

## Events to Know

### September

**18 Dr. K. Vinod Vijayan (Baylor College of Medicine)** to present "Regulation of Integrin AlphaIIbBeta3 Function by Serine/Threonine Phosphatases: Lessons from Platelets and Megakaryocytes." Noon, MSB 2.135.

**19 Tejas Office Products 2007 calendar display.** 10 a.m.-2 p.m., MSB Leather Lounge. Stop by to speak with Tony Vaeza, Tejas representative.

**20 Employee Appreciation Day.** 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Webber Plaza. UT badge required for free food, drinks, gifts, and entertainment.

**22 New Faculty Orientation & Lunch.** 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., MSB 5th Floor Gallery. R.S.V.P. to Dawn Alvarado at 713.500.5103.

**25 14th Annual Scholarship Golf Classic.** 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m., Timber Creek Golf Club, Friendswood.

**25 Dr. C.S. Raman (Dept. of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology)** to present "From Vioxx to Plant Volatiles: Visualizing Lipid Mediators in Action." Noon, MSB 2.135.

## UTMost Interest

**Dr. Brent King**, professor and chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine, spoke on "Trauma 24/7 - Life in the ER" at the July 26 Houston Area Teen Volunteer Symposium 2006, which was sponsored by Texas Medical Center hospitals.

**Dr. Mazen Dimachkie**, associate professor of neurology, was elected a Fellow Member of the American Academy of Neurology (AAN), in recognition of his contributions to the academy and to the neurology community. Established in 1948, the AAN is an international professional association of more than 19,000 neurologists and neuroscience professionals dedicated to providing the best possible care for patients with neurological disorders.

## Search committee created for RRF's Project Excellence

Interim Dean **Jerry Wolinsky** has created a search committee for *Project Excellence for the New Replacement Research Facility* comprised of key faculty members at the Medical School to be led by **Dr. Samuel Kaplan**, professor and chair of the Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics.

Search committee members include **Dr. Frank Arnett Jr.**, professor of internal medicine; **Dr. John Byrne**, professor and chair of the Department of Neurobiology and Anatomy; **Dr. Peter Davies**, executive vice president for research and professor of integrative biology and pharmacology; **Dr. Rodney Kellems**, professor and chair of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology; **Dr. Dianna Milewicz**, professor and director of the Division of Medical Genetics; **Dr. Ponnada Narayana**, professor of diagnostic and interventional imaging and director of Magnetic Resonance Research; **Dr. George Stancel**, dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences; and **Dr. Norman Weisbrodt**, professor and interim chair of the Department of Integrative Biology and Pharmacology.

The search committee for *Project Excellence for the New RRF* is charged with the goal of recruiting both junior and senior-level investigators who are committed to conducting research through the Medical School's mission.

"We plan to recruit up to seven faculty members, including one professor, two associate professors, and four assistant professors, during fiscal year 2007," Wolinsky said. "We will continue to recruit another two associate professors and five assistant professors, during fiscal year 2008. The

(Cont'd. on back)

## Japanese affiliation promotes educational, cultural exchange

Discovering basic differences between medical schools in Japan and the United States was the result of a recent three-day tour of the University of Tokushima Health Science Center by second and third-year students **Dana Bui** and **Elizabeth Truong**, who were accompanied by faculty member **Dr. Anil Kulkarni**, professor of surgery.

"This is the only exchange program that I know of between the UT Health Science Center and a Japanese health science center," Kulkarni said. "An affiliation means that we are sort of sister universities, which will allow exchange visits between faculty, staff, and students to learn about the educational process and how the universities work.

"I asked if their university would be interested in having an affiliation and their president's office agreed and came here to sign the agreement with **Dr. Willerson** in 2002," he explained. "Since then, many of our faculty members have gone to visit, and a few dental students have visited."

The visit in mid-June was the first trip involving Medical School students, who were able to visit, in part, thanks to a travel award that Kulkarni had received from the health science center. Instead of using it for himself, he split the monetary award between the students to help shoulder the burden of the airfare.

"The students were treated royally by our hosts and really enjoyed it," he said. "They interacted with students on and off the campus and found out that except for looks and language, students



A search committee will lead *Project Excellence for the New Replacement Research Facility*.



**Dr. Anil Kulkarni (center)** accompanied students **Dana Bui** and **Elizabeth Truong** (front) on a tour of the University of Tokushima Health Science Center in Japan.



## Heart ultrasound reveals link between pediatric obesity, sleep apnea

Heart ultrasounds can identify pulmonary hypertension – potentially fatal pressure in the lungs – in children who are obese and have sleep apnea. This Medical School study was released at the 17th Annual Scientific Sessions of the American Society of Echocardiography (ASE) in Baltimore in June.

The finding came from a study of the prevalence of pulmonary hypertension in children with systemic hypertension, or high blood pressure. The study was conducted by **Dr. Monesha Gupta-Malhotra**, assistant professor of pediatrics, a pediatric cardiologist, and pediatric hypertension specialist; **Archana Madhuker Dave**, visiting student in pediatrics; **Brian Sturhan**, research technician II; and **Dr. Ronald Portman**, professor of pediatrics and director of the Division of Pediatric Nephrology and Hypertension.

In the study, after other causes of pulmonary hypertension were ruled out, a significant percentage of those children who were found to have increased lung pressure were also obese. In addition, a significant number of those children, 67 percent, were found to have obstruction of the airways proved either by a sleep study or by presence of enlarged tonsils or adenoids requiring surgical removal, though this was not previously clinically suspected.

“We know that obesity and sleep apnea are linked,” Gupta-Malhotra said. “What we have learned from this study is that heart ultrasounds can often detect unsuspected abnormalities such as pulmonary hypertension in young patients who have other risk factors. This finding may lead to life saving treatments that otherwise may not have been offered.”

-ASE

To send a news tip or event for *Scoop*,  
e-mail [scoop@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:scoop@uth.tmc.edu).

### *Project Excellence, cont'd.*

total number of new research faculty should reach approximately 30.”

*Project Excellence for the New RRF* will target start-up packages in the range of \$600,000 to \$1,000,000 per investigator.

The six-story research building, adjacent to the Medical School Building, is scheduled for completion in the fall of 2007. The new building will be home to robust areas of research, including the neurobiology of human development, the molecular biology of human pathogens, physiological genomics or systems biology, and structural biology. The top two floors will house the animal care facility.

Although these areas of research hold great promise, the search committee’s job will be to look for the best and the brightest investigators and not be bridled by programmatic development.

“We do not have preconceived ideas of particular areas of research; rather, I’ve asked the search committee to look for creative, energetic, and ambitious investigators who are committed to the mission of the Medical School, will integrate well with the existing faculty, and can contribute generously to our academic life,” Wolinsky explained.

The work of the search committee will be a two-year project, and Wolinsky has requested an initial list of five qualified candidates by March 1, 2007.

-C. Webb

## New Investigator Development Program

The Office of Research is offering a New Investigator Development Program (NIDP) to help junior faculty members develop competitive grant applications. Led by the NIDP team, the program offers a seminar and workshop.

**Grants 101** is a seminar that provides participants with an overview of administrative policies and procedures for submitting and managing research grants. It will be held from 8 a.m.-noon, Oct. 9-10 in the Institute for Molecular Medicine Auditorium. The seminar is open to all health science center faculty, staff, and trainees, but participants must register online at <http://research.uth.tmc.edu/nidp/> by Oct. 2. Registration is limited to the first 200 applicants.

**Grants 102** is an in-depth eight-month workshop and follow up to Grants 101 where participants develop a grant application that is peer reviewed and ready to submit for external funding at the close of the workshop. An overview of the program and application guidelines is available online at <http://research.uth.tmc.edu/nidp/>. Faculty interested in participating must apply by Oct. 11. Applicants should have attended Grants 101. The first session begins Oct. 25, and the last session ends May 16.

Contact **Dr. Kevin Morano**, director of NIDP, at 713.500.5890 or **Catherine Price** at 713.500.3076 with questions.

### *Japanese exchange program, cont'd.*

are the same.”

“Everyone from the University of Tokushima far exceeded our expectations with respect to hospitality and helpfulness,” Bui added.

The UT group was picked up at the airport by **Dean Saburo Sone** and met with students and administrators during tours of the academic facilities, including the gross anatomy lab, Center of Enzyme, Institute of Genome Research, and Institute of Stress Sciences.

“We felt more than welcome by the students, faculty members, and administrators, and they were more than accommodating with all our questions and needs. Through their carefully constructed itinerary, we were exposed to almost all educational and clinical facets of the standard medical school system in Japan within a mere three days,” Truong explained.

The UT students also were able to attend classes at the Japanese school and tour a hospital to gain a better understanding of their medical education system.

“The Japanese medical school system has a two-year general internship residency after graduation, for which they must apply at each individual hospital,” Truong said. “If the resident decides to specialize in a field, they are able to start their specialty training after their two-year internship at the same hospital without the need to reapply.”

Outside of the academic exchange, another benefit is cultural exchange. “Our hosts took us sightseeing at the whirlpools in Naruto and to learn about the indigo dyeing process, for which this region is famous,” Kulkarni said.

The exchange goes both ways.

“The students were extremely interested in learning of our video streaming capabilities for watching classes, while we in turn were surprised by how so many of the students were also able to work part-time while in school,” Bui said.

Several of Tokushima’s faculty and staff have visited Houston and are planning to return to the Medical School to look at e-learning this fall.

-D. Brown