

IN TRANSLATION

May 2014

CONNECTICUT INSTITUTE FOR CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE (CICATS) AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT



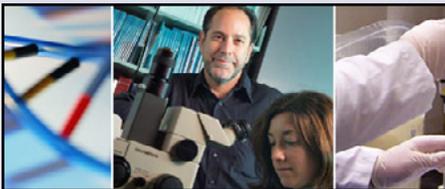
Message from the Director

This academic year, the Connecticut Institute for Clinical and Translational Science (CICATS) at UConn has been responsible for implementing new and innovative programs. In this issue of *In Translation*, I'm excited to share with you three new pioneering programs aimed towards building a cadre of exceptional faculty mentors, increasing the pipeline of underrepresented minority students in the field of science, and publishing the first international journal dedicated to issues in health disparities.

This is only a tidbit of CICATS at UConn activities and we look forward to sharing more with you in our upcoming newsletters. Enjoy! – **Cato T. Laurencin, M.D., Ph.D.**



Featured In This Issue



Mentorship (M1) Award

New CICATS at UConn program that supports successful research funded faculty to serve as mentors to underrepresented minority students, developing the next generation of research scientists. – **Page 2**



Core Interest Groups (CIG)

CIGs create opportunities for scientists to work collaboratively to advance science and practice around particular health or research areas. Today we take a look at the Personalized Immunotherapy CIG. – **Page 3**



YIIP Scholarships

Applicants for this new CICATS at UConn graduate level pipeline program are in the final stages of the selection process. – **Page 4**



Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities

First journal dedicated to eradicating and examining issues related to health disparities. – **Page 4**



Also Included:

Upcoming Events & CICATS at UConn Kudos – **Page 5**



The Mentorship (M1) Award

PREPARING OUR FUTURE COLLEAGUES

As a new and innovative program, CICATS at UConn has launched the Mentorship (M1) Award.

Through the M1 Award program, CICATS at UConn will develop a cadre of accomplished investigators who will participate in developing an academic environment that will elevate mentorship to a discipline with consistently high standards and practices. M1 mentors will maintain a focus on recruitment and mentorship of underrepresented minority students as well as junior faculty.

Using a peer review process, CICATS at UConn has selected the following three recipients to be awarded a three year M1 Award:



Anne M. Delany, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Center for Molecular Medicine, Department of Medicine at UConn Health



Elaine Choung-Hee Lee, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, Department of Kinesiology at UConn Storrs



Syam Nukavarapu, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, Orthopaedic Surgery at UConn Health

Each M1 Award recipient will receive \$50,000, inclusive of 25% protected time for mentoring individual students, participation in various CICATS led mentorship initiatives, and training in the mentoring of underrepresented minority students. In addition, \$10,000 of each award will provide for student related activities towards enhancing academic growth. ■

What it means to be a mentor...

Our three awardees have successful histories as trusted mentors:

Dr. Delany's willingness to reach students at all levels, her dynamic mentoring approach, and the sense of importance she bestows upon each student are a few of the qualities that make her an exceptional mentor.

– Lyndon F. Charles

At every step of the way, Dr. Lee was there. She managed to straddle the fine line between micromanagement and being helpful perfectly. Anytime I needed guidance she was there, but also would not solve my problems for me helping me to learn along the way.

– Dylan Rausch

In my three years working with Dr. Nukavarapu, I can easily say that he is a fantastic mentor. Dr. Nukavarapu exceeds the role of a mere advisor; he is truly invested in what motivates his students, and strives to equip us with the resources necessary to succeed.

– Deborah Dorcemus

CORE INTEREST GROUPS *at* CICATS *at* UCONN

Core Interest Groups (CIGs) were developed to promote collaborative, trans-disciplinary research. CIGs build on areas where the University has a strong research presence and capacity for collaborative research development, and also areas with great promise for innovative, new translational research. The formation of CIGs allows researchers, practitioners, state agencies, community groups, and service organizations to work collaboratively within CICATS to advance science and practice around particular health or methodological areas.

Supporting the research interests of CIGs is a primary goal of CICATS at UConn. For additional information and a listing of our current CIGs, please visit the [CIG webpage](#) or contact [Lana Angelo](#), Administrative Program Coordinator. ■

CIG SPOTLIGHT: *Personalized Immunotherapy*

The Personalized Immunotherapy CICATS at UConn Core Interest Group (CIG) led by Pramod Srivastava, Ph.D. M.D., Professor of Immunology and Medicine was established in 2009.

Focused on understanding the role and effectiveness of the immune system in response to the presence of cancerous cells, and conditions that impair the functioning of the immune system, Personalized Immunotherapy is at the forefront of immunology and cancer related research.

With lab activities occurring at UConn Health, the Personalized Immunotherapy CIG has strong leadership and resources residing at the UConn Storrs campus. Ion Mandiou Ph.D., Associate Professor of the Computer Science & Engineering Department at UConn, works with the group in providing expertise and research in the areas of bioinformatics and computational genomics.

Playing a key role in supporting the activities of this CIG is Fei Duan, Ph.D., who joined Dr. Srivastava's lab in 2008 as a Postdoctoral scholar and recently earned the position of Assistant Professor of the Department of Immunology. As Dr. Srivastava described it, Dr. Duan is integral to the operations and "leads the entire scientific aspect of this Core Interest Group."

In addition to the individual, departmental and lab specific roles performed by Personalized Immunotherapy members, the Core Interest Group is currently involved in a focused research project funded through a one year CICATS at UConn Pilot Grant, entitled "Identification and characterization of neo-epitopes of human ovarian cancers for use in immunotherapy."

This project will study the circumstances in which cancer cells may trigger immune system response and aims to identify specific mechanisms that result in tumor rejection through recent breakthroughs in DNA sequencing and bioinformatics.

Dr. Srivastava and his team are thankful for CICATS at UConn's continued support, especially for the progress they have made in their research as a result of the CIG and Pilot awards. ■



[Pramod Srivastava, Ph.D., M.D.](#),
Chair of the Personalized
Immunotherapy CIG



[Ion Mandiou, Ph.D.](#),
Associate Professor
Computer Science & Engineering
Dept.



[Fei Duan, Ph.D.](#),
Assistant Professor
Department of Immunology



Young Innovative Investigator Program

The Young Innovative Investigator Program (YIIP), led by [Dr. Linda Barry](#), is a new 1-2 year program aimed at baccalaureate students. This graduate level pipeline program was developed to serve as an entrance point for underrepresented minority students to the fields of biological and biomedical science. Scholars will conduct research in basic science biomedical laboratories under the supervision of a mentor. The program also provides students with individualized mentorship, academic support, and career guidance.

Upon successful completion of degree requirements, scholars will obtain a Graduate Certificate of Research Experience in Biomedical Science from UConn and have an opportunity to pursue a master's degree. By fulfilling the program requirements, YIIP scholars will acquire the expertise necessary to enter a M.D., M.D.-Ph.D. or Ph.D. program.

CICATS at UConn thanks the YIIP advisory committee consisting of Drs. [Marja Hurley](#), [Barbara Kream](#), [Victor Hesselbrock](#), [Anne Kenny](#), [Lori Bastian](#), [Carol Pilbeam](#), [Granville Wrensford](#), [Caroline Dealy](#) and [Kimberly Dodge-Kafka](#) for their hard work and dedication to the YIIP program.

To learn more, visit the [YIIP web page](#) or contact [Lana Angelo](#), Administrative Program Coordinator. ■



Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities

The Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities is the first publication to report on the scholarly progress of work to understand, address, and ultimately eliminate health disparities. Efforts to explore underlying causes of health disparities and descriptions of interventions are featured.

CICATS at UConn and the [W. Montague Cobb/NMA Health Institute](#) have partnered to produce this groundbreaking Journal with [Dr. Cato Laurencin](#), CEO / Director of CICATS at UConn serving as Editor-in-Chief and [Dr. Linda Barry](#), COO of CICATS at UConn serving as Co-Managing Editor. We encourage all our partners to read this important Journal. The Journal's first issue was published in March and the second issue will be released online through Springer in early June. Be sure to check our next months newsletter for more information. You can access the Journal online at this link: [Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities](#). ■



Upcoming Events

JUNE 9TH CICATS AT UCONN SCIENCE CAFE:
An Afternoon of Engaging Conversations Around Science

This fun event will facilitate a casual gathering to discuss all things science with peers and colleagues in the unique setting of the Connecticut Science Museum. Food, drinks and a good time provided.

**3:00 - 6:00 PM in the Dome Room of the Connecticut Science Center
250 Columbus Blvd, Hartford, CT**

Please confirm your attendance in advance with [Lana Angelo](#).

~~**JUNE 12TH**~~ CORRECTIONAL HEALTH COLLOQUIUM:
POSTPONED *A Text Messaging Intervention to Improve
Depression Treatment Adherence*

Drs. [Andrew M. Cislo](#) & [Jayesh Kamath](#) will lead presentations and discussions relating to the Background, Processes, and Preliminary Findings of Text Messaging Intervention.

**12:00-2:00 PM in Henry B.C. Low, M.D. Learning Center
Room CG076, UConn Health | Farmington**

Lunch and beverages will be provided. To RSVP or for more information please contact Dr. Andrew M. Cislo: cislo@uchc.edu

Keep In Touch

Please let us know what events are happening within and around our fields so that we may help share them here and online and don't forget to share the achievements of your institutions and partners for possible inclusion in our Kudos section. Any suggestions or inquiries regarding this newsletter may be directed to [Luke Bacewicz](#).



CICATS
KUDOS

*Here we celebrate the good and the great;
the accomplishments and the achievements
of those who advance our fields.*

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

[Biree Andemariam, M.D.](#), Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine and [Jennifer Wolf, M.D.](#), Associate Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery, New England Musculoskeletal Institute, winners of the **2014 Women of Innovation® Award**.

[Victor Hesselbrock, Ph.D.](#), Professor and Vice Chair, Department of Psychiatry and Chief Scientific Officer, CICATS at UConn, who received the **2014 UConn Health Board of Directors Faculty Recognition Award**.

[James J. Grady, Dr.P.H.](#), Professor, Community Medicine and Health Care, who received the prestigious **American Statistical Association's Professional Statistician Accreditation (PStat®)** in March of this year.

And to all our recent UConn graduates, our best wishes for their continued success.