Announcements

Center Department Change

In February 2012 the Center in Molecular Toxicology moved from the Biochemistry Department and is now considered part of the Department of Pediatrics in the Medical Center.

Kakie Mashburn (Center Manager), Jennifer Dix (Outreach Coordinator), and Wil Comstock (Administrative Assistant) have relocated their offices to space near the Center Director, Dr. Michael Aschner on the 11th floor of Medical Research Building (MRB) IV.

Phone numbers and email addresses remain the same.

Board Membership Changes

Our board representative from the Department of Health, Bonnie Bashor, retired in June and has resigned from serving on the COEC Advisory Board. We would like to thank her for her time on the board and wish her well in her retirement!

Bonnie recommended David Borowski as her replacement and we are pleased to announce that he has accepted the appointment.

David is Assistant Director of the Environmental Epidemiology Program within the Tennessee Department of Health. His expertise on environmental issues will be a great asset to the COEC.
The Center in Molecular Toxicology held a community forum on the evening of January 16, 2012 at Vanderbilt’s facilities at One Hundred Oaks. The forum was entitled “Parkinson’s Disease: Environmental Factors and Risk.”

**Format**
Presenters included two Center Investigators, Drs. Michael Aschner, Ph.D., and Aaron Bowman, Ph.D., and Vanderbilt Associate Professor of Neurology, Dr. Peter Hedera, M.D. Collectively, these three speakers presented information on current research efforts in both basic and clinical areas related to Parkinson’s Disease. A question and answer session was held after each speaker’s presentation with excellent participation.

**Advertising the event**
Various methods were used to promote and advertise the forum.

- Flyers posted around campus and at 100 Oaks
- Announcements via Alliance for Community Engagement (ACE) listserv
- Community Research Partner (CRP) e-newsletter
- Emails sent to the Peterson Foundation for Parkinson’s and the local chapter of the American Parkinson Disease Association (APDA)
- Posted in local calendars including the Nashville Scene, Vanderbilt Medical Center, and Vanderbilt University
- Posted in the community events section of MyVUMC and The Tennessean
- Promoted by Vanderbilt’s National Parkinson Foundation Center of Excellence, a Parkinson’s support group on campus

**Attendance**
The forum was well received with over 40 individuals in attendance, many of whom had Parkinson’s themselves. The majority heard about the forum from either reading about it in The Tennessean or through a Parkinson’s support group.

**Audience Evaluation**
Attendees were asked to fill out an evaluation form at the close of the forum rating various aspects on a scale from “excellent” to “poor”. Ninety-six percent of respondents said they would be likely to
recommend another similar event, and the overall quality of the event was “excellent” or “very good.” The usefulness and ease of understanding the information presented was rated excellent or very good by over 85% of respondents. Feedback was also solicited from attendees by asking them for suggestions to help improve future forums and what other environmental health topics would be of interest.

Future Community Forums
There is a high interest level for additional forums, and we are in the planning stages to hold another forum this summer.

NIEHS Center Director’s Meeting 2012
Boston, MA • March 26-29

Dr. Michael Aschner, Ph.D., Kakie Mashburn, and Jennifer Dix attended the 2012 NIEHS Center Director’s meeting in March.

The theme of this year’s meeting was 50 Years of Success: Shared Strategies for Moving Forward. The discussion centered primarily on NIEHS’s 2012 Strategic Plan and how this will affect the Core Centers in the future. NIEHS is scheduled to publish the finalized strategic plan in July 2012.

Jennifer Dix attended the Outreach and Engagement sessions and was able to meet and network with other Outreach Coordinators from the other Centers.

Below are links to the NIEHS website and the conference website specifically.

http://www.niehs.nih.gov/
http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/niehs-core-centers-meeting2012/index.html

Center in Molecular Toxicology Meetings

November 17, 2011: Executive Advisory Board
February 11, 2012: Center Planning Retreat
Communications

Work is underway on an update and reconstruction of the Center’s website. A detailed section on Community Outreach will be included, as well as links to resources, downloadable materials, and news and events. Plans are to have the new site ready by the end of August 2012.

Two brochures are also being created, and these will be downloadable from the website once complete. A new Center in Molecular Toxicology brochure is scheduled to be completed by the end of August. This brochure will give an overview of the Center, as well as details regarding each investigator’s work.

An additional informational brochure is being designed that will be specific to the Community Outreach and Engagement Core and will be available primarily as a community resource.

COEC Internal Advisory Committee Formed

An advisory committee has been established in order to get investigator input on the focus and future steps of Community Outreach and Engagement. An initial meeting will be held on July 6, 2012 for general discussion and suggestions from the following volunteers:

Michael Aschner, Ph.D., Aaron Bowman, Ph.D., Raymond Burk, M.D., Fred Guengerich, Ph.D., Ted Reiss, M.D., Kakie Mashburn, and Jennifer Dix

Additional Items

- The Fisk Community Environmental Health and Sustainability Forum was held on the Fisk campus on March 17, 2012. Jennifer Dix attended this event entitled “Transforming our Community into Becoming a Truly Healthy and Sustainable Community.” Ms. Donele Wilkins, President & CEO of GreenDoor Initiative in Detroit, MI was the keynote speaker. Other speakers were from the Metro Public Health Department, Wilmot Inc., TSU, Trevecca Nazarene University and Fisk University.
- Jennifer served on the Communications Committee for Vanderbilt’s Alliance for Community Engagement and has volunteered to assist with future social media efforts if needed. ACE is a network of faculty and staff at Vanderbilt who are interested in and committed to collaborating with the community on research and learning.

Upcoming Events

- August 2012
  - Community Forum

- Oct. 6, 2012
  - Open House, Center in Molecular Toxicology

- Winter 2012
  - COEC Board Meeting