What’s On My Mind

Within the portals of HsF III, faculty members from the Health Sciences Facility (HsF) III. HsF III will one day house the new school of Medicine Research Building, Health Sciences Facility (HsF) III. This complex piece of machinery is revolutionary in the treatment of cancer for many patients, delivering a more precise form of radiation therapy for certain types of tumors, while leaving surrounding tissue relatively unharmed. As the first of this type of treatment center in the Baltimore-Washington DC area, and only the 12th in the United States, the completion of the MPTC represents the School of Medicine’s enduring commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of our patients.

Second is the continued progress in our mission to become known for exploring “Big Science” research questions using strategic disruptive innovations. A large part of that effort was initiated at the end of 2013, with the inaugural Festival of Science, part of the Accelerating Innovation and Discovery in Medicine (ACCEL-Med) Initiative. The Festival highlighted our incredible work in the areas of genomics, pharmacology, and surgery, for an audience composed of keynote speaker and NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, and our distinguished Scientific Advisory Council. I also launched the first-ever Dean’s Challenge award, and our distinguished scientific advisory Council. I was delighted to lead a team of “happy, healthy and productive people,” because they are the ones who will make the most of their time, who will think innovatively, who will help catapult us to great heights.

Third is the commencement of the new required research course, Foundations of Research and Critical Thinking, for all medical students. This course revitalizes our medical school curriculum, providing students with the analytical skills and exposure to biomedical research that will be vital to their success as academically-trained physicians in the future. The students’ research projects form the core of the new course. At the end of last year, the lectures concluded and students selected their course mentors, so we expect that the students will begin their independent research projects in 2014.

Fourth is the ongoing progress of our capital Development campaign, “Transforming Medicine Beyond Imagination.” To thrive during a challenging fiscal climate, we must have the resources available to support all our endeavors: from recruiting the best talent to serve in faculty and other leadership positions within the School of Medicine, to supporting students and fellows just beginning their career journeys, to honoring our world-class researchers and clinicians with endowments, to funding the continuance of the superior work at our institution. Now, more than ever, we are turning to private support to further our mission, to ensure our success, and to guarantee that the legacy of academic excellence is carried through to the next generation. Therefore, as we reach the mid-point of the final two years of the campaign, I strongly encourage you to rekindle your passion for philanthropic efforts on behalf of the continued advancement of the superior work at our institution.

Being passionate and driven about your work is an integral component to success in our mission areas: research and discovery. With the arrival and installation of the cyclotron this month for the Maryland Proton Treatment Center (MPTC), we are beginning our independent research projects in 2014.

In the relentless pursuit of excellence, I am confident that we will surpass our goals for 2014, but recognize that we can only accomplish this by being a community of reinvigorated, recharged, and redefined academic scholars.

In the relentless pursuit of excellence, I am Sincerely yours,

E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA
Vice President for Medical Affairs, University of Maryland
John 2. and Aiketa K. Bowens Distinguished Professor and Dean, University of Maryland School of Medicine
University of Maryland School of Medicine Holds First

SOM FESTIVAL

NIH Director Francis Collins Gives Inaugural Keynote Address

Accelerating Innovation and Discovery in Medicine (ACCEL-Med), a major initiative of the University of Maryland School of Medicine, was launched on November 22, 2013. ACCEL-Med will increase the pace and scope of clinical and basic sciences research and will dramatically impact and improve human health and wellbeing. The initiative kicked off with the first SOM Festival of Science, a full day symposium highlighting the research being done by our faculty, Francis Collins, MD, PhD, Director of the National Institutes of Health, delivered the inaugural keynote address. “Our nation has really benefited from being at the forefront of science, technology and innovation,” said Dr. Collins, who spoke about the current environment for biomedical research, including the need for advancing discovery through technology and translational sciences, the importance of continuous innovation, and the economic benefits of medical research. Speaking to an overflow crowd of physician-scientists and researchers, Dr. Collins added, “Do not feel shy about justifying why what you do is a really valuable investment for the American public.”

The Festival featured a series of 12 faculty presentations showcasing the groundbreaking basic, translational and clinical research being conducted at the University Maryland School of Medicine. “This ACCEL-Med initiative and today’s Festival of Science demonstrate that we are not just doing business as usual,” said E. Albert E. Reece, MD, PhD, MBA, Vice President for Medical Affairs, University of Maryland, and the John Z. and Akiko K. Bowers Distinguished Professor and Dean, University of Maryland School of Medicine. “We are willing to evaluate and challenge our research portfolio as we boldly embrace the future.”

The first Festival of Science highlighted research conducted by the Institute for Genome Sciences (IGS), the Department of Pharmacology, and the Department of Surgery. Topics included gene sequencing, neuropharmacology, advances in transplant science, and the use of stem cells to treat serious heart problems in children. (See back page for presentation information.)

A cornerstone of the ACCEL-Med Initiative is an external scientific advisory council (SAC) that consists of five internationally acclaimed biomedical researchers and physician-scientists, who provide critical advice on SOM’s research, programs and plans, as well as guidance and support for junior faculty presenters.

“We are delighted that a dais of preeminent scientists has agreed to be a part of the Scientific Advisory Council for the ACCEL-Med Initiative,” said Dean Reece at the Festival of Science event. Members of the first Council included:

• Rita Colwell, PhD: Distinguished Professor at the University of Maryland College Park and the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health; Former Director, National Science Foundation; 2006 National Medal of Science recipient; Member, Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences
• Carol Greider, PhD: The Daniel Nathans Professor and Director, Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics, Institute of Basic Biomedical Sciences, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine; Awarded 2009 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine; Member, Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences
• Philip Needleman, PhD: Former President/CEO, St. Louis Science Center; Former President, Searle R&D; Member, Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences
• Elias Zerhouni, MD: President of Global R&D, Sanofi Pharmaceutical; Former Director, National Institutes of Health; Member, Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences

At the Festival, Dean Reece also announced a series of major initiatives—including new technology, new collaborations and new translational research programs—that will further strengthen the School’s position as one of the fastest growing biomedical research enterprises in the nation.
Dean Reece Announces New Challenge Award

The University of Maryland School of Medicine is dedicated to conducting exemplary biomedical research (basic, translational and clinical research and outcomes) to improve human health and well-being. To that purpose, Dean Reece is introducing a Dean’s Challenge Award to Accelerate Innovation and Discovery in Medicine (ACCEL-Med) and encouraging senior SOM scientists to catalyze the launch of major “Big science” research programs within the school and across departments, centers, institutes and programs. This award was inspired by a similar award, the Pioneer award established by Scientific Advisory Council member Elias Zerhouni, MD, president of Global R&D for Sanofi Pharmaceutical and former director of the NIH.

Applications for the Dean’s Challenge Award/ACCEL-Med must include senior investigators from two or more different departments, centers, programs and/or institutes, or any combination thereof, reflecting a major “Big science” undertaking with significant collaborations across the school of Medicine.

The funding program is intended to provide the support needed to generate pilot data for new and ambitious research projects that advocate and advance “Big science” over a two-year funding period, and that result in major research initiatives that are positioned to acquire a large federal funding base, such as...
During the Festival of Science, the Scientific Advisory Council (SAC) heard from three departments and one institute—regarding the exciting research being conducted here on campus. The Council then offered feedback to all of the presenters. Each presentation was lead by a moderator, and the SAC had the opportunity to ask questions of the researchers as they talked about their work.

The presenters were:

**The Institute for Genome Sciences**
(Moderator: Robin Pierson, MD)
- IGS Overview – Claire Fraser, PhD
- Application High-Throughput Sequencing to Genomic Epidemiology – David Rasko, PhD
- The Vaginal Microbiome and Women’s Health: Implications for Clinical Translation – Rebecca Bromman, PhD
- Human Population Genomics with Next-Generation Sequencing – Timothy O’Connor, PhD

**The Department of Pharmacology**
(Moderator: Curt Civin, MD)
- Department Overview – Margaret McCarthy, PhD
- Neuropharmacology: Where We Are and Where We are going – Thomas Abrams, PhD
- Oncopharmacology: Where We Are and Where We are Going – Yun Qiu, PhD

**The Department of Surgery**
(Moderator: Alan Shulman, MD)
- Department Overview – Stephen Bartlett, MD
- Vascularized Bone Marrow as an Immunosuppressive Approach in Transplantation – Rolf Barth, MD
- Clinical and Basic Research in Hyperparathyroidism: From Bedside (to Bank) to Bench – John Olson, Jr., MD, PhD
- Novel Therapeutics for Pediatric Cardiomyopathy Using Resident Cardiac Stem Cells – Sunjay Kaushal, MD, PhD
- “Halfway Technologies” and “Magical Metronomes” for Heart and Lung Diseases That Have “Left the Barn” – Bartley Griffith, MD

Dean Reece Announces New Challenge Award

Program project grants or center grants (P-series awards), cooperative agreements (U01 awards), or equivalent large awards.

Up to three Dean’s Challenge Awards will be awarded in the amount of $200,000 each, paid out at a rate of $100,000 per year for two years. Awards will not be given for existing projects funded by other sources, cannot be used to cover sensor faculty (P.I.) salary support, and are exempt from F&A (indirect costs). The total grant application page limit should follow the NIH guidelines for R21 proposals.

Proposals must be submitted to Sue Hobbs, Director of Research Administration, SOM, via email (shobbs@som.umaryland.edu). A website for the award will soon be established, but until then, please direct any questions to her attention.

All applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. EST on March 1, 2014. Applications received after the deadline will not be reviewed. Applications will be reviewed at a study section in April 2014, and the top proposals will be submitted for a second round of review by an internal council. Final selection will occur in May 2014 to determine the proposals to be funded. Recipients of the Dean’s Challenge Award will be announced in June 2014, with funds in place by the start of fiscal year 2015 (July 1, 2014).