Embedded weblinks are designated by blue text and can be accessed in the online version of ICTS News on our website at icts.wustl.edu.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR
Dr. Kenneth S. Polonsky

On May 29th the NIH announced the addition of 14 academic health centers to the CTSA program, bringing the total to 38 institutions. NIH and NCRR expect to eventually support 60 institutions in this consortium of medical research institutions promoting clinical and translational research. (News release at http://www.ctsaweb.org/) Representatives from each CTSA participate in workgroups and committees to develop relationships and build the infrastructure necessary to meet the challenges that accompany increased collaboration across institutions. As a result, membership in the ICTS provides access not only to the umbrella of cores and services in the WU ICTS, but also the evolving infrastructure of the wider CTSA community. See the ICTS website (icts.wustl.edu) for instructions on how to join.
Program Highlight: Brain, Behavior, Performance Unit (BBPU)

The Brain, Behavior and Performance Unit (BBPU), a core with specialized infrastructure and expertise in the performance of clinical research studies of the nervous system, is directed by Joel S. Perlmutter, MD, Head of the Movement Disorders Section, Department of Neurology. Faculty across the disciplines of psychiatry, neurology, occupational therapy and physical therapy contribute their expertise within the BBPU.

Services are provided at different levels of interaction:

a) collaboration on research plan development, study design and data management;
b) consultation on specifics of testing and data analysis, and
c) testing only, for researchers with specific requests. Specialized testing for muscle strength and function, quantified measures of movement, performance-based measures of daily living activities and quality-of-life measures are supported as well as key infrastructure support, including common database collection, retrieval and transfer of all research information.

Johanna Hartlein, RN, APN is the administrative coordinator of all studies and services provided by the BBPU. Located on the ground floor of the McMillan Building, the newly renovated space includes areas such as examination rooms, a procedure room, physiological and psychometric testing rooms, and kinematics and muscle strength testing rooms as well as working space for faculty, staff, research fellows, students and resident trainees. A state-of-the-art exercise and movement measurements laboratory are also in the planning stage.

For more information, contact Dr. Perlmutter at jperlmutter@wustl.edu or 314-362-6026 or Johanna Hartlein at johanna@npg.wustl.edu or 314-362-0420.

ICTS Membership, How and Why

Nearly 300 people have become ICTS members, gaining access to the ICTS Cores and services. Benefits also include increased exposure to national CTSA opportunities and collaborative relationships, ability to participate in ICTS research programs and ability to apply for ICTS pilot and novel methodologies funding. ICTS members must be from an ICTS partner institution and also fall into one of the following categories:

- Investigators who conduct or participate in clinical and/or translational research.
- Community and Industrial Partners that are collaborating with ICTS investigators.
- Students and trainees who wish to participate in ICTS educational or training programs.

Obligations of membership include standard reporting requirements and funding acknowledgement expectations and are outlined on the ICTS website.

To register, fill out the simple registration form on the ICTS website (icts.wustl.edu).

Bear Cub Funds Awarded

By Caroline Arbanas

Washington University has awarded 4 Bear Cub Fund grants totaling $150,000 to support research projects that could be attractive for licensing by commercial entities or serve as the foundation for a startup company.

The grants were awarded to William A. Frazier, PhD, Professor of Biochemistry & Molecular Biophysics; Gerald Linette, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor of Medicine; Daniel W. Moran, PhD, Assistant Professor of Biomedical Engineering; and Burton Wice, PhD, Research Assistant Professor of Medicine, and Kenneth Polonsky, MD, the Adolphus Busch Professor of Medicine and Head of the Department of Medicine.

The Bear Cub Fund is administered through the University's Office of Technology Management. Supported by endowment income and capital from private sources, awards can be given only to WU employees, but research supporting collaborations between ICTS partners are eligible.

The deadline for the next round of Bear Cub applications is Oct. 31. More information about the Bear Cub Fund can be found at otm.wustl.edu/bearcubfund. For more details about the current awards, go to http://record.wustl.edu/news/page/normal/11863.html.

"The Bear Cub Fund is important because it helps scientists demonstrate that their projects have commercial value."

Samuel L. Stanley, MD

Vice Chancellor for Research
Washington University
ICTS External Advisory Board: Advice & Review from our peers

The ICTS External Advisory Board (EAB) convened for the first time on February 29, 2008. Chaired by Robert S. Sherwin, MD, Director of the Yale Center for Clinical Investigation, the Board is comprised of members from respected institutions around the country (see membership list on the ICTS website). Among the members are representatives from some of the 2006 CTSA funded institutions: Mayo Clinic, University of Pennsylvania, University of Pittsburgh and Yale University.

The role of the External Advisory Board is to provide advice and direction to the ICTS Director and governance committees. Board members will visit WU on an annual basis and have access to documents, facilities and personnel to gain critical insights into ICTS programs in order to evaluate strengths and opportunities for growth.

The Board documented specific comments and suggestions for each program in their report which was included in the annual progress report as required by NIH.

General consensus was expressed from the Board that the ICTS is making marked progress in its first year and is on the right path to accomplish its long-term goals.

The Board will meet once annually, with the next meeting tentatively scheduled for January 25-26, 2009.

What happened last month?
Highlights from June

- June 12: Center for Clinical Research Ethics (CCRE) director James DuBois, PhD hosted a conference funded by the NIH, “Informed Consent: Assessing Decisional Capacity and Enhancing Understanding.” The event was attended by over 60 people from the St. Louis area. Keynote speakers included Drs. Paul Appelbaum, William Carpenter, and Charles Litz, all leading researchers in psychiatric research ethics. Following the conference, a group of 12 experts met to review the state of research in the field. They will produce an article later this year offering recommendations for best practices and further research. The conference was the first in a series of four.

- June 19: The Clinical Research Training Center held its 2nd annual Career Development Retreat. Approximately 80 individuals attended the retreat where speakers discussed leadership, teamwork, career advancement, and data management. Michael DeBaun, MD, MPH, Ferring Family Chair of Pediatrics and Professor of Biostatistics and Neurology, opened with an excellent overview of successful team building. Roger Yu- sen, MD, MPH, Associate Professor of Medicine, followed with a practical discussion on academic career progression. Kenneth Schechterman, PhD, Associate Professor of Biostatistics, provided valuable information regarding data collection and management. We are indebted to our presenters, who were instrumental in making this year’s retreat a success.

Events & Announcements

Major ICTS Events
- September 5: (8 AM—5 PM) Community Engagement hosts the Southeast Regional Conference at the Eric P. Newman Education Center.
- September 30: (5 PM CST) KL2 Career Development Awards deadline for applications. These awards are aimed at fellows, post-doctoral scholars, and junior faculty committed to multidisciplinary clinical and translational research. Information on how to apply may be found at http://crscholars.im.wustl.edu/home-apply.php or you may contact Alison Ebers at aebers@im.wustl.edu or 314-454-8255.
IN THE NEWS:

- Graham Colditz, MD, MPH the Niess-Gain Professor, associate director of Prevention and Control at Siteman Cancer Center and ICTS Executive Committee member, was lead investigator on a study about girls and young women who exercise regularly between the ages of 12-35 and incidence of breast cancer before menopause. The May 21, 2008 volume of the Journal of National Cancer Institute contains an article pertaining to the study entitled “A Prospective Study of Age-Specific Physical Activity and Premenopausal Breast Cancer.” J Natl Cancer Inst, 21 May 2008; 100: 728-737.


Clinical Research Training Center

- 2008 Predoctoral Program: The CRTC Predoctoral Program began on Tuesday, June 3rd. The 33 students include 9 on the one-year intensive track and 24 on the summer research track. Of the 33 students, 19 are WU medical students, 3 are medical students from other institutions, 5 from the Program in Audiology and Communication Sciences, 1 from the Program in Occupational Therapy, and 5 from the St. Louis College of Pharmacy. Students take 2 courses in the summer: 1) Analysis of Clinical Data and 2) Designing Outcomes and Clinical Research and work in the clinical research lab with their mentor. The summer students will present their work at a symposium to be held in the Farrell Learning and Teaching Center on Tuesday, July 29.

HAVE YOU MET?

ANA S. ILTIS, PHD

Moving from Houston, Texas 6 years ago, Ana Iltis, PhD, Assistant Professor, has found a home in the Department of Health Care Ethics at Saint Louis University. As the Consultation Service Director and Course Director for Ethical and Regulatory Issues in Clinical Research, Dr. Iltis is the primary contact for the ICTS Center for Clinical Research Ethics (CCRE). The Graduate School at SLU, where Dr. Iltis is located, is an ICTS Partner Institution.

Addressing a common misconception, Dr. Iltis says, “Consulting with CCRE is just like discussing your biostatistics plan. We are not the ethics police. We help you determine the best study plan to avoid problems in the future.”

Dr. Iltis’ areas of expertise support the CCRE mission: 1) promoting research ethics education, 2) providing consultations and 3) conducting research on research ethics. Her enthusiasm for the education component is evident as she describes how she enjoyed working with the WU Masters of Clinical Investigation (MSCI) students last semester. Consisting of a diverse group of students with unique study design issues including disparate research populations. Dr. Iltis and guest instructors facilitated discussions to tease out appropriate study designs to avoid ethical or regulatory issues.

Her commitment to the second mission component is exemplified by her collaboration on a whitepaper about Research Ethics Consultation with representatives from other funded CTSA organizations. In addition, much of her time is spent on the third component, conducting her own research on research ethics.

What does she do with her spare time? For one thing, she, her husband and their 6 year old daughter love to travel. Their most recent trip was an auto tour of Alaska, complete with a brown bear encounter and a tour of the Denali National Park.

To learn more about the CCRE, contact Dr. Iltis at either iltisas@slu.edu, or ccre@im.wustl.edu or 314-977-6661.

Comments about ICTS News, suggested articles or questions should be directed to ICTS@im.wustl.edu or by contacting Jae Allen at 314-362-9331.