Collaboration

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Upcoming Events
September 8th
11:30 a.m. Community Liaisons Meeting

September 12th
9 a.m. Cytoscape training hosted by UMich and NCIBI

For more upcoming events please visit:
http://rtnm.net/Forms/rcmi_calendar.html

Speed Networking Café Sparks Research Collaborations in Hawaii

Speed Networking at University of Hawaii

To spark new collaborations in basic, clinical and translational research, the RCMI Translational Research Network (RTRN) and the RCMI Multidisciplinary and Translational Research Infrastructure Expansion (RMATRIX or RCTR) at the University of Hawaii at Manoa co-sponsored a Speed Networking Café event on Wednesday, June 29, 2011 at the medical school campus. This event gave investigators the opportunity to interact with colleagues from diverse disciplines, find new collaborators and discuss possible joint projects. Twenty-eight participants attended from the departments of Medicine, Anatomy, Cell and Molecular Biology, Native Hawaiian Health, Tropical Medicine, Human Nutrition, Food and Animal Science, Molecular Biosciences and Bioengineering, as well as the Schools of Nursing and Public Health and affiliated hospitals.

Participants rotated past each other, exchanged photos and biosketches, and spoke during four-minute intervals about potential collaborative projects. Fifteen rounds of speed networking occurred in about an hour, followed by prize drawings and lunch.

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Speed Networking

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Participants were asked to complete “seeking collaborator or resource” forms as well as to list possible collaborators they met during the Speed Networking Café. The Hawaii RTRN and RMATRIX teams are communicating with each participant to assist with coordinating follow up meetings, identifying funding opportunity announcements, and offering key services such as protocol and grants development, biostatistical support, and study coordination.

Twenty-five of 28 participants completed the evaluation form, and 21 remained in the room to enjoy lunch and continue their conversations.

“It was an excellent opportunity to meet people we generally don’t interact with, and learn about their research interests and activities.” Beatriz Rodriguez, M.D., Ph.D.

Other responses included “It was fun!” (and)...“Meeting new people.” Participants noted the benefit of meeting colleagues from diverse research backgrounds and requested that future events include more time for discussion of

MSM Welcomes Renowned Scientists and Launches New Initiatives

Morehouse School of Medicine’s R-CENTER Welcomes Dr. Valerie Montgomery Rice

Dr. John Maupin and the board of directors at Morehouse School of Medicine recently appointed Dr. Valerie Montgomery Rice as Dean and Executive Vice President. Dr. Montgomery Rice, a renowned reproductive endocrinologist and infertility specialist will oversee the academic enterprise and guide the continued advancement of the school’s patient care, research, community health, and education and training programs. She will also take on the role of Director for the MSM R-CENTER.

Prior to her appoint as Dean at Morehouse School of Medicine, Dr. Montgomery Rice served as Director of the Center for Women’s Health Research and Professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Division Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility, at Meharry Medical College. Dr. Montgomery Rice currently serves on the FDA Advisory Panel for Reproductive and Urological Drugs. She is the recipient of the 2011 American Medical Women’s Association Elizabeth

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About the RCTRs

NCRR’s RMI Infrastructure for Clinical and Translational Research (RCTR) awards support the development of infrastructure required for the conduct of clinical and translational research in institutions funded via the Research Centers in Minority Institutions (RCMI) program.

Supported by NCRR’s Division of Research Infrastructure (DRI), RCTR represents a re-organization of the existing RCMI programmatic activities. This re-organization was developed to improve collaboration and coordination of clinical and translational research programs within RCMI institutions and foster collaborations and partnerships with other institutions.
cont. from pg. 2

Blackwell Award, one of the highest honors for contributions to women’s health.

A Georgia native, Dr. Montgomery Rice stated that she is honored to be a part of Morehouse School of Medicine’s legacy of leadership and believes that the school is uniquely poised to make its greatest contributions to a healthier Georgia and the nation.

THE PUERTO RICO BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH EDUCATION PROGRAM: A COLLABORATIVE SUCCESS

Submitted by: Emma Fernández-Repollet, Ph.D.
Director, RCMI Program UPR Medical Sciences Campus

Studies in science education highlight the importance of informal learning to stimulate the interest of students in science. The Puerto Rico Biomedical Research Education Program (PR-BREP) was initiated in 2003 through a NCRR-SEPA grant with the goal to expose Hispanic/Puerto Rican children to biomedical research. The program primarily focuses on two initiatives: a Comic Book Series and a Biomedical Summer Internship Program. Special emphasis is given to health disparities in Hispanic/Latino groups such as diabetes, heart diseases, hypertension, and HIV. After completion of the SEPA award in 2008, the RCMI Program leveraged private funds from the Pfizer Foundation and institutional funds from the Office of the Vice Presidency for Research and Technology to continue offering the Biomedical Summer Internship Program.

Since the inception of the program, over seventy presentations have been made to introduce students to biomedical research through the BioMed Battle Team comic book series. A total of 2,579 school students have been impacted by this activity and over 15,000 copies of the comic books have been distributed across the Island.

The Biomedical Summer Internship targets middle and high school students, providing hands-on experiences in biomedical research, and introducing local biomedical scientists. Thirteen (13) Summer Internships have been held with applications tripling the enrollment capacity. A total of 354 students from 52 schools, representing six of the seven School Regions across the Island have participated in the Internships.

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Professional surveys and evaluations confirmed the positive impact of these tools in developing the interest of Puerto Rican students in biomedical sciences.

The PR-BREP program evidences the capacity to establish partnerships and collaborations between NCRR supported programs such as SEPA and RCMI, as well as with entities from the private and government sectors to develop effective informal educational tools. Collaborators include RCMI researchers, science teachers, pharmaceutical representatives, non-profit organizations, and government agencies.

Research supported by NIH-SEPA Grant # R25 RR17415, NIH-RCMI Grant # G12RR03051 at the UPR Medical Sciences Campus, Pfizer Foundation, and the UPR Office of the Vice Presidency for Research and Technology.

Students visit the University of Puerto Rico Cancer Center
Informatics advances at Meharry Medical College: connecting the dots for collaboration

by Siddharth Pratap, Ph.D.

With the new era of translational research, the focus of connecting clinical researchers with basic science researchers has taken center stage. While this endeavor presents challenges, there are a great number of opportunities to be attained as well. Meharry Medical College, along with many other RCMI centers, has been working on many fronts to accomplish the goal of better connecting our research, clinical, and administrative staff in order to leverage our collective strengths. One example has been the development of our campus-wide intranet based web portal, “ResearchPoint”. The concept is simple, a central landing place to organize many sources of information necessary for a successful project. Even small campuses can have “the silo effect” where resources, research interests, and goals are compartmentalized due to separation of operations and departments. For example, a researcher with a new project plan would need to know about available CORE laboratories and services such as Proteomics services, tissue banking repositories, or clinical trial recruitment services. These resources should be easy to find and access. A central benefit in enterprise level information management is that it prevents redundancy by overcoming the silo effect, which is central to optimizing translational research.

Another need that informatics can address is to streamline the often intimidating task of grant applications. The goal is to make the operations process easily navigated on both applications and administration sides. Meharry has implemented a plan to track our internal grants process; from Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) to application submission to post-grant award processing. By making the grants process electronic, time and effort is saved at each level. Another benefit of having digital data from the onset of a grant is that this process allows easier reporting and outcomes on the back end. We are currently also working on a publications tracker database to automate the reporting process for publications resulting from funded grants.

One more project which we are currently pursuing is to connect Meharry service core labs which are data and computationally intensive. The Proteomics Core, Morphology Core, and Microarray/Bioinformatics Cores will use centralized data storage and processing architecture for the increasingly large data sets which they generate. Scalability is addressed as other "Omics" heavy applications such as next-generation sequencing will be merged into the central architecture process as they come on-line. The driving force for all of this is the connection of these resources by informatics.

Please visit the Meharry Translational Research Center (MeTRC) website for more details and contact info here: http://metrcmmc.edu
Great Networking Success at the Community and Academic Faculty Forum

The Charles R. Drew University Division of Community Engagement held a Community Faculty and Academic Faculty Networking forum on August 19th, 2011. Dr. Keith Norris and Dr. Kenneth Wolf opened the event with remarks highlighting the uniqueness of the Community Faculty program and the role that it plays in improving CDU’s clinical and basic research. The community faculty members were given great praise for their commitment to translational research at CDU. Dr. Nell Forge, Director of Community Engagement at AXIS, introduced each member of the community faculty to the audience, highlighting their wide range of accomplishments and their expertise in community organization, leadership and health disparities. At the end of the program, CDU’s president, Dr. David Carlisle, thanked the community faculty and presented them each with CDU memorabilia. Afterward, faculty members mingled over hors d’oeuvres during a networking reception with poster presentations. The goal of the event was to encourage discovery of common research interests and facilitate the rise of collaborations and partnerships between academic and community faculty.

The community faculty program is now two years old. Community faculty members are local organizers and leaders who are well tuned to the issues faced by their communities. After completing an academic boot camp, they receive a faculty appointment at the university and are responsible for advancing a research agenda. This training allows them to work with academic researchers and community members, bridging the gap between the two groups. They are not traditional academics, yet they possess an expertise crucial to the mission and success of the university. Often, it is up to them to communicate a research project to their community in lay language and allay participant fears regarding the conduct of research. The community faculty secures a stake in the research enterprise for their community. The mission of the community faculty is to “Create equity and equality in health and wellness by increasing academic and community capacity through a collaborative integration of local expertise”.

The NIH defines translational research as a continuum, with translation of basic science at the molecular and biological level to human health applications (T1), then into clinical practice (T2), and daily care of patients (T3), and finally to the community and public at large (T4). The community faculty at CDU is vital to enhancing the translation of research to the community.

The community faculty comes from CDU’s many community partners working to improve health and health care in Los Angeles, including the Los Angeles Urban League (LAUL); Healthy African American Families (HAAF); African American Advocacy, Support-Services & Survival Institute (AmASSI); Black Health Community Task Force (BHCTF); Community Health and Research Council (CHRC); South Los Angeles Health Projects (SLAHP); Building Bridges to Optimum Health (BBOH); and many local churches. For more information go to: http://axis.cdwru.edu/functions/community-engagement/links. You can find the community faculty biographies at: http://axis.cdwru.edu/functions/community-engagement/faculty.

CDU Community Faculty Forum
2011 RMATRIX Collaboration Pilot Projects Program Awards

The RMATRIX (RCMI Multidisciplinary and Translational Research Infrastructure Expansion) Program supports research collaborations and partnerships among university and community-based basic, clinical and translational researchers who are focused on reducing health disparities affecting Hawaii’s diverse ethnic communities. RMATRIX established the Collaboration Pilot Projects Program to stimulate collaborative, transdisciplinary, translational research in one or more RMATRIX HEALTH Initiative areas (Cardiovascular Health; Respiratory Health; Perinatal, Growth and Developmental Health; Nutrition and Metabolic Health; Aging and Neurocognitive Health; and Cancer) by providing modest, short-term pilot grants for competitive projects proposed by JABSOM faculty and their collaborators.

During the current cycle, the RMATRIX program received a total of 27 applications representing unique collaborations between physicians and basic scientists, community workers and clinicians, and investigators in disparate disciplines, with research proposals addressing all of the RMATRIX HEALTH Initiatives. The applications were evaluated through an NIH-based review process, and several outstanding applications emerged.

Dean Jerris Hedges is pleased to announce eight new awards for the 2011 RMATRIX Collaboration Pilot Projects Program as follows:

**Project: Protection from Cardiac Hypertrophy via Pharmacological Inhibition of the Ion Channel TRPV1**
Principal Investigator: Alexander Stokes, PhD
Dept. of Cell & Molecular Biology, UH JABSOM
Collaborator: Abby Collier, PhD
Dept. of Tropical Medicine, Medical Microbiology & Pharmacology, UH JABSOM
HEALTH Initiative(s): Cardiovascular Health
Amount: $30,000

**Project: PILI ‘Aina Project: Partnerships to Overcome Obesity Disparities in Hawaii**
Principal Investigator: J. Keawe’a’imoku Kaholokula, PhD
Dept. of Native Hawaiian Health, UH JABSOM
Collaborator: Claire Hughes, MD
Hawai’i Maoli - Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs
Collaborator: Bridget Kekauoha
Kula No Na Po‘e Hawai’i, Papakolea Hawaiian Homestead Community
Collaborator: Donna Palakiko, RN, MS
Ke Ola Mamo Native Hawaiian Health Care System
Collaborator: Sheryl Yoshimura, MPH, RD
Kokua Kalii Valley Comprehensive Family Services
HEALTH Initiative(s): Nutrition & Metabolic Health
Amount: $30,000

*cont. pg. 8*
Project: Thyroid Cancer and Ethnic Disparity in Hawaii: Profiling the MAPK and MTOR Signaling Pathways
Principal Investigator: Shane Morita, MD
Dept. of Surgery, UH JABSOM
Collaborator: Christopher Lum, MD
Depts. of Medicine & Pathology, UH JABSOM
Collaborator: James Davis, PhD
Research Design & Biostatistics, RMATRIX, UH JABSOM
HEALTH Initiative(s): Cancer
Amount: $25,000

Project: Neuroimaging Correlates of Monocyte/Macrophage Infiltration in HIV-infected Individuals: A Cross-sectional Pilot Study Using IV Furomoxytol
Principal Investigator: Beau Nakamoto, MD
Dept. of Medicine, UH JABSOM
Collaborator: Bronwyn Hamilton, MD
Dept. of Diagnostic Radiology, Oregon Health Sciences University
Collaborator: Cecilia Shikuma, MD
Dept. of Medicine, UH JABSOM
Collaborator: Bruce Shiramizu, MD
Depts. of Pediatrics & Medicine, UH JABSOM
HEALTH Initiative(s): Aging & Neurocognitive Health
Amount: $22,200

Project: Correlation of Genetic Risk Factors with Gestational Diabetes and Preeclampsia in Women from Hawaii
Principal Investigator: Johann Urschitz, PhD
Dept. of Anatomy, Biochemistry & Physiology, UH JABSOM
Co-Principal Investigator: Janet Burlingame, MD
Dept. of Obstetrics & Gynecology, UH JABSOM
Collaborator: Thomas Slavin, MD
Dept. of Pediatrics, UH JABSOM
HEALTH Initiative(s): 1) Perinatal Growth & Developmental Health; and 2) Nutrition & Metabolic Health
Amount: $21,428

Project: Effect of Corticosteroids on Pulmonary Surfactant of Premature Newborns
Principal Investigator: Yi Zuo, PhD
Dept. of Mechanical Engineering, UH College of Engineering
Co-Principal Investigator: Charles R. Neal, Jr., MD, PhD
Dept. of Pediatrics, UH JABSOM
HEALTH Initiative(s): 1) Respiratory Health; and 2) Perinatal Growth & Developmental Health
Amount: $29,257

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MSM Will Host Personalized Medicine Awareness Day in Georgia and Welcomes Dr. Leroy Hood

September 1 is proclaimed as Personalized Medicine Awareness Day in Georgia and Morehouse School of Medicine will host the full program. Georgia Governor Nathan Deal will open the program that includes a keynote presentation by Dr. Leroy Hood.

Leroy Hood, MD, PhD is a pioneer in biotechnology and genomics, and founder of the Institute for Systems Biology in Seattle. Dr. Hood will discuss the promise of personalized medicine for improving health care. Dr. Hood is a pioneer in systems approaches to biology and medicine. His research has focused on the study of molecular immunology, biotechnology and genomics. His professional career began at Caltech, where he and his colleagues developed the DNA sequencer and synthesizer and the protein synthesizer and sequencer—four instruments that paved the way for the successful mapping of the human genome. Dr. Hood also has played a role in founding more than fourteen biotechnology companies, including Amgen, Applied Biosystems, Darwin, The Accelerator and Integrated Diagnostics.

A panel discussion involving scientists from Morehouse School of Medicine, Emory University and Georgia Institute of Technology will also be presented. The panel discussion explores recent advances in personalized medicine and Georgia’s leadership in this innovative health care research. This session will be moderated by R-Center PI and Morehouse School of Medicine’s Dean and Executive Vice President, Dr. Valerie Montgomery Rice, with panelists to include:

- David Satcher, MD, PhD, Director of the Satcher Health Leadership Institute at Morehouse School of Medicine and the 16th Surgeon General of the United States.
- Kenneth L. Brigham, MD, Associate Vice President and Director of the Predictive Health Institute at Emory University and Georgia Institute of Technology.
- Elizabeth Ofili, MD, MPH, Associate Dean and Director of the Clinical Research Center at Morehouse School of Medicine, national principal investigator of the WARFARIN study, a first of its kind personalized medicine study approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.
- Roger Simon, MD, Director of Translational Programs in Stroke and Professor of Neurology and Neurobiology at Morehouse School of Medicine.
- David Stephens, MD, Vice President of Research at Emory University’s Woodruff Health Sciences Center.
- Fred Sanfilippo, MD, PhD, Director of the Emory University and Georgia Institute of Technology Healthcare Innovation Program.

Former United States Ambassador Andrew Young will also deliver remarks. The Personalized Medicine Awareness Day program will be held at the Louis W. Sullivan National Center for Primary Care at Morehouse School of Medicine.
AXIS introduces its own Twitter feed

Social media aficionados can now find AXIS in the Twitterverse. The new feed will tweet about AXIS news and events related to community engagement, urban health care issues, translational science, and similar topics.

The extension of AXIS news through the 140-character limit of Twitter was prompted by studies showing that minority populations are major players in Twitter. A recent article by the Pew Research Center reports that 19% of online Hispanics and 25% of online African Americans use Twitter, compared to just 9% of whites.

The article was based on a survey conducted in May 2011 and shows an increasing trend of Twitter adoption for these minority groups. Experts aren’t sure why this trend is apparent, speculating that comparatively high cell phone use as mobile computing among African Americans might be involved. The finding is consistent with other studies that have found a high rate of social media adoption among minorities.

CDU is taking advantage of this trend in social media by using Twitter to reach out to minorities about health issues that affect their communities. Recent tweets from AXIS include a reminder about the Community and Academic Faculty Network Forum, a link to an interesting journal article on the role medical family therapy could play in integrated health care, and ‘retweets’ of other Twitter user’s posts.

The ‘retweet’, when a user shares a post already on another Twitter user’s feed, is a way to stimulate and extend conversation. The AXIS Twitter feed will be a great place to ask questions and start discussions about health care and research.

Join our followers and the discussion on twitter.com by searching for AXIS_CDU.

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**African-Americans and Latinos are more likely than whites to use Twitter**

| % of Internet users in each group who use Twitter (total and on a typical day) |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| White, non-Hispanic         | Black, non-Hispanic         | Hispanic                    |
| Typical day                 | Typical day                 | Total                       |

9% 3% 11% 25% 15%

**Source:** The Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project, April 26 – May 22, 2011 Spring Tracking Survey, incl. 2,277 adult internet users ages 18 and older, including 755 cell phone interviews. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish.
R-CENTER Launches Web-Portal

The BioMedical Informatics Unit of RCTR at Morehouse School of Medicine recently launched its full Web-Portal. The portal features an innovative design created to provide a central location for access to research resources. Component Leaders, Drs. Alexander Quarshie and Adam Davis states “the web portal will increase efficiency in the development and implementation of research and enhance collaboration between internal MSM Investigators and external partners and will provide a flexible system for on-going feedback and enhancements.” The portal was created to be a user friendly design and to allow ease of navigation.

A demonstration model, “Establishing the Morehouse School of Medicine RCTR Web-Portal: The Role of Focus Groups” was presented at the 12th RCMI International Symposium on Health Disparities in Nashville, Tennessee in December 2010. The presentation demonstrated how the portal is accessed and gave symposium attendees the opportunity to test drive the usability and benefit of utilizing the RCTR web portal to enhance their research.

CDU Congratulates Dr. Porszasz-Reisz

CDU wants to congratulate Dr. Suzanne Porszasz-Reisz on receiving a $1 million NIH MBRS SC1 grant on “Myostatin Regulation of Skeletal Muscle Energy Metabolism”. Dr. Porszasz-Reisz recently discovered that during adulthood too much myostatin can affect metabolism, causing obesity. Myostatin regulates muscle growth and differentiation during development, but its role in adulthood is unclear. After developing a genetically modified mouse model whose myostatin levels could be regulated at will by researchers, Dr. Porszasz-Reisz found that mice with their myostatin gene turned on (producing high levels of myostatin) became severely obese. People who are sedentary often show high levels of myostatin which may cause their metabolisms to slow down. Dr. Porszasz-Reisz thinks that myostatin might contribute to the regulation of metabolism in adulthood in order to conserve energy when we’re less active. Dr. Porszasz-Reisz is an Associate Professor, Molecular Geneticist and the Chair of the Health and Life Science Department in the College of Science and Health at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science.

CTSI Town Hall Meeting Unveils New Collaborations

On Tuesday, August 9th, administrators, faculty, staff and students gathered at UCLA, Charles R. Drew University, Cedars Sinai Medical Center and Los Angeles Biomedical Research Institute-Harbor-UCLA Medical Center to participate in a videoconference about the new Center for Translational Science Institute (CTSI). Dr. Steve Dubinett, CTSI Program Director and Associate Vice Chancellor at UCLA, and other program leaders including CDU’s Dr. Keith Norris, discussed goals of the CTSI and the implementation plans at all four partner institutions. Dr. Dubinett focused on the need for truly translational research in Los Angeles, particularly as it relates to health disparities among minority populations. Community Engagement is central to the CTSI mission and Dr. David Martins has been working closely with the Clinical and Community Research Resources program (CCRR) to address the needs of the diverse communities represented in Los Angeles County. (More can be seen about the CTSI’s commitment to community at: http://www.ctsi.ucla.edu/about-us/commitment/) Dr. Dubinett also talked about efforts to harmonize IRB requirements across institutions and developing a cross-institutional voucher system to promote shared core laboratory resources. The UCLA CTSI website (www.ctsi.ucla.edu) was unveiled during the town hall and contains a wealth of information about the projects and services that are available to CDU through this collaboration. The town hall meeting will be available online soon.
IRB Reciprocity and IP/Technology Transfer Protocol Agreements

The Atlanta Clinical and Translational Science Institute (ACTSI) and the MSM R-CENTER faculty successfully initiated IRB Reciprocity Agreements to enhance efficiency, breakdown administrative barriers, and accelerate the pace of quality science, IRB reciprocity and collaboration among ACTSI institutions and Atlanta partners. The participating institutions have been able to achieve expanded IRB reciprocity across all partner institutions - (Morehouse School of Medicine, Emory School of Medicine, Georgia Institute of Technology and Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta.)