State Invests in Pathology Entrepreneurs (See Comment)

The work of four Pathology researchers has attracted seed-money investments this year from the Georgia Research Alliance (GRA) through its VentureLab program, an innovative state initiative that helps Georgia’s academic scientists commercialize their discoveries. Launched in 2002, VentureLab supports faculty with the most promising new inventions and technologies, and provides them with access to seasoned managers, advisors, and investors, as well as early-phase grants to develop prototypes and explore commercial feasibility. It also offers loans of up to $250,000 to start-up companies that use licensed university technology. The program reports having so far directed over $20 million of state funds into Georgia universities and has helped launch more than 110 active companies.

This year, with VentureLab support, Professors David Lambeth, M.D., Ph.D., and Periasamy Selvaraj, Ph.D., are advancing their inventions of a new class of anti-inflammatory agents and personalized therapeutic anti-cancer vaccines, respectively, while Assistant Professor Brant Herrin, Ph.D., and Professor Max Cooper, M.D., use lamprey antibodies to search for occult tumor antigens. In recent years, the program also supported work by Associate Professors John Roback, M.D., Ph.D., and Daniel Kalman, Ph.D., on automated blood-typing instrumentation and new antiviral therapies, respectively, and by Professor Keqiang Ye, Ph.D., on drugs against neurological and psychiatric disorders. Altogether, since 2008, VentureLab has invested more than $890,000 in these researchers and affiliated start-up companies to develop their groundbreaking discoveries.

Comment: Transferring discoveries from the lab to the marketplace is a vital part of Emory’s mandate and its mission. Kevin Lei, of Emory’s Office of Technology Transfer, reports that Pathology now has more faculty funded by VentureLab than any other department in the University.

A Quarter Century on the Front Lines of African AIDS Research

At a June 15 ceremony in Rwanda’s capital Kigali, Professor Susan Allen, M.D., M.P.H., marked the 25th anniversary of the program she founded to understand and prevent HIV transmission in Africa. Joined by Rwanda’s First Lady and by scores of colleagues and other dignitaries, Dr Allen celebrated a project that began from nothing and has since grown to encompass up to 400 researchers, students, and healthcare workers on two continents, built clinics and diagnostic laboratories in two African nations, and touched the lives of more than 150,000 couples. A graduate of Duke Medical School, with a degree in Tropical Medicine from Liverpool, and just out of residency in Anatomic Pathology at the University of California in San Francisco, Dr Allen was first drawn to Rwanda in 1985 as the HIV epidemic there came to light, long before antiviral drugs were available to treat it. Horrified to discover that nearly 30% of reproductive-age Rwandan women were infected at that time, she set out to find practical, low-cost ways of preventing spread of the virus, particularly among urban heterosexual couples. Those who find today’s research climate challenging may reflect that, for nearly a decade, the Rwandan government prevented her from publishing for fear of harming tourism, and that half her staff and patients were murdered during the 1994 genocide there. She is now perhaps best known for developing a widely-used method of couples-based counseling and HIV testing which her research has shown can be highly effective at combating transmission, even in resource-poor settings. Now active in both Rwanda and Zambia, Dr Allen’s research and patient-care efforts over the past 25 years have garnered support from the NIH, CDC, Gates Foundation, the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative, and international public health agencies, and have served as the foundation for numerous clinical, behavioral, or basic research studies with colleagues at Emory and beyond.

To contribute to the next newsletter, send an email to Donna Martin (dmart06@emory.edu).
Congratulations to four Pathology faculty who were honored recently by their students and trainees. The 2012 class of Emory’s Medical Technologist Training Program named Assistant Professor David Jaye, M.D., as the year’s Outstanding Faculty Instructor at their graduation ceremony in July, making him the first faculty member ever to be honored in this way. Assistant Professor Kyle Bradley, M.D., and Associate Professor Mark Edgar, M.D., carried home the 2012 Golden Apple awards for outstanding residency teaching in Clinical and Anatomic Pathology, respectively. And Professor Whit Sewell, M.D., was named the best second-year teacher and also an honorary class member by the 2012 graduating medical students. No surprise there: Dr Sewell has garnered at least one of those laurels from 20 of the past 23 graduating classes.

CASE REPORTS -

A new clinical lab that opened its doors on September 26 offers advanced diagnostic tests for patients and a new style of partnership between Pathology and the hospitals. The Emory Clinical and Translational Research Laboratory (ECTRL) is the brainchild of Assistant Professor Ross Molinaro, Ph.D., and Professor Jim Ritchie, Ph.D., building on their expertise in clinical mass spectrometry. ECTRL starts out by serving as Emory’s reference lab for assaying free and total serum testosterone, and it aims to roll out other tests in the near future. ECTRL’s goal is to provide those tests in-house at lower cost and with faster turnaround time than outside commercial labs, while giving patients better access to novel or highly specialized tests developed in our Department.

NEW FACULTY — Erin K. Meyer, DO, MPH

Our Department’s world-class team in transfusion medicine caught another rising star in August with the recruitment of Erin Meyer, D.O., M.P.H., as a new Assistant Professor in our Clinical Pathology Division. Coming to Emory straight out of Harvard’s joint fellowship in Transfusion Medicine, Dr Meyer joins the faculty of our Center for Transfusion and Cellular Therapies, and will practice her clinical subspecialty mainly in the pediatric setting in her new role as Assistant Medical Director of the Blood Bank at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta. She earned her doctorate at the University of New England and then completed dual residencies in Anatomic and Clinical Pathology and in Preventive Medicine while simultaneously earning her Master’s in Public Health, all at Dartmouth, before moving to Harvard last year. Her authorship credits already include six publications and a book chapter that span a range of topics in transfusion and hematopoietic stem-cell transplantation. Building upon her advanced training in public health and population-based studies, Dr Meyer aims to explore opportunities in clinical effectiveness and patient-centered outcomes research focusing on the wise use of blood products, which are infused into more than 5 million patients annually nationwide and cost Emory Healthcare alone more than $15 million each year. We are delighted to welcome Dr Meyer onto our faculty and look forward to working with her in the years ahead.

CASE REPORTS -

Professor Chuck Parkos, M.D., Ph.D., has been elected to the President’s Advisory Committee at Emory, a council of senior faculty who provide advice on all tenure actions and other University matters. His three-year term began on September 1. Dr Parkos is also Vice Chair for Experimental Pathology and Director of the Medical Scientist Training Program.

L/R: Mark Edgar, MD, Kyle Bradley, MD, Whit Sewell, MD, David Jaye, MD

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Left to Right: Ross Molinaro, PhD, Jim Ritchie, PhD

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Congratulations to the six Pathology Department members who were promoted into the senior faculty ranks on September 1 of this year. Drs Marina Mosunjac, M.D., Adeboye Osunkoya, M.D., and Michelle Reid, M.D., M.S., each earned promotions to Associate Professor, and Drs Jeannette Guarner, M.D., Momin Siddiqui, M.D., FIAC, and Ifor Williams, M.D., Ph.D., are now full Professors.

To the right is the complete list of Pathology faculty appointed or promoted to Associate Professor (Assoc) or full Professor (Prof) in each of the previous nine years. The academic standards for promotion at Emory are high, so we proudly celebrate all of our faculty who meet and exceed them.

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<th>Promotions by Academic Year</th>
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Residents, Fellows, Program Directors: 2012–2013

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