

campus clips

Gendelman Named Chairman of Pharmacology

Howard Gendelman, M.D., David T. Purtilo Distinguished Chair of Pathology and Microbiology and director of the Center for Neurovirology and Neurodegenerative Diseases (CNND), has been named chairman of the Department of Pharmacology and Experimental Neuroscience in the UNMC College of Medicine.



Howard Gendelman, M.D.

Dr. Gendelman is one of four UNMC scientists who are listed by the Intercollegiate Sciences Institute as the top 0.5% of the most cited scientists in the world. Being acknowledged by Thomson-ISI as a highly cited researcher means that an individual is among the 250 most cited researchers for their published articles within a specific time period.

Dr. Gendelman joined UNMC in 1993 as professor of medicine and of pathology/microbiology. He was named director of the CNND in 1997 and was instrumental in its formation. Under Dr. Gendelman's leadership, the CNND has seen tremendous growth both in terms of employees and funding. Today, the CNND has 63 members, including scientists, graduate students, fellows and support staff, annualized funding of \$4.8 million for fiscal 2003-04 and total external grant support of \$18.4 million.

Pamies Appointed to AAMC Committee

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) recently named Rubens Pamies, M.D., vice chancellor for academic affairs and dean for graduate studies at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, to a 19-member External Advisory Committee for the AAMC's Institute for Improving Medical Education (IIME).



Rubens Pamies, M.D.

The institute's mission is to boost the health of Americans by fostering innovations in medical education that will better align the knowledge, skills and professionalism of medical students,

residents and practicing physicians with the needs and expectations of the public.

Dr. Pamies and other members of the external advisory

group will translate the deans' recommendations into actions, which may be adopted by medical schools and accrediting agencies. Dr. Pamies' involvement with the IIME also will keep UNMC students and faculty members abreast of new developments in medical education on a national level.

College of Nursing Offers Accelerated Program

The UNMC College of Nursing has received a \$1.17 million grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The grant will provide three years of funding to launch and establish a one-year accelerated bachelor's degree in nursing program.

In January, the college admitted a class of 10 in Omaha.

Catherine Todero, Ph.D., associate dean for undergraduate programs, UNMC College of Nursing, said the program would help the college admit more students and address the nursing shortage by getting nurses into the workforce faster. The college has experienced a significant increase of applicants to its programs over the past few years.

She said the typical student in accelerated programs seeks a second degree and desires a career change to nursing. The program, she said, will provide one answer to the acute nursing shortage because it will take highly motivated students with good academic backgrounds and educate them quickly for much needed nursing roles.



Catherine Todero, Ph.D.

Five Faculty Honored for Outstanding Contributions

Five faculty members at UNMC were honored this spring for their excellence in teaching, mentoring and community service.

M. Patricia Leuschen, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Genetics, Cell Biology and Anatomy, received the inaugural Outstanding Mentor of Graduate Students



Ann Berger, Ph.D.



Joel Bessmer, M.D.



Barbara Heywood, M.D.



M. Patricia Leuschen, Ph.D.



Jim Medder, M.D.

Award. During her tenure at UNMC, Dr. Leuschen has personally supervised 15 graduate students and has served on the committees for more than 40 others.

Jim Medder, M.D., associate professor in the Department of Family Medicine, received the second annual Spirit of Community Service Award. Dr. Medder was instrumental in the formation of the SHARING Clinic, a student-run clinic in south Omaha that serves the indigent

for a nominal fee. Formed in 1997, the clinic is now one of three student-run clinics in south and north Omaha.

Faculty who received Outstanding Teaching Awards were Ann Berger, Ph.D., associate professor in the College of Nursing; Joel Bessmer, M.D., assistant professor in the Department of Internal Medicine; and Barbara Heywood, M.D., associate professor in Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery.

UNMC Honors Three at Commencement

Three individuals were honored for their dedication and support to UNMC and the health professions during UNMC's spring commencement ceremony in Omaha.

UNMC awarded its Distinguished Service Award to Kenneth Morrison of Hastings, Neb., for his outstanding support of UNMC, and an Honorary Doctor of Science degree to Linda R. Cronenwett, Ph.D., of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, in recognition of her accomplishments in improving the health of people through excellence in nursing.

The J.G. (Jack) Elliott Award, given annually to a Nebraska resident who has made significant contributions to medicine and health programs for the State of Nebraska and UNMC, was bestowed upon Lucinda A. Bradley of North Platte, Neb., for improving health care services for Nebraskans and supporting the education of students in the health professions.

UNMC Microbiologists Identify Bacterium

After four cancer patients in five years contracted the

same mysterious, life-threatening lung infection, a UNMC cancer physician – Stefano Tarantolo, M.D., – wanted to know exactly what bacteria was causing the infection. Knowing would give him a better idea of how to more effectively treat the infection.

Employing molecular diagnostics to solve the mystery, UNMC microbiologists and laboratory specialists at The Nebraska Medical Center accomplished something prestigious in the world of microbiology. They identified a previously unknown organism and named it nebraskense, after the state.

“This may not be equivalent to discovering a new planet, but for biologists, it’s very exciting,” said Steven Hinrichs, M.D., UNMC professor of pathology and microbiology and director of The Nebraska Medical Center microbiology and virology laboratories. “This bacterium wasn’t just created. It’s just that it hasn’t been recognized before. It’s probably been around for a long time.”

The UNMC discovery will allow laboratory specialists around the world to identify the organism faster and earlier, enabling health professionals to use the most appropriate treatment. Dr. Hinrichs said treatment is the key because the organism is almost impossible to avoid.

Durham, Dr. Khayat Honored at Cancer Event

In November, the Friends of the UNMC Eppley Cancer Center honored Omaha philanthropist Chuck Durham and David Khayat, M.D., who helped organize one of the first worldwide organizations to fight cancer, at its Ambassador of Hope Gala at the Qwest Center Omaha.

A business and civic leader in Omaha for several decades, Durham and his late wife, Margre, have made a major impact on UNMC research, education and patient care.

Durham has given UNMC the single largest contribution ever and helped to support further fund-raising efforts for the 10-level, \$77 million Durham Research Center that opened in 2003. The 289,000-square-foot Durham Research Center houses 116 research laboratories, a 319-seat auditorium, three classrooms and 12 conference/seminar rooms. Five of the 12 primary researchers in the center are involved in cancer research. His donations also included funding for a 540,000-square-foot employee parking structure, which opened in 2003.

Dr. Khayat, professor of medicine and head of medical oncology at the Hopital Pitie-Salpetriere, Paris, France, made a name for himself in cancer research by organizing the Charter of Paris Against Cancer in February 2000.

The World Summit Against Cancer, which brought about the Charter of Paris Against Cancer, was the first global fight against cancer. The Charter gathered 100 signatures from international leaders of government, patient advocacy, cancer research organizations and corporations to ensure their commitment to the global eradication of cancer.

The Ambassador of Hope Award is presented to individuals who have made significant contributions in the fight against cancer through their research or patient care activities, or by raising the public’s awareness of cancer. The Friends of the UNMC Eppley Cancer Center is a community-based group committed to raising funds for cancer research.