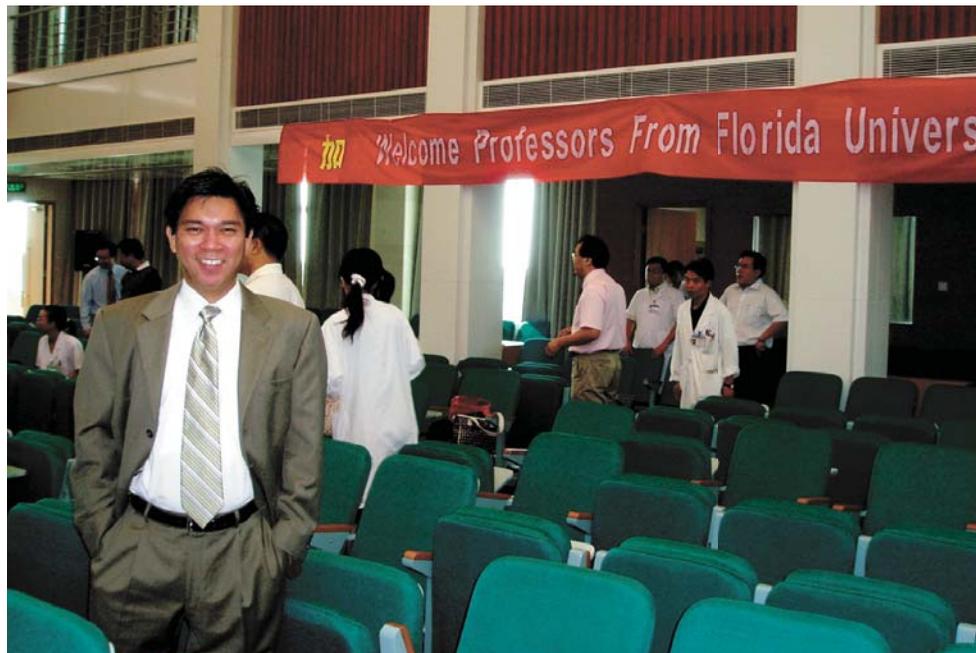
According to a 2000 Institute of Medicine report, nearly 100,000 deaths can be attributed to medical errors each year. A 2005 study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that the death rate from preventable errors had not changed much.

One year after Sebastian accidentally received an overdose of the amino acid arginine during a test at a UF clinic, the Ferreros have partnered with UF to help the institution become a leader in the field of patient safety.

"Every morning I look up into the sky and I tell Sebastian 'Today, I will do this for you,'" Luisa Ferrero told the medical students. "But I can't stop wishing to hug him one more time." **P**

A good idea goes global

Chinese doctors to study UF movement disorders center



Dr. Hubert Fernandez poses before a presentation at China's Zhengzhou University. Along with Dr. Michael Okun and Samuel Wu, Ph.D., (not pictured), Fernandez went to Zhengzhou in late August to meet and interview two movement disorders fellowship candidates and conduct a seminar on Parkinson's disease

By Anne Myers

Two research scholars from China's Zhengzhou University will be coming to UF for a nine-month fellowship to study at the Movement Disorders Center at the McKnight Brain Institute, where they plan to learn medical techniques and acquire the organizational knowledge necessary to start their own movement disorders center in China.

Doctors Yuming Xu, a neurologist, and Bo Yang, a neurosurgeon, will be trained to run a clinical, educational, research and outreach program modeled after the one developed at UF's Movement Disorder's Center, according to Hubert Fernandez, M.D., who co-directs the center with Michael Okun, M.D., Kelly Foote, M.D. and Ramon Rodriguez, M.D.

Xu is the director of neurology and Yang is a professor of neurosurgery at the First Affiliated Hospital of Zhengzhou University, which is located in the province of Henan, outside of Beijing. The university has a student population about equal to UF's and is situated in an area the size of Florida with a surrounding population of 100 million, Fernandez said.

"Our mission is to have a meaningful presence with one center in a developing country or region in the world and to set up strong connections so they can set up a movement disorder center that is as powerful as ours," Fernandez said. "We can teach clinical care and medical and surgical treatments, but to learn how to operationalize a movement disorders center with a four-part mission of clinical care, research, education and outreach — there is no substitute for them being here and working alongside of us."

UF's Movement Disorders Center was established at the McKnight Brain Institute in July 2002 to bring together UF doctors and researchers with special expertise in Parkinson's disease and other movement disorders.

"As we build our foundation in Florida, we recognize that there are millions of people outside of UF that need medical care," Fernandez said. "We established the fellowship that will bring doctors Xu and Yang here to help address that need."

With the help of Sherman Bai, Ph.D., an associate professor of industrial and systems engineering and director of the UF Center for International Studies in Beijing, Fernandez, Okun and Samuel Wu, Ph.D., an associate professor in the department of biostatistics, went to Zhengzhou University in late August to meet and interview the two candidates, conduct a seminar on Parkinson's disease and describe the elements needed to set up a comprehensive movement disorders center. They arrived on the final day of the Olympics. **P**



Designing women

PHHP women leaders navigated challenges, helped build a tradition of excellence

By Melissa M. Thompson

There were no department founding fathers here — just a trio of women each at the helm of the College of Health Related Services' first three departments.

They designed the health services curricula and fought to establish research programs and gain adequate academic and professional space within the Health Science Center. Fifty years later, the strength and innovation of Alice Jantzen, Ph.D., chair of occupational therapy; Barbara White, M.A., chair of physical therapy; and Ruth Williams, Ph.D., chair of medical technology; continue to influence health professionals.

Physical and occupational therapy as well as the medical technology fields historically employed more women than men. As thousands of men returned wounded from World War I and II, the demand for skilled health workers increased. Although the college's women leaders enjoyed positions of influence, through the decades they learned to manage social challenges such as gaining equal recognition and finding a balance between dedicating time to their craft and their families.

Lela Llorens, Ph.D., former chair of the

department of occupational therapy, said she was attracted to the profession because she wanted to help people and was grateful the field offered leadership roles where other health disciplines fell short.

When Llorens joined the UF faculty in 1971, Jantzen mentored her and helped her adjust to the administrative nuances of being a professor at a large university.

"I knew she was going to retire at some point," Llorens said. "I made her agree to stay five years longer because I wanted to learn from her. She was a strong, no-nonsense woman who took a mentor role with people who worked with her."

Llorens said she worked to make her voice heard during interdepartmental committee meetings, especially when she was the only woman.

"There tended to be lower expectations for women, especially if you were the only one in the room," Llorens said. "It was always amusing to me to think I was going to surprise somebody with my ideas."

Eileen Fennell, Ph.D., a professor in the department of clinical and health psychology, was a wife and mother of two young children when she entered the college's clinical psychology doctoral program in the early 1970s.

While the women's movement made it more acceptable to pursue higher education, a grueling schedule didn't make it easier to juggle life as a

full-time student and Super Mom. Fennell says she struggled with the same guilt, sacrifice and stress many working mothers face today.

"I remember what it was like to feel like you were stuck between a rock and a hard place," she said. "As the years went by it got better, and it got a little easier for new generations to manage those things."

Fennell remembers waking up before sunrise on weekends to drive her children to their swim meets by 7 a.m. and cheering them on to victory in between studying for exams by the poolside.

"I can remember sweating at times thinking, 'What am I going to do?'" she said. "My sense of it was that the faculty was still adjusting to having women with families in graduate school."

Claudette Finley, M.S., an associate professor emeritus in the department of physical therapy, says she never felt the proverbial glass ceiling hanging over her head. Opportunities existed for those who worked hard and wanted to advance their careers. The student applicant pool, however, was primarily female, something that was illustrated within classrooms. Finley remembers teaching a class of 25 students in the late 1960s — only one or two of the students were male. By the time she retired in 2002, the male to female student ratio was even.

"I'm really proud of our college and what it has accomplished," Finley said. "Back then, I got to step into that department and see role models I could relate to. It showed me it was possible to do this." **P**

Not your typical teen

Eighteen-year-old medical student receives Air Force scholarship

By Priscilla Santos

While most students her age are adjusting to their first semester of college, Maria Kravchenko is studying anatomy in her first year of medical school at UF.

You might say 18-year-old Kravchenko, a Ukrainian-born U.S. citizen, is a bit advanced for her age. In fact, she recently was commissioned into the Air Force Reserve.

Kravchenko, who received her bachelor's degree from UF in May and began medical school in August, was accepted into the U.S. Air Force Corps Health Professions Scholarship program, which provides tuition, books and other various expenses during her four years in medical school.

"I saw the Air Force scholarship as a great alternative to loans for paying for medical school," Kravchenko said.

Kravchenko earned her high school equivalency diploma at 14 and began taking college classes. She says her home-schooling discipline prepared her for the challenges of attending college and medical school at such an early age.

"Medical school is challenging but very rewarding," Kravchenko said. "I think becoming a doctor will give me an opportunity to give back to society."

On Aug. 7, Kravchenko was commissioned as an Air Force Reserve second



Retired Brig. Gen. James Albritton swears Maria Kravchenko into the Air Force Reserve Aug. 7. The newly commissioned 18-year-old Air Force reservist received the Air Force Medical Corps Health Professions Scholarship.

lieutenant by retired Brig. Gen. James Albritton, a friend of the Kravchenko family. Kravchenko will serve on inactive-duty status during medical school.

After graduating from medical school, 2nd Lt. Kravchenko will be promoted to captain and complete postgraduate training while serving on active-duty status in a military medical facility or in a civilian residency program. She will then fulfill a minimum of four years on active-duty service — one year for every year of medical school the Air Force sponsored. **P**

After the storm

UTMB doctor continues residency at UF after Hurricane Ike

By Anne Myers

In the aftermath of Hurricane Ike, which devastated much of the Texas coastline, residents at the University of Texas Medical Branch were forced to relocate.

The UF College of Medicine department of otolaryngology has taken in Camysha Wright, M.D., a fifth-year ear, nose and throat resident from UTMB in Galveston, Texas, until she is able to return home.

"I'm really happy they agreed to let me come here because they didn't have to," Wright said.

Wright's classmates have gone to other hospitals in the country until UTMB is able to take them back. The medical branch was flooded through the first floor during the storm and is not estimated to reopen for another one to three months while repairs are being made. Because of the extensive damage, the price tag for recovery is steep, about \$710 million when lost revenues and evacuation costs are added in to the price of rebuilding, according to university estimates.

Patients at UTMB were evacuated before the storm, and the hospital is currently only open for emergencies. The doctors at surrounding hospitals have taken on more patients to help, Wright said.

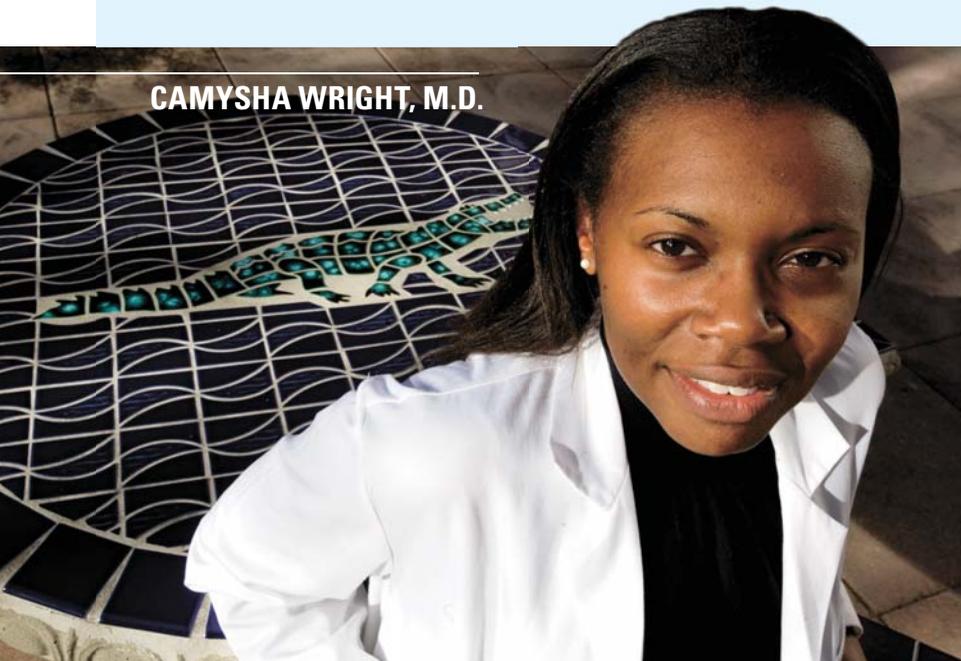
Wright's transition to Shands at UF has been relatively smooth, but she has encountered some difficulties. She has to learn a new computer system and find her way around a new medical center.

"Everyone has been great here, though, so that makes it easier," Wright said.

Even though she is settling into her new surroundings, Wright is still dealing with hurricane issues back home. Her house was flooded, and she and her husband lost many of their belongings, including their car. Since he is still working in Texas, it is hard for her to be away from him and have to watch the rebuilding process from afar.

While she is in Gainesville, Wright is staying with fellow resident, Sonia Deshmukh, who has been a great help, she said.

Because she is able to continue her residency while UTMB is being restored, Wright is still on track to complete her training on time in June 2009. She hopes to go into general ENT private practice with a focus on allergies. **P**



CAMYSHA WRIGHT, M.D.

PHOTO BY SARAH MEWEL

Educating everyone

More diversity in health care could improve patient outcomes

By April Frawley Birdwell

In the 1950s, when Louis Sullivan, M.D., was applying to medical schools, students didn't worry about how to pay for medical education. They worried about being accepted.

"If you got in, there would be scholarship money available," said Sullivan, the former U.S. secretary of health and human services under President George H.W. Bush and dean emeritus of the Morehouse College of Medicine. "Now scholarship dollars are in short supply. Students depend on loans to finance their education."

The high cost of health education, particularly medical school, is just one of the factors that keeps some minority students from pursuing careers in health care or from entering lower-paying fields such as family medicine, said Sullivan, who spoke at UF Oct. 23 as part of the HSC's third Diversity Dialogue, a series intended to raise awareness about diversity in the health professions.

And with the changing demographics of the United States — by 2050 there will no longer be a white majority population, according to the U.S. Census Bureau — the issue of bringing more minority workers into health care is no longer solely an issue of equality, it's a critical need.

"We are experiencing a period of increasing diversity, racially and ethnically, more so than any time in my lifetime," Sullivan said. "If we are going to have a health system that serves them well, we have to indeed see that we train physicians, nurses and health professionals who are able to relate to that population."

"Good health outcomes require not just a scientific base but the ability to communicate with one's patients so information is believed, complied with and recommended actions are taken."

About 30 percent of the population is Hispanic, African-American or Native-American, but only 9 percent of nurses, 5 percent of doctors and 6 percent of dentists belong to one of these minority groups, said Sullivan, who led a 15-member commission that examined the issue of diversity in health care.

"Those data are an improvement over what existed in the 1950s and 1960s, but they are far



Dr. Louis Sullivan, the former U.S. secretary of health and human services under George H.W. Bush, spoke at the HSC's third Diversity Dialogue Oct. 23.

from what they should be," Sullivan said.

The commission's report, released in 2004, issued 37 recommendations on how to improve diversity in health care. The report has since spawned the formation of several groups across the country committed to improving the number of minorities entering health-care fields.

One such group is the Florida Alliance for Health Professions Diversity, which formed in 2007 to boost the number of minorities in health care so it mirrors state demographics. UF and Shands HealthCare renewed their commitment to the alliance's goals during a signing ceremony a few hours before Sullivan's talk.

"This is a dynamic, growing alliance," Sullivan said. "Already there are programs at Florida Memorial University and Florida International University to make nursing programs more available. I certainly will be following work under way in Florida because I am very much encouraged by what has happened so far."

Programs at community colleges that make

earning a four-year degree more feasible could help broaden the pipeline of students entering the health professions, Sullivan said. The Sullivan Commission found that while a large number of Hispanic and African-American students attend community college, only 18 percent of those students go on to earn degrees from four-year universities.

Ultimately, though, creating a more diverse health workforce may require a change in how Americans think of health education, said Sullivan, who suggested thinking of health education expenses as an investment in the country's infrastructure.

"We know we have national security needs, there is no question about that, but we need to make sure we don't ignore our domestic needs," Sullivan said. "We have citizens not getting the health care they need and the education they need. (Investing in health education) not only useful for them but will make them more valuable members of society." **P**



Target: *neuroblastoma*

Scientists close in on method to fight deadly childhood cancer

By John Pastor

A multicenter team of researchers, including scientists from UF, has discovered a way to potentially block the growth of neuroblastoma, a type of cancer responsible for 15 percent of all cancer deaths in children.

Working with human cell lines and tissue samples, researchers described online in the journal *Nature* how they were able to short-circuit genetic processes that apparently contribute to neuroblastomas — tumors that arise from the developing nervous system in children and often appear in the abdomen, chest or neck.

Concentrating on a gene known as ALK, the scientists used a small-molecule inhibitor — a technique common to many drugs — to block abnormalities that apparently cause neuroblastomas.

Neuroblastomas are extremely rare, appearing in about 600 patients annually in the United States, according to the National Institutes of Health. About half of the patients with neuroblastoma are diagnosed before the age of 18 months. In 40 percent of cases, the cancer has spread to other parts of the body by the time doctors discover it.

Treatment usually involves surgery, chemotherapy and radiation, and transplantation for high-risk patients.

“We need to find a home run for these kids,” said Wendy B. London, Ph.D., a research associate professor of epidemiology, biostatistics and health policy research at the UF College of Medicine and a member of the UF Shands Cancer Center. “A targeted therapy to treat patients with



WENDY B. LONDON, Ph.D.

ALK mutations would be a real breakthrough.”

Led by Dana-Farber Cancer Institute researchers Rani E. George, M.D., an assistant professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School, and A. Thomas Look, M.D., a professor of pediatrics at Harvard, the scientists analyzed the ALK gene in 94 tumors representative of general neuroblastomas and 30 neuroblastoma cell lines.

Scientists discovered that ALK abnormalities in a subset of neuroblastoma cells appear to interfere with the natural cell-death processes. Furthermore, they found some of the ALK mutations were sensitive to a tiny organic molecule known as TAE684, a discovery that may be useful in efforts to create drugs to staunch cancer growth.

In addition, researchers used gene-transfer techniques to initiate ALK-related cancer in rodent cells. These transduced neuroblastomas also appear vulnerable to the small molecule, known as an ALK inhibitor.

The tumor samples were obtained from the Children’s Oncology Group Neuroblastoma Tumor Bank. COG is an NIH/National Cancer Institute cooperative research coalition that conducts pediatric cancer clinical and biological trials, including specimen collection and statistical analyses. UF is one of three sites of the COG Statistics and Data Center, where the study design, data collection and statistical analyses of the data take place.

The current findings dovetail with the recent discovery of the role of ALK mutations in both inherited and non-inherited versions of neuroblastoma published Aug. 24 in *Nature* by researchers from The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia.

“This research group looked at neuroblastoma in a totally different and complementary way to ours and came up with similar results, validating the role of ALK mutations,” said pediatric oncologist Yael P. Mosse, M.D., of The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. “A unique aspect of their work is they proved in a model system that these mutations can indeed be cancer-causing.”

With samples they had collected from families for the past 15 years, as well as additional data from COG, Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia scientists traced the genetic roots of many neuroblastomas to ALK mutations — findings that open the door to genetic screenings for the disease as well as possible therapies.

Ultimately, researchers hope drug treatments can be developed to disrupt the cancer cell-signaling process. They are designing a clinical trial that would test small molecules against the cancer-causing mutations in the gene.

“This is the epitome of translational research,” said London, who is also the principal investigator of the COG Statistics and Data Center at UF. “We will use what we have learned about the sensitivity of ALK mutations to an ALK inhibitor and attempt to translate this knowledge to the development of targeted therapy for treatment of neuroblastoma patients in the clinic.” **P**

The sugar trap

Fructose hampers hormone that controls appetite, UF study finds



By April Frawley Birdwell

Could all those years chewing candy and slurping sugary sodas come back to haunt you? Perhaps. A new UF study in rats shows that a fructose-filled diet blocks the appetite-controlling hormone leptin from doing its job, setting the body up for future obesity.

Leptin is critical in controlling appetite and energy expenditure, and scientists have long linked leptin resistance to obesity. And several studies have shown that overconsumption of fructose, a sugar found in everything from apples to cookies, could be playing a significant role in the obesity epidemic. But the UF study, recently published in the *American Journal of Physiology — Regulatory, Integrative and Comparative Physiology*, is the first to link fructose and leptin resistance.

UF researchers found that rats became resistant to leptin after being fed a diet high in fructose for six months. Although there were no visible signs this change was occurring, the fructose-fed rats gained considerably more weight than rats that never ate fructose when both groups were switched to a high-fat diet.

“Leptin resistance is a condition that leads to obesity in rats when coupled with a high-fat diet. The surprising finding here was that increasing the amount of fructose in the diet without increasing the amount of calories led to leptin resistance and later exacerbated obesity when paired with a high-fat diet,” said Philip J. Scarpace, Ph.D., a professor of pharmacology and therapeutics in the UF College of Medicine and the senior author of the study.

According to this study’s findings, fructose itself does not cause obesity, but alters the way leptin works.

“It blocks leptin action most likely by blocking leptin entry into the brain,” said Alexandra Shapiro, Ph.D., an assistant scientist in the department of pharmacology and therapeutics and the lead author of the study.

Typically, leptin resistance develops with obesity, but this study showed that high dietary fructose causes a “silent” leptin resistance, Shapiro said. It develops undetected, but when the high-fat diet is introduced it causes greater than expected obesity.

“Fructose sets you up,” Scarpace said. “If these findings are applicable to humans, then there could be consequences of eating a diet high in fructose, but only if you also consume an excessive amount of calories.” **P**



**ALEXANDRA SHAPIRO, Ph.D. (LEFT)
AND PHILIP J. SCARPACE, Ph.D.**

A welcome warning

UF researchers find biomarker linked to kidney damage after heart surgery

By Jennifer Brindise

Heat surgeons may soon be able to identify within an hour of surgery which patients are at high risk for kidney injury, UF College of Medicine researchers said Oct. 14 at the 2008 Clinical Congress of the American College of Surgeons in San Francisco.



THOMAS BEAVER, M.D.

Among medical concerns associated with complex heart surgery, kidney damage ranks only behind death, heart attack and stroke. Current blood tests warn of potential kidney problems within one or two days after heart surgery. UF surgeons believe developing a test that identifies at-risk patients while they are still in the operating room could lead to treatments that prevent kidney injury altogether.

In a study of patients who had complex heart surgery, UF researchers found a correlation between postsurgery kidney damage and the early presence of a protein called neutrophil-gelatinase-associated-lipocalin, or NGAL, in the blood. NGAL and other inflammatory biomarkers were detected as soon as one hour after completion of surgery, compared with the current test of serum creatinine, which does not show injury until one to two days later.

“The problem with kidney injury is that the markers we commonly use, like measuring the serum creatinine, often change when it is already too late in the game,” said presenter Tad Kim, M.D., a UF surgical resident who is spending two years in the laboratory as part of his training. “The damage is already done and you can try to help rescue the kidneys, but you haven’t really caught it early enough. It would be nice if we could see something via a simple blood or urine test that tells us earlier in the process that the kidneys are undergoing injury so we can intervene instead of waiting.”

The study’s principal investigator, Thomas Beaver, M.D., an associate professor of thoracic and cardiovascular surgery, said 10 percent to 40 percent of patients undergoing heart surgery are at risk for some level of kidney injury.

“The kidneys are sensitive and highly dependent on their blood supply, which can be impaired during and after surgery,” Beaver said. “They get 20 percent of the body’s blood flow, so any debris that is in the bloodstream at the time of surgery is at risk of reaching the kidneys.” **P**

Predicting pain

Social factors top race as predictor of senior pain, disability

By Tracy Brown Wright

Race is less important in predicting pain and functional disability in older adults than other factors, such as socioeconomic status, a recent UF study reports.

The study, published in the journal *Research in Nursing and Health*, sought to measure the connection between pain and functional disability in older adults and focused on differences between whites and blacks. The researchers found that race is not a significant predictor of pain and functional disability, when other factors were considered.

“What we found is that race is less of a factor in increased pain and disability than less education and income and more chronic conditions,” said Ann Horgas, Ph.D., R.N., an associate professor and associate dean for research at the UF College of Nursing.

Previous studies have shown that blacks report more pain, have more untreated pain and have less access to pain medications than whites. However, most of these studies that examined pain sensitivities in blacks and whites were done in an experimental laboratory setting rather than in a clinic and were performed on much younger subjects.

The UF study specifically looked at 115 older adults in a community setting in downtown Detroit to determine differences in pain and functional disability levels. Pain has been linked to limitations in physical functioning, such as walking and carrying items like groceries, which can affect elders’ independence.

Sixty percent of the respondents reported experiencing pain of some sort with 66 percent reporting physical limitations. Seventy-one percent said pain limited their social activities as well.

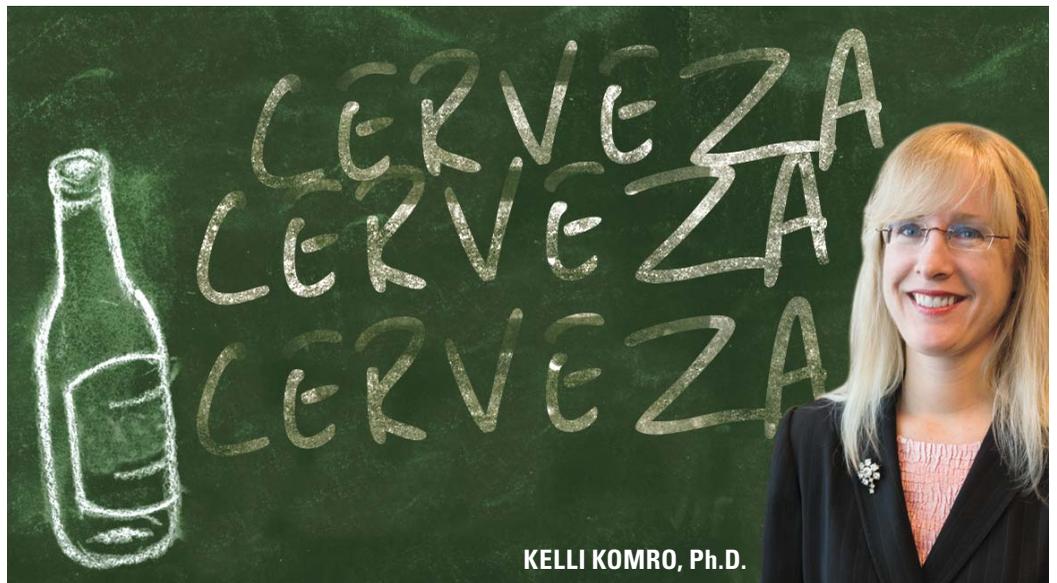
There was a robust connection between pain and disability. More pain was associated with greater physical and social limitations. This is an important finding for health-care practitioners because pain management often may not be considered a top priority when treating older patients, Horgas said.

Black and white participants did not differ significantly in intensity or duration of pain, although black participants reported more physical limitations. When race, socioeconomic, demographic and health variables were considered simultaneously, race no longer had a significant association with disability.

“Pain needs to be treated in all seniors with careful attention to the special circumstances that may affect older black Americans,” Horgas said. **P**



ANN HORGAS, Ph.D., R.N.



KELLI KOMRO, Ph.D.

Overexposed

Areas with more Hispanic kids also have more alcohol ads

By April Frawley Birdwell

Children are exposed to nearly seven times more alcohol advertising if they attend a school where at least one-fifth of the students are Hispanic, a new UF and University of Texas study shows.

In a study of 63 schools in urban Chicago, researchers found there were 29 alcohol ads on average in the two-block radius surrounding schools with larger Hispanic populations compared with an average of four ads around schools where less than one-fifth of students were Hispanic. In all, the researchers counted 771 alcohol ads around the 27 schools with more Hispanic students and only 160 ads around the 36 schools with fewer Hispanic students, the researchers reported online in the journal *Ethnicity & Health*.

“We also know from previous research that Hispanic children are at increased risk for alcohol use at young ages.” — Kelli Komro, Ph.D.

“This is a concern because we know from past research that exposure to ads is associated with alcohol use and intentions to use alcohol,” said Kelli Komro, Ph.D., an associate professor of epidemiology in the UF College of Medicine and Institute for Child Health Policy and the study’s principal investigator. “We also know from previous research that Hispanic children are at increased risk for alcohol use at young ages.”

The ads around these schools, which housed kindergarten through eighth grades, were also more likely to contain cartoon images and animals, Komro said. Some of the ads, ranging from billboards to signs, also seemed to tie into Hispanic culture by featuring Spanish words and the colors from the Mexican flag.

There are more than 45 million Hispanic people living in the United States — about 10 million more than there were in 2000 — and the increase stems more from a baby boom than a population boom, according to a Pew Hispanic Center report released in October. About 20 percent of public school students across the country are Hispanic, the report shows.

“Exposure to alcohol advertising has been shown to increase alcohol use and intention to use alcohol, and marketers are aggressively capitalizing on the rapidly growing Hispanic population, targeting their marketing efforts at this group,” said Keryn Pasch, Ph.D., an assistant professor of kinesiology and health education at the University of Texas and the study’s lead author. “Given these facts, I think it’s critical to determine if alcohol advertising around schools is related to the ethnicity of the students and, if it is, to take steps to reduce the exposure of high-risk groups to this negative influence.” **P**

By Anne Myers

With a list of about 50 classic rock songs in its playlist, The Jawbreakers are a hot band in the UF College of Dentistry. The band's name, the result of student suggestions, is a humorous reminder of its members' day jobs.

Matt Dennis, D.D.S., lead singer and guitar; Ron Watson, D.M.D., guitar; Larry Brock, D.M.D., drums; and Roger Wray, D.D.S., bass; are all professors in the college. They have been playing together for a few years and have become pretty popular with the dental students.

"Students like to see their professors doing something other than dentistry," said Dennis, a clinical associate professor of oral and maxillofacial surgery.

The Jawbreakers get together once a week to practice at Dennis' house. After setting up their equipment and sharing a few jokes, they jump right into a Tom Petty or Van Morrison song.

"We have fun, that's the main thing," said Wray, a clinical associate professor who recently transferred to Shands Jacksonville.

The band has played at several College of Dentistry functions over the years, including the annual senior banquet and holiday parties. They've even had a few outside gigs, but haven't actively pursued those because, well, they still have day jobs. If asked, though, they would love to play for other colleges, said Watson, an associate professor in the division of general dentistry.

Although they play mostly classic rock, one time they performed the popular Outkast song, "Hey Ya," at a dentistry event. The students went crazy and sang along, which is what they all love about playing, the professors explained.

While The Jawbreakers have found a fan base, in the end, they really just do it for fun.

"I am grateful that I fell into such a great group of guys to play with," said Brock, a clinical assistant professor in periodontics. **P**



PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

Meet The Jawbreakers: (From left) Dr. Matt Dennis on vocals, guitar, and oral and maxillofacial surgery; Dr. Larry Brock on drums and periodontics; Dr. Roger Wray on bass and community dentistry; and Dr. Ron Watson on guitar and general dentistry.



PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

WHEN DENTISTS ROCK

Drills and forceps by day ... **GUITARS** and **DRUMS** by night

It's a small world ...

It's no secret. With hundreds of faculty members and students who hail from everywhere from Berlin to Brunei, the HSC is an international community. The question is what does this conglomeration of cultures, ideas and influences mean for education and science? A lot, actually. Julie Henderson of the College of Pharmacy puts it like this: "I think the main benefit is perspective. If you are raised and live and work in monocultural space, you have the same life experiences and draw similar conclusions. Within the HSC and UF at large the mix of people brings a greater perspective on a range of things." With this in mind, this month the POST met with a select few of those faculty, students and staff who come from other countries to learn more about their experiences and how their backgrounds shape their work and lives at UF. Here are some of those stories:

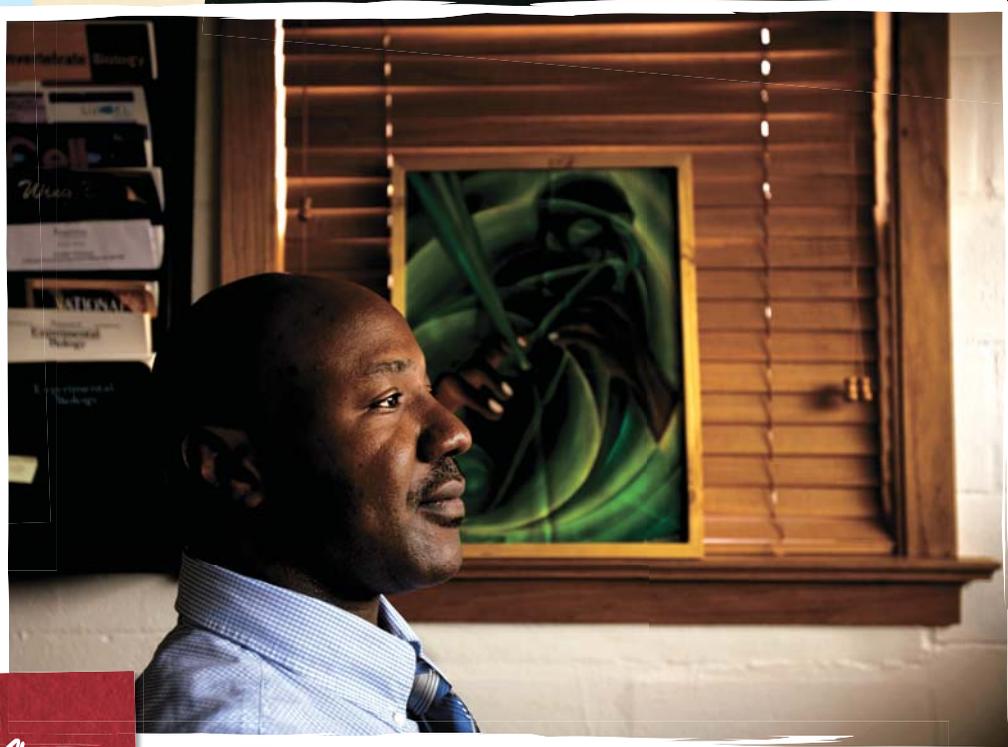


PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

Mission: malaria

Bernard Okech, Ph.D., a Kenyan native, contracted malaria three times as a child, at ages 5, 8 and 12. "I was lucky," Okech says. "My dad could afford to drive me to the hospital to get me treatment. But what about the guy who doesn't have a car and has to walk 20 miles or more to a clinic that doesn't have the medication he needs? Malaria, as with many other tropical diseases, is closely associated with poverty."

A mosquito-transmitted disease, malaria is highly prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa. The World Health Organization estimates there were 247 million cases of malaria in 2006 and 881,000 deaths.

As a researcher at UF's Emerging Pathogens Institute and the Whitney Laboratory, Okech is looking for methods to kill mosquitoes when they are in the larval stage, before they mature and become malaria carriers.

"By understanding the basic biology of the mosquitoes, it will be possible to develop insecticides that only kill mosquitoes without harming the environment," said Okech, a research assistant scientist in the College of Public Health and Health Professions' environmental health program. "With every new discovery we are getting closer and closer to the silver bullet."

Okech's work became deeply personal a few years ago when his teenage brother in Kenya died of malaria after a broken pipe outside his school remained unfixed and created standing water, a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

"I feel that malaria is one of those diseases that we shouldn't even be talking about anymore," Okech says. "We have all the tools to control it, and it has been done in developed countries for years. It is sad that people can die from a disease that we can control." — *Fill Pease*





Classroom culture clash

Gainesville was a familiar place to Emel Ozdora, who spent summers here with her cousins when she was growing up. But moving from Turkey to attend graduate school at UF still wasn't easy.

"It took some time to adapt," says Ozdora, a communications assistant in the College of Dentistry and a UF doctoral student. "Adapt to being alone away from home, adapt to being a student in the U.S. where people have a really different approach to education."

First of all, relationships between professors and students in the U.S. and in Turkey are very different, Ozdora says.

"Professors here are so much more friendlier and are much more helpful. There is not such a high power difference, which took some time to adapt to, but I really enjoy it now. I can just talk to my professors and discuss issues much more comfortably."

In Turkey, college is similar to high school. Professors lecture, students listen and there is little discussion, Ozdora says.

"Here, the first thing I needed to adapt to as a graduate student is that professors don't go over the material chapter by chapter," she says. "You have to come to class having done the reading and be ready for class discussion."

Ozdora seems to have adjusted well to the change. She recently won the UF Outstanding International Student Award.

And though she feels she has adapted to living in the U.S., she still reads Turkish newspapers online and keeps a Turkish blog, where she talks about her experiences living here. She is also an active member of the Turkish student community in Gainesville, having served as vice president and president of the Turkish Student Association. — *Karen Rhodenizer*

Accent limbo

The summer she graduated from high school, Julie Henderson walked the Green Line of Beirut, visited the West Bank and toured a garbage dump in Cairo where the collectors lived, worked and raised families. Basically, your typical summer vacation.

But even the months she spent traveling across the Middle East or the trips to third-world countries she took with her father could not prepare her for her first visit to China in 1990.

"It was so incredibly alien," says Henderson, an Australian native who now develops online cultural training programs for the UF College of Pharmacy's distance learning programs. "It was the year after Tian'anmen. It was backward. There were two different types of currency, one for the Chinese and one for foreigners. After two months, I figured I could never live there. It was too hard."

Eighteen years later, China is booming. Henderson, who has been back to China three times, has teamed with UF engineers to create a virtual version of the country, which lets visitors practice interacting in real situations before they go. The project, called Second China, is housed within the Internet program Second Life.

"I'm really interested in the cultural and communications aspects of these 3-D virtual worlds," Henderson says. "I believe there is a place for them in health-care education."

Before joining the College of Pharmacy staff, Henderson taught English to foreign students at her family's now-closed language school, the English House. From teaching and living in other countries for so long, only a wisp of her Australian accent remains, though it comes back when she talks to other Aussies.

"I'll get halfway through a word and not know how to end it," she says, laughing. "I'll get stuck in accent limbo." — *April Frawley Birdwell*





The meaning of saudade

“Many aspects of my own culture that I had never thought about as important not only became apparent, but I also felt saudade (this Portuguese word for a feeling of melancholy cannot be translated to English). I felt saudade for things such as having my first name pronounced correctly, being hugged, socializing with colleagues, being approached naturally instead of having to approach everybody, expressing myself in my own language, talking with people over the phone instead of with answering machines, having time for lunch instead of eating during meetings, and wearing my jeans to work.”

For Brazilian-born Jeanne-Marie Stacciarini, Ph.D., R.N., an assistant professor in the College of Nursing who moved to the United States in 2000, adjusting to American culture has been a bit of a challenge. While serving a faculty member at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, Stacciarini wrote a paper on the cultural differences she experienced, referenced above.

Although the paper took some fellow faculty members aback, it helped to open up dialogue on ways to respect and welcome those of different cultures into the working environment.

Stacciarini has been at UF since 2006 and says its multicultural environment gives people an opportunity to discover a variety of perspectives. She admits she misses the stronger sense of community she felt in Brazil but has been able to forge her own ties in UF and in Gainesville.

This sense of community has driven Stacciarini's research. She received a grant to conduct a community-based participatory research study on depression in Latina women. Her respect for the community is why she was attracted to the CBPR approach, which enlists community members in the research.

— Tracy Brown Wright

Missing warm beer

Nick Bacon, Vet.M.B., never intended to spend more than a year in the United States. But after a fellowship at the Colorado State University, the Englishman discovered burgeoning veterinary oncology program at the UF College of Veterinary Medicine.

“Suddenly I was interviewing for a surgery job at UF,” says Bacon, a UF clinical assistant professor of small animal surgical oncology. “That was two years ago and here I am.”

Bacon, who trained in veterinary surgery at the University of Cambridge, discovered he liked how the colleagues he met in the United States approached the practice of veterinary surgery. It was different than in the U.K., where tradition sometimes got in the way of out-of-the-box ideas.

“I don't know if this just the (U.S.) universities I have been to and maybe not across the board, but here, there's much more of a feeling of possibility and creativity. Because we don't do it or know how to do it is not an obstacle,” Bacon says. “For oncology, that's brilliant.”

Of course, there is one little thing some Americans do that still confuses Bacon — the reaction he gets to his British accent. He notices people sometimes focus on how he says something rather than what he says.

Although his stay here has been three times longer than originally planned, he still hopes to move back to England someday.

“You do miss warm beer and some of the foods, amazingly,” he says. “But on the other side, I wear shorts most of the year and get to go to the beach. It's quite nice having palm trees in your back garden.”
— April Frawley Birdwell



Help from afar



At first, when a colleague told her about the earthquake in China's Sichuan Province, Guilian Xu, Ph.D., didn't think anything was wrong. “There are always earthquakes at that part of Sichuan,” says Xu, a researcher in the College of Medicine McKnight Brain Institute who hails from Chengdu, the capital of the Sichuan province. “He told me it was a 7.9, and I said ‘It should be OK, nobody lives there.’ Then he said a high school had collapsed with 900 kids inside.”

Shocked, Xu scanned the Internet for more information. The number of reported deaths kept growing rapidly, and Xu started calling her relatives. The phone rang, but no one answered any of the numbers she called that day.

“I didn't get anything done that day, I was just worried and scared,” says Xu, who studies mouse models on neurodegenerative diseases in the lab of David Borchelt, Ph.D. “I don't want to feel that way again.”

Her family and friends were safe, but almost 70,000 people were killed, including many children who were crushed when school buildings collapsed. Xu says shoddy construction at these schools may be more to blame than the earthquake itself.

“My friend told me, hundreds of kids were asking for help when the building collapsed,” Xu says, shaking her head. “It's terrible.”

With the leader of the Friendship Association of Chinese Students and Scholars, Xu helped set up a fund to collect money for relief efforts. With two other universities, the group was able to send almost \$70,000 to China to aid in rebuilding efforts.

The money will help rebuild a school. — April Frawley Birdwell



Three years and 35 minutes



PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

After graduating high school in 1999 and spending a year in Cuba's mandatory military service, Leo Pena didn't do anything for two years. No work. No school. It was too risky.

"With the Cuban government, you have to play it really safe," says Pena, a UF medical student who was held in his native Cuba for three years after his family won U.S. visas through the Department of State's visa lottery program. "I ended up wasting three years doing nothing."

Even worse, his mother, father and sister were already in the United States living in Miami. Only Pena was held back. But in 2002, Pena boarded a plane bound for Miami. Thirty-five minutes later he was in the United States.

"I was like, that's it? That's how far I have been? Thirty-five minutes?" Pena says.

As happy as he was to be with his family and in the U.S., pursuing an education in a new country created its own set of challenges. Most schools wouldn't accept him without a permanent resident card, and one of the institutions that did wanted him to take English as a second language classes. But his English was fine. So he enrolled at a Broward Community College and then at Florida Atlantic University, driving 100 miles each day to get to class. He wanted to be a doctor, but without his permanent resident card, he wouldn't be able to enter medical school. So he majored in math.

"I lost hope," he says. "I was going to be an actuary. But then I got my permanent resident card."

Now a second-year medical student, Pena became a U.S. citizen in October in a ceremony with 1,200 people in Miami. Half of them were Cubans.

"I wanted to vote, but I missed (the deadline) by a week and a half," Pena says. "I'll vote next time." — *April Frawley Birdwell*

The decision to stay

After they had been in the United States two years, Elena Kurenova, Ph.D., and her husband, Sergei Kurenov, M.S., decided not to go back to Russia. It was a difficult decision. Adjusting to American life had been hard, but in Russia, after the Perestroika economic reforms of the late 1980s and eventual collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, being a scientist was even harder.

"The Perestroika time and the years after were very hard for scientists in Russia," says Kurenova, sitting in her office in the UF Cancer/Genetics Research Complex. "Many of our friends had to change their fields of interest completely. For us it was not acceptable. It was the main basis for our decision to come here. The other thing was how we will raise our child."

"We think we made the right decision."

The couple and their then 8-year-old daughter moved to North Carolina in 1993 after Kurenova was recruited to the National Institutes of Health and eventually to UF in 2003. Although they each stayed in their own fields—she in science and he in computer technology—their areas of interest have evolved since coming to the United States. In Russia, Kurenov developed military simulators and worked with a company retooling Microsoft Word for the Russian market. Now, he is the College of Medicine department of surgery's go-to expert for simulation. And although she once studied fruit flies at a genetics institute, she is now working with William Cance, M.D., to develop cancer drugs using focal adhesion kinase as a target.

The plight of scientists in Russia has improved in recent years, Kurenova says. Now, with so many Russian scientists in the U.S., there are more scientific collaborations between the countries.

"The Cold War was a really bad time for both countries," Kurenov adds. "Both have a good exchange with brainstorming and ideas, now ... Understanding other cultures is just avoiding a lot of problems and misunderstandings." — *April Frawley Birdwell*



PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL



PHOTO BY SARAH CAREY

Saving *Auto*

Dog en route to recovery thanks to Humane Society and UF veterinarians

By Sarah Carey

A badly injured young stray dog that happened to wander into the bushes near the Alachua County Humane Society is alive today and at home with his new owners, thanks to caring Humane Society workers and surgeons at the UF Veterinary Medical Center.

“He was discovered Monday morning, Oct. 6, by staff members, and he was obviously dehydrated and in shock,” said Kirk Eppenstein, the Humane Society’s executive director, adding that while no one saw the

accident, it appeared the dog had been hit by a car.

“The Humane Society made him comfortable until he could be transported to Alachua County Animal Services for mandatory holding to see if an owner would come forward,” Eppenstein said.

No one did. After consulting with a few local veterinarians who gave the dog — nicknamed Auto — a poor prognosis, members of the Humane Society went to the media and to the general public seeking donations to help pay for the dog’s medical care.

“Staff from the Humane Society refused to give up on Auto and worked with him daily,” Eppenstein said. “He had the presence of mind or the luck to wander into the bushes near our offices, and although our resources are always spread thin, we just felt he deserved a chance.”

Eight days later, Auto arrived at UF’s VMC, where he was evaluated by orthopedic surgeon Antonio Pozzi, D.V.M., and resident Alastair Coomer, B.V.Sc.

“Radiographs showed a fracture of his left femur, a left hip luxation, right pelvic fracture

and small fractures of the left femoral head,” said Christine Ross, the junior veterinary student who served as part of the treatment team.

Surgery was performed Oct. 14 to repair the fractured femur.

“Five pins and two screws were used to stabilize the multiple fractures,” Ross said.

Two days later, Auto received a total hip replacement, removing small bone chips and replacing his left hip joint with a new titanium joint.

“He is a young dog and has soft bones, so we are taking multiple precautions during his recovery,” Ross said, adding that Auto would be in a sling for the next few weeks to prevent him from bearing any weight on the injured limb.

Eppenstein said that the good Samaritan who covered the lion’s share of Auto’s veterinary expenses — estimated to be more than \$6,000 — had decided to give the dog a permanent home.

“His recovery will likely be long and slow, but his prognosis is very good,” said Coomer. **P**



Canine cardi♥

New rehabilitation and fitness center launched at UF Small Animal Hospital

By Sarah Carey

Veterinarians at the UF Veterinary Medical Center now have a new tool for helping Fido get back on his feet: an underwater treadmill.

A ribbon-cutting to celebrate the launch of this new rehabilitative treatment modality, part of the UF Veterinary Rehabilitation and Fitness Center, was held Sept. 15 and included a demonstration of the new treadmill, which is housed in the VMC between the small and large animal hospitals and adjacent to the equine treadmill room.

Several UF faculty and staff members, along with special guests Victoria Ford and Janine Tash, D.V.M., owner of Aalatah Veterinary Hospital and member of the UF CVM class of 1983, attended the event. The treadmill was made possible through financial gifts from Ford, who is past treasurer of the Pals & Paws dog agility group in Jacksonville and a dog agility friend of Tash's.

"After competing in agility for 12 years, I observed all the injured dogs going to Aiken, S.C., for treatment and wondered why the UF veterinary school was not their choice," Ford said. "I learned that UF had no such program and the agility dogs needed special treatment."

Tash was meanwhile working on Ford's two competition dogs and mentioned the need for an underwater treadmill.

"I saw a need and was able to assist the veterinary school in acquiring it with a gift of \$60,000," Ford said.

After a meeting with college administrators, Ford learned that not only did agility dogs have rehabilitation needs, so did other canine athletes as well as surgical and neurological patients.

She subsequently decided to support this goal by establishing the James Edmundson Ingraham Endowed Fund in Veterinary Medicine with an additional gift in memory of her great-grandfather, a businessman, entrepreneur and railroad company executive whom Ford describes as "a moving force in the development of the state of Florida from the 1880s through the early 1900s."

"I am excited to be a part of the development of the small animal rehabilitation area in the veterinary hospital and look forward to its growth," Ford said. She also made an additional donation toward creating a small animal rehabilitation area in the soon-to-be-constructed new Veterinary Research and Education Center, which includes a new small animal hospital.

Directing the new rehabilitation program will be staff surgeon Kristin Kirkby, D.V.M., a 2003 graduate of the UF veterinary college who recently



PHOTO BY SARAH CAREY

Dr. Kristin Kirkby smiles at her dog, Bailey, while veterinary technician Wendy Davies monitors operation of the new underwater treadmill. Bailey gamely participated in the treadmill demonstration during a recent ribbon-cutting event.

completed her residency in small animal surgery. Kirkby is now pursuing a doctoral degree.

Under Kirkby's direction, limited hydrotherapy services are now being offered to certain clients, primarily animals suffering from joint problems or muscle loss, which often results from orthopedic or neurological disease.

"There is a huge benefit for dogs with spinal cord injury that are unable to or have difficulty walking on land," Kirkby said.

Large animal patients are also benefiting from the new treadmill.

"The goal is to reduce pressure on the muscle groups and to allow for weightless movements as part of physical therapy to improve muscle strength," said equine resident Johanna Elfenbein, adding that the major problem with recumbence — the inability to stand — in large animals is that their large muscle groups have decreased blood flow, causing muscles to die over time.

Kirkby would like to see the service expand and make use of other rehabilitation modalities such as low-level laser therapy, therapeutic ultrasound and shock-wave therapy.

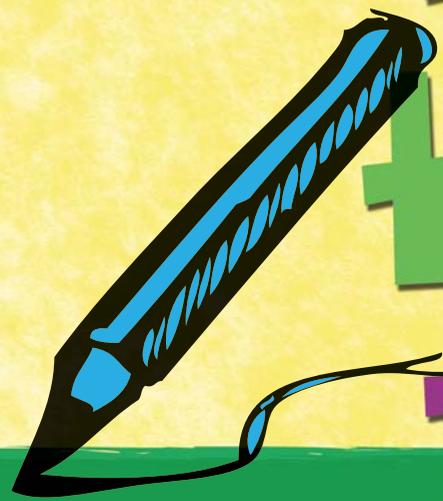
"One of the big things we plan to push for is weight loss," she said. "We envision a wellness center that would provide exercise and nutrition therapy, along with pain management and rehabilitation."

Kirkby said the buoyancy of the water decreases the impact of an animal's weight on its joints, and the resistance provided by walking in water builds muscle.

"Depending on the height of the water, you can target different muscle areas and joints," she said.

Other veterinary colleges and hospitals are using aquatic therapy for small animals, but UF is the only one in South Georgia or North Florida.

"My vision is that we will become very much a leader in clinical services but also in research to validate why we're doing this," Kirkby said. **P**



HOPEFUL, HAPPY, HEALTHY...

STUDY AIMS TO IMPROVE HEALTH OF AMERICAN CHILDREN

By Sarah Carey

Two scientists with the UF colleges of Veterinary Medicine and Public Health and Health Professions will help monitor environmental testing and exposure assessments for Florida's component in an unprecedented national study aimed at improving the health of America's children.

UF's component of the \$54 million Florida contract amounts to approximately \$10 million, administrators said.

Nancy Szabo, Ph.D., director of the Analytical Toxicology Corps Laboratory and a research assistant professor with the College of Veterinary Medicine, and Natalie Freeman, Ph.D., associate professor and interim director of the College of Public Health and Health Professions' environmental health program, will partner with lead investigator Mark Hudak, M.D., a UF pediatrician at Shands Jacksonville, on UF's piece of the project known as the National Children's Study.

One of the largest collaborative efforts in health-related research ever, the NCS will involve a consortium of federal partners, including the National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The NCS's goal is to ultimately enroll 100,000 children nationally. To that end, the NIH has selected 105 counties in the country, including four in Florida, to participate. Each urban county selected will ultimately assemble a group of 1,000 children. Rural counties will assemble a group of 600 children, all of whom will be followed prenatally and through the first 21 years of life.

In Florida, the University of Miami's Miller School of Medicine will be taking the lead role as the Florida coordinating center. The University of South Florida and the University of Central Florida also are involved. UF's efforts will focus primarily on 600 children from Baker County, although Freeman and Szabo also will participate in the Orange and Hillsborough county sites.

"Having Mark Hudak as principal investigator of the Baker location makes a lot of sense during the first years of the study, since the primary focus will be on recruiting women before and during pregnancy and following them through delivery," said Freeman, whose background is in residential exposure assessment, with a particular focus on children. She and Szabo also are excited about the potential for additional intercollege collaborations that may ensue at UF from spin-off studies.

Freeman said the NCS is essentially an observational exposure assessment study

as well as a longitudinal epidemiology study. Environmental assessments will include household, air, water and soil around the household. More specific decisions relating to which contaminants will be analyzed are expected to be finalized in the next few months. Specific contaminants to be tested will vary by region.

"We will gather information about lifestyle activities and collect environmental samples for analysis of a wide range of agents," Freeman said. "Hopefully this data will provide information about what children are exposed to and how it impacts their health."

She added that the Florida contract should provide for many jobs in Dade, Hillsborough, Orange and Baker counties and ought to be a welcome boon for the entire state in lean economic times.

"It is expected that the folks manning the phone banks, and people trained for home visits and the collection of various environmental/biological samples will come largely from the area," said Szabo, whose primary role will be to provide quality control and quality assurance for the Baker County piece of the study.

"This extends beyond the collection or manipulation of data; it involves verification and evaluation of the personnel involved, biological and environmental protocols, sampling and site activities and verification/evaluation of corrective actions," Szabo said.

Although most of the time-consuming, routine efforts for Baker County — such as phone banks, surveys and site visits for collection of biological and/or environmental samples — have been subcontracted to a company that has its own quality control system, its activities will still be monitored and confirmed by UF personnel.

The NCS coordinating center has not yet finalized decisions regarding which analyses will be conducted or who will provide those analyses on collected environmental and biological samples.

Freeman said that besides Szabo's role in monitoring quality assurance and control — which Freeman called "critical" for a study of this size — it was possible that other veterinary medical faculty who conduct research relevant to both humans and animals might at some point be involved in other aspects of the NCS.

"One of the focuses of the NCS is trying to understand the development of asthma," Freeman said. "In the veterinary college, there already is an established group conducting asthma-related research."

Along with asthma, however, diabetes, obesity and autism are specifically stated interests within the NCS. Szabo and Freeman both said all these areas could afford the possibility of future intracollege collaborations at UF.

"As time goes by and the Florida branch of the NCS gets started, other opportunities of this nature will surely appear," Szabo said. **P**

Research center to reduce racial disparities in cancer

By Karen Rhodenizer

The National Institutes of Health announced a five-year, \$5.3 million grant to the UF College of Dentistry to fund a new research center aimed at reducing disparities in head and neck cancer survival through prevention and early detection in low-income, minority men.

It is the first NIH-funded center to focus on head and neck cancer in the Southeast. Minority men suffer a disproportionate burden of death and impairment from head and neck cancer. Each year, more than 11,000 people die because of head and neck cancers in the United States and 34,000 new cases are diagnosed.

It is the 10th leading cause of death among African-American men, who suffer twice the mortality of white men. In Florida, African-Americans are diagnosed at a younger age and more advanced disease stage compared with whites. Most African-American men will survive about 21 months after diagnosis, while white men will survive about 40 months.

For some people, oral cancer begins with a mouth sore or perhaps a suspicious spot found by a dentist during a regular checkup. Patients generally need to see specialists for treatment, which forces them to deal with new doctors at an emotionally vulnerable time. Surgery for oral cancer is often disfiguring and radiation may cause loss of the ability to speak.

“As we talked with local residents, we learned about the negative impact on people’s lives,” said Henrietta Logan, Ph.D., a professor at the College of Dentistry and the center’s director. “We found that many community leaders, who were invited to meetings because of their community involvement, had been touched by this disease within their own families. They had stories of relatives who were diagnosed too late.”

The new multidisciplinary center will be located at the College of Dentistry in Gainesville, and programs will extend to satellite clinics and rural locations throughout the state. The successful grant application was the result of collaboration with many professional associations and collaborative groups, including Florida A&M University, the Alachua County Organization for Rural Needs and regional ministerial networks, officials said.

For more information about the center, please visit its Web site at www.dental.ufl.edu/Offices/TakeTheBite. **P**



Grant could help people who undergo dialysis

By Jennifer Brindise

A UF vascular surgeon has received a \$1.1 million five-year National Institutes of Health grant to evaluate a common surgical procedure, called an arm fistula, used to create access sites for patients needing hemodialysis.

Thomas S. Huber, M.D., Ph.D., a professor in the division of vascular surgery and endovascular therapy at UF’s College of Medicine, will lead a multidisciplinary team of UF faculty to define the natural history of fistulas, a surgically created connection between an artery and a vein.

Fistulas, which provide a single entry and exit point for blood flow for hemodialysis, are a common type of access for patients who need hemodialysis, a method of removing waste products from patients whose kidneys no longer function effectively.

The study is designed to track the health of patients who use this type of dialysis access. The UF team will work with five other centers across the country to outline practice patterns and create surgical guidelines with the aim of increasing the number of successful fistula procedures.

Huber said currently there is a higher than desired failure rate when fistulas are first created. Through this project, researchers hope to better understand why some fistulas cannot be successfully formed initially and why others do not mature, as they should, into the necessary size for use. The answers to these questions could provide cost savings and enhance patient care.

“The biggest single expense is maintaining dialysis access,” said Huber, adding that problems with access sites can be quite frustrating for patients.

Although fistulas cannot be used for dialysis until three to four months after they are created, they are the optimal access method because they can be used for a long time and are resistant to infection, Huber said.

UF vascular surgeons have about a 70 percent success rate in creating fistulas, a statistic that is higher than the national average.

While hemodialysis patients have other options for hemodialysis access, Huber said a functioning fistula is still a far better option than other approaches.

About 400,000 people are currently on dialysis, Huber said. As the population ages, this number is expected to grow. **P**



UF physician to lead new Breast Health Center

By Kandra Albury

Shahla Masood, M.D., a UF College of Medicine-Jacksonville professor and chair of the department of pathology and laboratory medicine, has been appointed medical director of the Shands Jacksonville Breast Health Center.

Masood is an internationally recognized physician in breast cancer diagnosis and prognosis and was the driving force behind the establishment of the Breast Health Center. She is the recipient of several national and international awards, and is a renowned pathologist with a specific interest in enhancing the quality of breast health care around the world.

Robert Nuss, M.D., dean of the UF College of Medicine-Jacksonville regional campus and associate vice president for health affairs, said Masood's passion for breast care makes her the ideal candidate for the position.

"Her well-established national and international reputation as an expert on breast cancer as well as her strong and dynamic leadership promise an optimistic future for the Breast Health Center on our campus," Nuss said.

As the director of the Breast Health Center, Masood plans to establish a multidisciplinary team of physicians to provide comprehensive services and programs for patients with breast disease. Pathologists, radiologists, surgeons, oncologists and radiation therapists will work together toward the goal of providing coordinated, optimal evaluation and treatment of patients, and support for families and long-term survivors. Other plans for the center include creating a breast health advisory committee to monitor quality of care, making recommendations for treatment and fostering clinical research. There are also plans to create a high-risk breast clinic that will be used to direct patients to early intervention services.

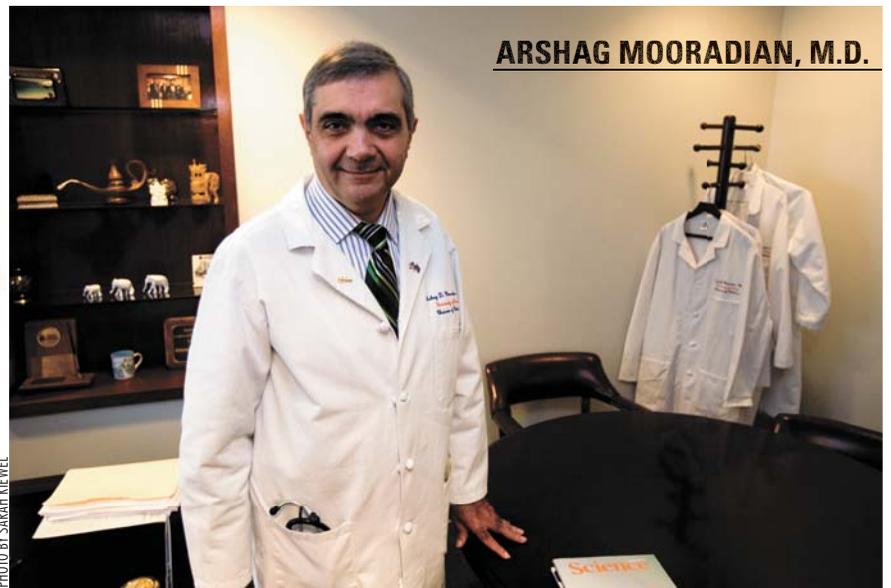
"I'm committed to the attainment of national accreditation for the Breast Health Center," Masood said. "We want to distinguish ourselves in this community as the place to go for breast health care."

Masood intends to build an infrastructure to allow members of the breast team to conduct clinical trials and participate in translational research. She will continue her research in breast cancer diagnosis and prevention by using minimally invasive procedures and advanced molecular base technologies to better identify high-risk breast cancer patients.

"Conducting studies at the bench and bringing the results to the bedsides of our patients will result in the true translation of research," Masood said. "Research is the pulse of academic medicine." **P**



SHAHLA MASOOD, M.D



ARSHAG MOORADIAN, M.D.

PHOTO BY SARAH KEWEL

A passion for healing, educating and leading

UF doctor helps build successful department in Jacksonville

By Kandra Albury

Deciding to become a physician was easy for Arshag Mooradian, M.D., a professor and chair of the department of medicine at the UF College of Medicine-Jacksonville.

Early in life he lost a childhood friend to diabetes. That loss taught him a valuable lesson — that human health is both precious and fragile — and it set him on a life-changing mission. He committed to studying medicine, honing his clinical skills and engaging in lifelong learning — all with the goal of helping patients improve and preserve their health.

Deciding to become a medical educator also was easy for Mooradian. He discovered that he learned best through teaching others. He credits residents and fellows with motivating him to study even more just to keep up with their challenging questions.

But perhaps one of the easiest decisions Mooradian made in his professional career was joining the faculty of the UF College of Medicine-Jacksonville in 2006.

"I was flattered by the prospect of joining the ranks of this prestigious group of clinicians and scholars on the Jacksonville campus," he said. "At a time when many academic centers are facing serious threats to their mission, the UF College of Medicine-Jacksonville is clearly on the upswing phase with unprecedented growth and expansion of patient services."

The department of medicine has contributed much to that growth and expansion because it serves as the hub of patient care. Its physicians treat the "whole person" and link patients to the resources they need to improve and preserve their health.

"At the core of a successful and respected academic medical center is its department of medicine," said Robert Nuss, M.D., dean of the regional campus in Jacksonville. "Dr. Mooradian has brought his considerable talents, energy and commitment to our campus and, in a very short time, has recruited exceptional new faculty physicians. His leadership has enriched the campus — his dedication to patient care, teaching and research is a standard for all."

Medical care available through Jacksonville's department of medicine ranges from standard therapy to sophisticated treatments such as transmyocardial injection of genes to promote angiogenesis in patients with coronary artery disease.

And the number of innovative interventions will continue to grow, Mooradian said.

"These are truly exciting times for this department and for this campus, and I am delighted to be part of it," he said. "It is an honor and a privilege to help our patients improve and preserve one of the most precious and fragile gifts we have — our health." **P**

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

HERWIG-ULF MEIER-KRIESCHE, M.D.,

a professor of medicine and the medical director of renal and pancreas transplantation, has been awarded the TTS-Novartis Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Evidence Base for Transplantation for his work in transplantation. Meier-Kriesche, also the Central Florida Kidney Center endowed chair in medicine, is renowned for his research in renal transplantation, particularly on the use, metabolism and complications of immunosuppressive drugs in elderly renal transplant recipients.



Herwig-Ulf Meier-Kriesche

MARIAN LIMACHER, M.D.,

a professor of cardiovascular medicine, was recently named the Suncoast Endowed Professor in Cardiovascular Medicine Research. A scholar who served as a primary investigator for the Women's Health Initiative, Limacher has been recognized by the National Institutes of Health and the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States, among others.



Marian Limacher

I. KEITH STONE, M.D.,

a professor of obstetrics and gynecology, was nominated for the 2008 Association of American Medical Colleges Humanism in Medicine Award. Stone was nominated by members of the AAMC Organization of Student Representatives at UF. The national recipient of the award is determined by considering positive mentoring skills, compassion and sensitivity, collaboration, community service activity and observance of professional ethics.



I. Keith Stone

COLLEGE OF NURSING

KATHLEEN LONG, Ph.D., R.N., dean of the college and a UF associate provost, was recently

selected as the 2008 recipient of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's Sister Bernadette Armiger Award. This award recognizes a nursing leader who has made significant contributions to the AACN and its goals, to nursing education and to the advancement of the profession.



Kathleen Long

Nominated by a group of peer deans from across the country, Long was recently presented with the award at an AACN meeting in Washington D.C. Long has served several terms on the board of directors of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing and was AACN's president from 2002 to 2004. She was a member of the AACN Task Force that authored "Nursing Education's Agenda for the 21st Century."

Long has been nursing dean since 1995 and has won national recognition as a leading thinker about the future of the nursing profession in a rapidly changing health-care landscape threatened by a shortage of nurses. She has been a member of several national task forces focused on interdisciplinary education, health professions shortage issues and patient safety.

COLLEGE OF PHARMACY

MAUREEN KELLER-WOOD, Ph.D.,

a professor and department chair in pharmacodynamics, received a \$1.5 million, five-year grant from the National Institutes of Health to continue her work on understanding neuroendocrine and physiological adaptations in pregnancy.



Maureen Keller-Wood

CARRIE HASKELL-LUEVANO, Ph.D.,

a professor of pharmacodynamics, has received a \$1.55 million, five-year National Institutes of Health renewal award to continue her studies on obesity.



Carrie Haskell-Luevano



Cancer Center director honored

Joseph V. Simone, M.D., director of the UF Shands Cancer Center and physician-in-chief for cancer services at Shands at UF, received the 2008 Association of American Cancer Institutes Distinguished Service Award.

The award recognizes Simone's contributions to the nation's cancer community. Simone directed the Institute of Medicine's effort to promote and improve quality care for cancer patients. His leadership has influenced public opinion and pushed Congress to address issues of patient care. He has developed and implemented effective research programs and management systems that are essential to today's comprehensive cancer center.

For the past eight years, Simone has been the president of Simone Consulting Co., which advises organizations on cancer program quality and development. He also founded the American Society of Clinical Oncology's Quality Oncology Practice Initiative and is a columnist for *Oncology Times*.

Before coming to UF, Simone was physician-in-chief of the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York City. He was also the director of St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, where he spent most of his medical career.

Simone received the award in October at the 2008 AACI Annual Meeting in Chicago. Lance Armstrong, shown here with Simone, was also honored at the event, as was Sen. Edward Kennedy.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22



Edward V. Staab, M.D.

Former UF doctor dies unexpectedly

Edward V. Staab, M.D., the former chair of the department of radiology in the College of Medicine, died suddenly on Nov. 1 in an auto accident near Winston-Salem, NC. He was 72. His wife, Mary Staab, was injured in the accident. Staab served as chair of radiology from 1986 until 1998. He came to UF from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he had been an associate chair and professor of radiology. In 1996 he was named one of the Top 20 Most Influential People in Radiology by Diagnostic Imaging Magazine. He is survived by his wife, five children and 11 grandchildren.

IN MEMORIAM

HENDRIK LUESCH, Ph.D., an assistant professor of medicinal chemistry, has received a \$1.2 million, three-year National Institutes of Health award from the National Institutes of General Medical Sciences to continue his research in marine natural products, including collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution Marine Station.



Hendrik Luesch

ALMUT WINTERSTEIN, Ph.D., an associate professor in pharmaceutical outcomes and policy, received grants this fall from the Florida Department of Health Agency for Healthcare Administration and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid. Each two-year award supports graduate and research programs in pharmacoepidemiology and health policy.



Almut Winterstein

SHANNON ZANDY, a third-year student in the joint UF Pharm.D./Ph.D., program has been elected the first student director to the Florida Pharmacy Association House of Delegates. She hopes to increase student involvement in FPA during her three-year post.



Shannon Zandy

PUBLIC HEALTH AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS

ANDREA BEHRMAN, Ph.D., an associate professor of physical therapy, received the first Alumni Excellence in Clinical Practice Award from Duke University. This award is given to an alumna or alumnus who has demonstrated innovation or creativity in the delivery of physical therapy services. Behrman is the leader of the Locomotor Training and Recovery Research Program, which aims to maximize the recovery of locomotion in individuals with central nervous system injury or disease.



Andrea Behrman

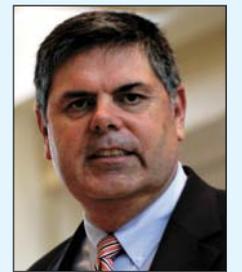
LAURA ZAHODNE, a student in the clinical and health psychology predoctoral program, received a scholarship from the National Parkinson Study Group to present her paper and deliver an oral presentation in September at the 2008 Parkinson Study Group and Movement Disorders Society's annual symposium in Salt Lake City. The symposium was on etiology, pathogenesis and treatment of Parkinson's disease and hyperkinetic movement disorders.



Laura Zahodne

Baker named chair of molecular genetics and microbiology

Henry V. Baker, Ph.D., has been appointed chair of the College of Medicine department of molecular genetics and microbiology following a national search. Baker began as chair on Nov. 1, when he also assumed the Hazel Kitzman Professorship in Genetics.



Henry V. Baker

A professor of molecular genetics and microbiology with a joint appointment in the department of surgery, Baker has served as interim chair of MGM since 2003.

"Dr. Baker has done an exemplary job, contributing to (MGM's) recognition as one of the best departments of its kind in the nation," said Michael Good, M.D., interim dean of the College of Medicine. "In terms of National Institutes of Health research funding, MGM ranks eighth when compared with medical school genetics departments among public universities and 18th overall in the United States."

Library 2.0

Library traffic increases with addition of new technology

By Anne Myers

You might have noticed a few more people working together around large monitors and white boards in the Health Science Center Library in the Communicore Building recently. Since the opening of the Collaboration Commons this summer, students have found a new place to do group projects.

The Collaboration Commons is an area on the first floor of the library devoted to group study, informal learning and research collaboration. It features several big-screen monitors, computers, rolling white boards and innovative learning software such as the Invisible Human Dissector, which allows students to view slices of a frozen human body.

"We wanted to create an environment that enhances people working together rather than frustrates people working together," said Wallace McLendon, director of the HSC Libraries.

And it certainly seems to be working. The HSC Library has seen a 20 percent jump in attendance from this time last year. Seats are full in the new Collaboration Commons two to three times a day, McLendon said. The HSC Library has even put a video feed of the area on its Web site, so students can check to see how crowded it is (www.collaborationcommons.hscl.ufl.edu/view).

The new addition has met with enthusiasm from the students, with comments ranging from "Very cool!" to suggestions for future improvements.

Next on the agenda for the HSC Library is to complete a Collaboration Center. Set to open soon, it will be an inviting, technology-enhanced space



PHOTO BY NED DAVIS

Students gather around a monitor at the HSC Library's new Collaboration Commons.

for larger teams of faculty and researchers to come together and share their data and discoveries. The Collaboration Center will feature videoconferencing; an AccessGrid, which allows viewing of speakers around the world; a 65-inch SmartBoard/projector combo, which digitally captures what is written on it; and hopefully a Vizwall, which is a wall-sized screen that allows for close-up inspection of high-definition images.

While some other libraries have a communications commons, usually it only includes a group of computers, McLendon said. The HSC Library's Collaboration Commons and Center are focused on technology that will make learning easier, and the library aims to continue to add new technology as it becomes available.

"We're not your father's library anymore," McLendon said. **P**

Child's play

Psychology professor made child behavioral therapy her lifelong work

PHOTO BY SARAH KEWEL

Sheila Eyberg, Ph.D.



By Anne Myers

It was as a graduate student at the University of Oregon in the late 1960s that Sheila Eyberg, Ph.D., was first trained in the new behavioral approach to treating children with conduct disorders through parent training.

Later, as a psychology intern at the Oregon Health and Sciences University, she was conversely taught the traditional approach to play therapy, helping children express their feelings and develop trust.

However, Eyberg had several concerns about what was happening during the play therapy sessions. The children were bonding to her instead of their parents, and after many weeks, they were still being disobedient and defiant at home.

When she joined the faculty at Oregon Health and Sciences University, Eyberg began to develop a treatment program for preschoolers with behavioral disorders called Parent-Child Interaction Therapy, or PCIT. She incorporated important aspects from both her behavioral and traditional training into the program.

Today Eyberg, a distinguished professor in the department of clinical and health psychology in the UF College of Public Health and Health Professions, has trained hundreds of therapists from all over the world in her program, which is widely used for young children with disorders such as conduct disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

"Often, parents are angry because children who have these disorders are difficult to live with," Eyberg said. PCIT focuses on warm parent-child interactions, which calm the parent's anger and stress as well as the child's.

During PCIT sessions, parents are coached through a microphone in their ear while they play with their child and are encouraged to dedicate five to 10 minutes a day to playing at home. In the first phase of treatment, praise, reflection, imitation, description and enthusiasm — called the PRIDE skills — are strongly emphasized to strengthen the parent-child bond and make the child less angry and more willing to obey.

With this foundation, families enter the second phase of treatment. During the play sessions, parents are coached to give clear directions and consistent consequences before returning again to the PRIDE skills.

"Children need both love and limits," Eyberg said.

Since coming to UF in 1985, Eyberg has trained hundreds of graduate students in PCIT. In the last decade, she and her students have been holding training workshops to educate therapists in PCIT, and she has worked closely with representatives from Puerto Rico, Holland, Germany, Hong Kong and Australia so they can conduct and teach PCIT in their countries.

"Through my work, I've developed some really close friends all over the world, and my work allows me to travel and see them," Eyberg said.

She enjoys working with people who have the same interests in improving mental health care for children and families.

Eyberg stresses that early intervention is important in changing children's lives and sees her work as a chance to change society. Offering therapy when children are young could help families avoid worse behavioral problems later or even prevent children from becoming delinquents, she said, noting PCIT's long-term effects.

Over the past 30 years, Eyberg has received dozens of awards and honors for her work. She finds it hard to choose just one to mention, but recently she was presented the Distinguished Contributions to Education and Training Award from the American Psychological Association.

"Dr. Eyberg is one of the most prominent clinical child psychologists in the United States today," said Russell Bauer, Ph.D., chair of the department of clinical and health psychology. "She is a researcher who is known for her meticulous, carefully designed studies designed to establish the effectiveness of her treatment approach to child conduct problems."

Eyberg has continued to do research with graduate students on expanding PCIT to new populations and different cultures. Being at UF and working with the graduate students on her research are perks of the job, she says.

"The best thing about being here is the graduate students, without question," she said. "They are bright, committed and eager to learn." **P**

SEE YA!

Nabih Asal, a professor in the department of epidemiology and biostatistics in the College of Public Health and Health Professions, lectures to public health students in his Principles of Epidemiology course Oct. 21.



PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

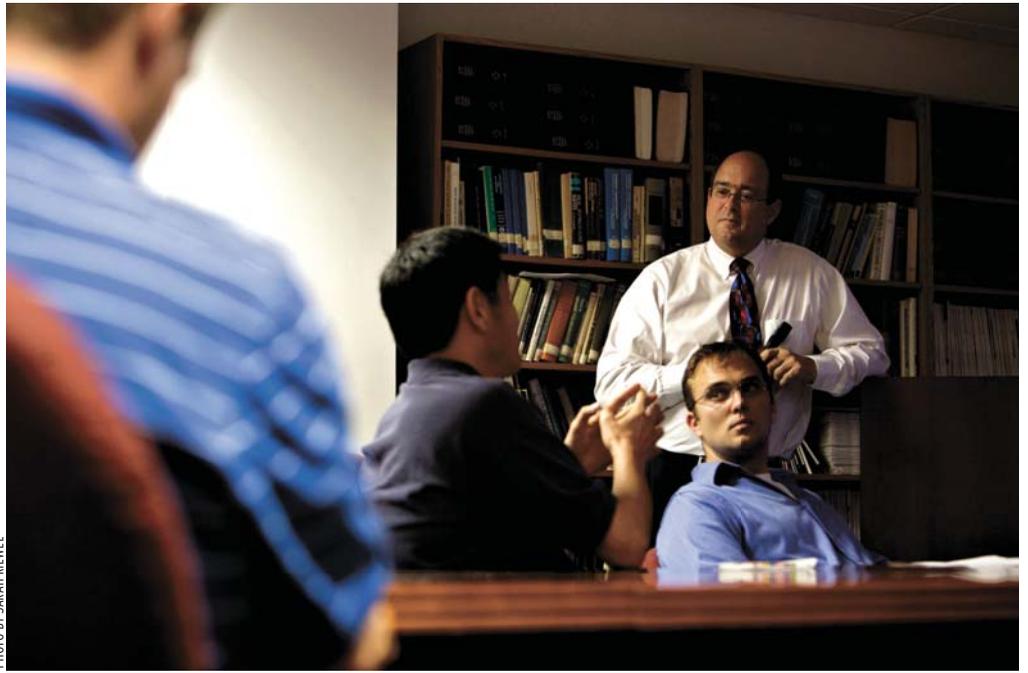


PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

Robert Bell, CEO of Drug Development & Technology, met with the pharmaceuticals graduate students and faculty to discuss how biological drugs compare to generic drugs in terms of costs, safety and effectiveness. Here, associate professor Sihong Song talks with Bell as graduate student Stephan Schmidt and associate professor Cary Mobley (left) listen.

What can fish tell us about human diseases? Kimberly Epley, a research scientist at the Whitney Laboratory for Marine Bioscience, hopes the genes in zebrafish can tell us about genetic mutations that present problems in human pregnancies. Here she displays some of her research models at her lab in St. Augustine.



PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

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