



MINIM



Volume 20, Issue 9

BIOCHEMISTRY NEWSLETTER

September 2006

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

The State of Matching Funds

At our second Town Hall Meeting with Governor John Corzine, it was a great opportunity for us to ask questions concerning budget cuts, pending layoffs, the nurse's strike, and many other issues that were of the utmost importance including the ethics issues. The Governor began by commending us "on a job well done." It was nice to see that the Governor appreciates our hard work and dedication to UMDNJ.

I was given the opportunity to ask Governor Corzine about the New Jersey Higher Education Incentive Funding Program. This program was initiated by former Governor McGreevey in 1998 to encourage private donations for higher education and was designed to match dollar for dollar private donations of \$1M or more given in a fiscal year. Our department received \$1M in the fiscal year of 2002 and another \$1M for the fiscal year of 2004 from my friend, Dr. I. Kato to establish a \$2M Endowment in our Department, entitled, Takara-Bio Professor in Bioinformatics. The match (10% of donation a year, therefore, \$200,000 every year for 10 years to be completed by 2014) was supposed to start the next year for each \$1M donation. To our disappointment, the State could not keep their promise (explained because of severe budget cuts). Instead the State has provided prorated funds only for two years in 2005 and 2006 in the total amount of \$46,000 (supposed to be \$600,000 by now) Finally we received a letter from Ms. Jane Oates, the Executive Director of the NJ Commission on Higher Education, informing us their regret that they were terminating the program. This was a total surprise, as I could not believe that the State is being so irresponsible. Now I am placed in such a very embarrassing situation with my lifelong friend, to whom we promised that his donation will be matched to \$4M. Whenever I had an opportunity, I spoke with Dean Paz and Acting President Vladeck requesting their help to resume the matching fund program without any success. Therefore, I thought that it would be my last opportunity to ask for assistance on this matter at the Town Hall Meeting. To my big surprise, Governor responded to my question in a very graceful manner stating:



"If there were commitments made then they should sustain themselves even though that program isn't there anymore. We need to figure out how this should be done. The reason why this program was dropped is because there was a very shallow participation. Make sure you contact my office and I will follow up specifically and get an answer regarding those particular issues. We went years with the actual appropriations not being used. We weren't getting the word out or other people felt it wasn't useful. I would love to reinstitute the program and see it being utilized and effective."

(Continued on page 2)

(The State...continued from page 1)

It was very encouraging to hear that the State of New Jersey should honor commitments made by the Higher Education Incentive Funding Program. Most encouragingly, his Executive Secretary, Ms. Samantha Gordon was waiting for me after the Town Hall meeting to obtain all the necessary information on our Endowment. Later, we further exchanged more information and there will be a meeting soon with the UMDNJ foundation to discuss the matter.

I sincerely hope that the State finally keeps their promise to match all of the previous commitments and also reinstates this important program to encourage private donations to our school.

Publications

Inouye, M. (2006) Signaling by transmembrane proteins shifts gears. *Cell*. 126(5):829-31.

Falzon, L., Suzuki, M, and **Inouye, M.** (2006) Finding one of a kind: advances in single-protein production. *Curr. Opin. Biotechnol.* 17(4):347-52.

Inouye, M. (2006) The discovery of mRNA interferases: Implication in bacterial physiology and application to biotechnology. *J. Cell. Physiol.* 209(3):670-76.

**In Press:**

Liu, A., Li, J., Marin-Husstege, M., Kageyama, R., Fan, Y., **Gélinas, C.** and Casaccia-Bonnel, P. (2006) A molecular insight of Hes5-dependent inhibition of myelin gene expression: old partners and new players. *EMBO J.*

Stock, A.M. and Guhaniyogi, J. (2006). A new perspective on response regulator activation. *J. Bacteriol.* 188.

Presentations

Ann Stock presented a seminar at the Society of General Physiologists Annual Meeting and Symposium on Chemotaxis, Invasion, and Phagocytosis: From Bacteria to Humans in Woods Hole, MA on September 6-10, 2006. Her talk was entitled, "Phosphorylation-mediated regulation of OmpR/PhoB family transcription factors."



Department of Biochemistry Annual Retreat

The Graduate Program in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology will hold its Annual Retreat on Friday, October 6th from 8:30am to 4pm at the Rutgers - Livingston College Student Center, Multipurpose Room. The keynote speaker is **Dr. John Hunt** from Columbia University. His talk is entitled, "The ABC's of structure-based function elucidation."

