Dr. GiDeon J. Lewis ('00) completed his surgical residency at Florida Hospital and is currently in private practice in Winter Park, Florida, where he specializes in foot and ankle surgery. He remains very active with the UCF community, serving as the pre-medical surgical internship director. In his free time, he enjoys traveling, barefoot skiing, and running.

Dr. Jesse Johnson ('75 and '79) is currently in practice in internal medicine at Heathrow Internal Medicine at Lake Mary, Florida. He has been in practice in the Central Florida area since 1987. In his spare time, Dr. Johnson greatly enjoys salt water kayak fishing and spending time with his family. Dr. Johnson’s son, Travis Johnson ('10), graduated from UCF with a degree in Molecular and Microbiology and is currently pursuing medical school. His surgical residency at Florida Hospital is currently in private practice in Winter Park.

Dr. Jesse Johnson
to prepare them for tomorrow’s employment market. New courses in biotechnological areas such as stem cell biology, tissue engineering, bioimaging and biotechnology laboratory methods are being offered. The newly developed biotechnology B.S. and M.S. programs are already beginning to generate workforce for the emerging biotechnology industry. The new M.S./M.B.A. and Ph.D./M.B.A. programs being offered in collaboration with the College of Business Administration are to provide the managerial workforce for the biotechnology industry.

Our academic programs are growing in quality and size. Last year more than 14,000 students were enrolled in our courses and this fall our enrollment increased more than 11 percent. We currently have 2,523 majors in our undergraduate degree programs, more than 12 percent increase over the last year. Our graduate programs also are growing; currently we have 115 graduate students, 70 in Ph.D. and 45 in the M.S. programs. More than 100 undergraduate students are conducting laboratory research. Five of our undergraduates are listed as co-authors on journal articles and 22 contributed to 21 different abstracts/presentations. Thanks to the efforts of our advising staff who pays special attention to students with special needs, BSBS has one of the lowest percentage of students on probation.

Our physical facilities expanded to provide space for the growing programs. The 198,000 sq. ft. Burnett School of Biomedical Science building at Lake Nona became ready for occupancy last spring and currently 13 research teams are working in the building. This building has a variety of sophisticated state-of-the-art shared core instrumentation facilities that should enhance our ability to conduct research at the cutting edge. The 25,000 sq. ft. transgenic animal facility has become functional and started serving the research needs of our programs. We completed the refurbishing of the Biomolecular Science annex in the Research Park. A laboratory vacated by Cardiopulmonary Sciences in HPA2 is being converted into a state-of-the-art biotechnology teaching laboratory with modern instrumentation. Shuttle service and video hookups started to function to help meet the challenges posed by the 25-mile separation of the Burnett building from the main campus although many challenges still remain.

Our academic programs are constantly undergoing renewal to provide our students training in the emerging technologies in biomedical science and physical facilities expanded to provide space for the growing programs.
Our faculty collaborate with researchers at the national level at the University of California, University of Miami, Ohio State University, University of Florida, etc., and internationally in Switzerland, Canada, Austria, Brazil, China, France, India, Italy, Japan, Jordan, etc.

The faculty of the Burnett School are supported by more than $12.6 million per year from nationally competitive sources such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Department of Defense. A shared instrumentation grant was awarded to set up a sophisticated confocal imaging system. This is a remarkable achievement by our extremely dedicated faculty, considering the fact that the success rate in obtaining such nationally competitive grants has hit the lowest point ever.

Our faculty members continued to publish in high-impact journals such as Nature Cell Biology, Journal of Immunology, Cell Death and Differentiation, FASEB Journal, Cardiovascular Research, Journal of Biological Chemistry with a total of 80 publications last year. Research conducted in the new Burnett building has already appeared in scientific journals; one in the Biochem Journal, and another with the work in Stem Cells and Development where it is featured on the cover of the journal. Our faculty made more than 95 presentations at professional meetings and were on 75 national review panels last year. They were very active in intellectual property development; they filed 18 invention disclosures, 44 patent applications and 10 patents were issued in the past year. These constituted advances in novel ways of treating diabetes, Alzheimer’s disease, HIV/AIDS, producing plant based vaccines and biopharmaceuticals, and in understanding cancer, cardiovascular diseases, strokes and tuberculosis. Faculty research was featured in “The Scientist”, UCFTV, Orlando Magazine’s Orange Appeal, the Orlando Sentinel, Channel 13 (English and Spanish), WUCF, Channel 9 Eyewitness News, among others.

The Luminary Series, initiated by Ms. Bernadine Douglas, currently sponsored by Dean Mead and Fifth Third Bank, showcases cutting-edge research being done in the Burnett School. Thanks to the efforts of Chip Roberts, Carlee Thomas and Lorraine Scholler, it continued this year with presentations “Mending the Broken Heart” by Dr. Dinender Singla and “Your Body Produces Antibiotics that Fight Deadly Germs” by Dr. Alexander Cole and “Stat3 Protein: New Target For Breast Cancer Therapy” by Dr. James Turkson.

With the availability of state-of-the-art research facilities, we are embarking on an aggressive search process to recruit faculty members conducting research at the cutting edge in cancer, cardiovascular and metabolic, neurodegenerative and infectious disease. we also expect to enhance our collaboration activities with Sanford-Burnham, the hospitals and other biomedical research establishments in Florida, the U.S. and abroad.

**Hemophilia Research Earns Daniell Prestigious Award**

Professor Henry Daniell is one of only five scientists and clinicians in the world to earn a Special Project Award from one of the world’s largest funders of hemophilia research.

Bayer HealthCare of Germany awarded Daniell the grant to continue his cutting-edge research into hemophilia, an incurable bleeding condition that affects about 400,000 worldwide. Patients with Hemophilia A, the most common type of hemophilia, experience prolonged or spontaneous bleeding, especially into the muscles, joints or internal organs.

Treating the disease is challenging and dangerous because many patients suffer fatal allergic reactions to the expensive protein that doctors use to make their blood clot. Treatments must be provided in a hospital setting under supervision, and they can cost up to $1 million.

To prevent these reactions, Daniell and his team want to help patients develop a tolerance to the therapeutic protein before they seek treatment. The researchers are using genetically modified plants that could be ingested and safely travel through the stomach before being released into the small intestines, where the immune system can act on them.

**“It’s quite an honor to be ranked first in a global competition,” Daniell said. “This grant will certainly help us to move this research forward and potentially save thousands of lives.”**

For the past two decades, Daniell has developed transgenic plants for producing and delivering oral vaccines and immune-tolerant therapies. He has used similar techniques to create potential vaccines against malaria and cholera, and genetically engineered insulin into plants to help prevent diabetes.
Dr. Sic L. Chan and his team have found a protein that could hold the key to treating one of the most common and most aggressive brain tumors in adults.

Glioblastoma multiforme (GBM), the type of malignant brain tumor that killed U.S. Senator Edward Kennedy, is difficult to treat because it spreads cancerous cells to other parts of the brain very quickly. About 10,000 cases are diagnosed in the U.S. each year.

There is no cure and treatments have limited success. They consist of surgically removing the tumor from the brain, followed by radiation therapy and chemotherapy. About half of the patients don’t survive for more than a year after their diagnosis.

That’s why the role of the protein called “TRPC6” discovered at UCF is so promising. TRPC6 is a receptor channel protein found in most, if not all, cells in the body. It promotes cell growth during development of the central nervous system.

“Collectively, our studies indicate that TRPC6 is a key mediator of tumor growth of GBM. It may be a promising therapeutic target in the treatment of human GBM,” said Chan.

Chan and his team ran several experiments with cancerous brain tissue obtained from Florida Hospital in Orlando and Duke University Medical Center. They found that this protein is strongly expressed and functional in brain tumor cells. Further research found that they could stop the growth and spread of tumors by knocking down the expression of this protein. It is the first time such findings have been made with this particular kind of brain tumor.

Professor Debopam Chakrabarti is analyzing samples from sponges, sea worms and other underwater creatures collected near Florida’s coast. They could hold the key to developing drugs to fight malaria, a mosquito-borne illness that kills more than one million people worldwide annually. There is no FDA-approved vaccine for malaria, and people are becoming more resistant to the treatments available.

Chakrabarti is pursuing this study with Amy Wright of Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute, whose team has collected these samples from a depth up to 3,000 feet. He is excited about the results so far—preliminary tests identified about 300 samples that can kill malaria parasites. He’s already filed an application for patent protection.

“Why am I so optimistic? Just consider that the oceans cover 70 percent of the planet,” he said. “Of among 36 of the phyla in life, 34 are found in marine environments, whereas the land represents only 17 phyla, and we haven’t even begun to explore the oceans’ depths.” He’s concerned, however, that the Gulf of Mexico oil spill may wipe out species that could hold healing properties for many deadly diseases.

So far, Chakrabarti and his two graduate students have tested more than 2,500 samples from the Harbor Branch collection to evaluate growth inhibitory properties of these samples for malaria parasite growing inside human red blood cells in culture. Harbor Branch is one of only three organizations in the country that has the capability to collect deep-sea samples. It has submersible vehicles that dive 3,000 feet underwater to collect samples off Florida’s coast. Wright directs the biomedical-marine research program at Harbor Branch.

Chakrabarti will continue analyzing samples, particularly the 300 already identified as promising, during the next year.
NEW FACULTY

Alvaro G. Estévez—Associate Professor

Dr. ESTÉVEZ received his Ph.D. in Cellular Neurobiology from the Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1995. As a postdoctoral fellow at the Department of Anesthesiology and Center for Free Radical Biology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, he worked under the mentorship of Dr. Joseph S. Beckman. Dr. Estévez is interested in the mechanisms and pathways of reactive oxygen and nitrogen species-induced neuronal death. He is also a recipient of National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding and has published more than 40 articles in journals such as Journal of Biological Chemistry, Neuron, Journal of Neurosciences, Science and PNAS.

Yoon-Seong Kim—Assistant Professor

Dr. KIM earned his M.D. from Kyung-Hee University Medical College in Seoul, Korea and his Ph.D. in Neuroscience from Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Science. Dr. Kim’s research on mechanism of oxidative stress in the pathogenesis of neurodegenerative diseases, including Parkinson’s disease, is funded by the NIH and The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson’s Research.

Jihe Zhao—Associate Professor

Dr. ZHAO received his M.D. from China Medical University and his Ph.D. from the Tohoku University School of Medicine, Japan. After completing his postdoctoral research studying FAK signal transduction at Cornell University Cancer Biology Program, he started his own laboratory at Albany Medical College. Dr. Zhao’s research interests are focused on the role of KLF8 signaling in the regulation of breast and ovarian cancer progression with emphasis on malignant transformation, epithelial to mesenchymal transition, cancer stem cells, invasion and metastasis. This research is currently supported by the NIH, American Cancer Society (Research Scholar Grant), Susan G. Komen for the Cure (Investigator-Initiated Research grant and PDF) and NYSTEM (IDEA Grant for breast cancer stem cell research).

FACULTY PROMOTIONS

Dr. Dinender Singla (Tenure)

CONGRATULATIONS TO DR. SINGLA ON HIS TENURE. Dr. Singla joined the Burnett School as an associate professor in 2007. His major area of research is strongly related to cardiac regeneration and apoptosis in the animal models of Myocardial Infarction, doxorubicin induced cardiomyopathy and diabetes. He is currently funded with R01 and R21 grants from the NIH and is an author or co-author in multiple peer-reviewed papers. He is also a reviewer for NIH and AHA study sections and has reviewed manuscript for a number of major journals.

Dr. Kenneth Teter (Tenure and Associate Professor)

CONGRATULATIONS TO DR. TETER ON HIS TENURE AND HIS PROMOTION TO ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR. Dr. Teter joined the Burnett School in spring 2004 from a postdoctoral fellowship in the Department of Microbiology at the University of Colorado Health Science Center. His research is focused on the molecular mechanisms which allow certain plant and bacterial toxins to enter the host cell cytosol. He has been continually funded by the NIH since arriving at UCF and is currently PI on a NIH R01 grant. Dr. Teter also initiated the Program for Undergraduate Research Experience and the Career Opportunities in the Biomedical Sciences seminar series.
Faculty Accomplishments (PARTIAL LIST)

ALEXANDER COLE
Invited Speaker—Microbicides 2010, Pittsburgh, PA, May 22-25

HENRY DANIELL
Organized a session at the 9th International Congress of Plant Molecular Biology, St. Louis. October 25-30, 2009.
Invited speaker, Frontiers in Genomics, National Autonomous University of Mexico, Cuernavaca, Mexico, March 21-24, 2010.

MARK MULLER

P.E. KOLATTUKUDY
Invited speaker, Procter & Gamble, Cincinnati, Ohio, November, 2009.

WILLIAM SELF
Invited speaker in lecture series for the Center for Redox Biology at the University of Nebraska, Department of Biochemistry, August 3-5, 2009.

KENNETH TETER
Invited speaker, University of Georgia Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Seminar Series, Oct. 2, 2009.

University Award for Excellence in Distinguished Research and Teaching

DR. MOHTASHEM SAMSAM, was awarded the Golden Apple Teaching Award: UCF American Medical Student Association 2009-2010.

DR. WILLIAM SAFRANEK was awarded the TIP (Teaching Incentive Award) in 2010.

DR. WILLIAM SELF was awarded the RIA (Research Incentive Award) in 2010.

DR. KENNETH TETER received this year’s Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) award for the College of Medicine.

Director Recognized

Dr. Kolattukudy was recognized as a 2009 “Health Hero” by the Orlando Business Journal and “Must-Know Floridian” by Florida Trend. He also received congressional recognition and was featured in Health Magazine “Big Ideas. Five top medical researchers’ projects will benefit Central Florida.”

Ph.D. Graduates (Mentor):

Emmanuel Vrotsos (Sugaya)
Serene Keilani (Sugaya)
Tracey Ann Ruhiman (Daniell)
Nitya Venkataraman (Cole)
Sarah E. Jackson (Self)
Lawrence Ayong (Chakrabarti, D.)
Bongyong Lee (Muller)
Craig W. Younce (Kolattukudy)
John W. Rumsey (Hickman)
Christopher S. Massey (Teter)
Charlambos Kaittanis (Khaled)
Anupama Natarajan (Hickman)
Mounir Chehtane (Khaled)
Christina Kittipatarin (Khaled)

ORDER OF PEGASUS 2010

Congratulations to Molecular Biology and Microbiology undergraduates JENNIFER BAZEMORE, LISA KIPERSZTOK and STEPHANIE NEUBERT for receiving the Order of Pegasus 2010—the most prestigious and significant student award at UCF.

Student Awards and Achievements

ELLA BOSSY-WETZEL’S LAB
ALEJANDRA PETRILLI-GUINART, doctoral candidate was awarded third at the 2010 5th Annual Graduate Symposium, UCF.

ALEXANDER COLE’S LAB
COLLEEN EADE, doctoral candidate, Biomolecular Sciences Ph.D. Program, UCF. Awarded first place as well as Best Oral Presentation in Infectious Diseases at the 2010, 5th Annual Graduate Symposium, UCF.

DINENDER SINGLA’S LAB
CARLEY GLASS, awarded second place as Best Oral Presentation in Cardiovascular Sciences at the 2010 5th Annual Graduate Symposium, UCF.

KENNETH TETER’S LAB
Undergraduate JENNIFER BAZEMORE obtained first place in the Life Sciences I category, SURE poster presentation, Order of Pegasus Award and the Burnett School of Biomedical Sciences Founder’s Award in 2010.
She is now attending UCF Medical School.
Undergraduate CARLY BADER (PURE student, RAMP student) was a Summer 2010 SMART grant recipient.

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The Burnett School of Biomedical Sciences held a Research Colloquium on August 19 at the Burnett School in Lake Nona to welcome 36 new Ph.D. and master’s degree students. The colloquium included poster presentations of student research projects and a plenary lecture by Dr. Yixian Zheng from the Carnegie Institute for Science at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute in Baltimore titled “The Mitotic Spindle Matrix can hold the Answer to How Cell Division and Differentiation are Orchestrated.” The poster session gave the new graduate students and medical students the opportunity to become familiar with some of the exciting biomedical research in our school. The colloquium was very well attended by students of the Burnett School, Medical School students, faculty and staff.

**DONOR SPOTLIGHT: The Hollie and Anna Oakley Foundation**

**Generous Gift Helps the Burnett School Recruit Top Ph.D. Students**

The Hollie and Anna Oakley Foundation has created an endowment for the College of Medicine’s Burnett School of Biomedical Sciences. The gift is part of a Graduate Fellowship campaign that will help the school recruit and retain outstanding Ph.D. students.

Founded in 1958, the private Oakley Foundation is headquartered in Terre Haute, Indiana, and traditionally awards grants to further medical research, education, civic advancement and other quality of life programs.

“We are pleased to support the world class biomedical research of the Burnett School by establishing an endowment that will help recruit the best and brightest Ph.D. students to its programs,” said Eston Perry, vice president of the foundation and a resident of Windermere, Florida.

Gifts to the Graduate Fellowship campaign help UCF compete nationally for the best and brightest graduate students. These future scientists work with seasoned Burnett School researchers to foster new discoveries in the areas of cancer, cardiovascular, infectious and neurodegenerative diseases.

In order to have premier academic and research programs, UCF must attract the best and brightest students. Faced with the high cost of post-graduate education, many top students ultimately choose a university based on its ability to provide fellowship funds. To help attract these students, the Burnett School is seeking community partners who will donate $10,000 to fund one year’s tuition for a Ph.D. student, or a five-year tuition gift of $50,000. Donors may also take advantage of the state of Florida’s matching gift program for endowed gifts by establishing an endowed graduate fellowship that will benefit students in perpetuity.

For more information, please contact Carlee Thomas at 407-266-7000 or carleeth@mail.ucf.edu.

**“Leader and Healer” Inspires UCF Graduates**

At a reception honoring graduates, Dr. Carmelo Licitra—an Orlando infectious disease specialist and UCF alumnus—urged College of Medicine Burnett School of Biomedical Sciences graduates to give back to their community.

During the event Dr. Pappachan Kolattukudy, director of the Burnett School, described Licitra as “a leader and a healer,” as the physician is also a volunteer faculty member at UCF in addition to his teaching positions at the University of Florida and Florida State University.

Dr. Licitra described his life as having “unexpected blessings” that initially seemed like “the worst thing that could have happened to me.” He immigrated to the U.S. during JFK’s presidency, and everything the family owned was stored in a small trunk. Growing up in New York, Dr. Licitra worked his way to a soccer scholarship—only to be drafted during the Vietnam war. “On Friday, I was in class. On Tuesday, I was living in the barracks,” he said.

It was the Navy, however, that brought him to Orlando—he was stationed here and became a hospital orderly and was inspired by the doctors working in the Navy’s emergency room. That’s when he enrolled full-time at UCF in 1975, then still called Florida Technological University.

Dr. Licitra credits UCF’s Dr. Robert Gennaro, now associate director of the Burnett School, with nurturing his love of microbiology. Of Dr. Gennaro, he said he was thankful for “his encouragement and guidance that helped me achieve my goal of becoming a physician. It wasn’t by chance that I became an infectious disease doctor.”

**WELCOME TO THE NEW M.S. BIOTECHNOLOGY, M.S. MOLECULAR & MICROBIOLOGY AND PH.D. STUDENTS**

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**BURNETT SCHOOL RESEARCHERS PRESENT SCIENTIFIC POSTERS**

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**Generous Gift Helps the Burnett School Recruit Top Ph.D. Students**

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**WELCOME TO THE NEW M.S. BIOTECHNOLOGY, M.S. MOLECULAR & MICROBIOLOGY AND PH.D. STUDENTS**
OTHER NEWS

Pre-Health Professions Advisement Office (PHPAO)

Of the applicants who used our PHPAO’s resources, 65 percent were placed into M.D. programs for 2009—the national average was less than 50 percent. In total, we helped place 115 of our applicants into a number of health professions (medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, veterinary, optometry, podiatry, chiropractic and physician assistant).

The SLS 2311C (Overview of Select Medical Careers) course taught by Dr. Genaro Lopez in the 2009 spring semester, had the highest number of enrolled students ever, including more than 400 freshman, sophomore, transfer and upper-division students from all majors who are interested in careers in the health professions.

Our PHPAO received the highest number of Composite Evaluation Application Packages (247) ever submitted by UCF applicants to nine major health careers—surpassing the previous record of 215 submissions in 2009—for students who chose to use this special supplemental application service.

BSBS Faculty Honored in Millionaires Club

The honorees for this year are Dr. Alexander Cole and Dr. Cristina Fernandez-Valle, associate professors at the Burnett School of Biomedical Sciences.

The UCF Office of Research & Commercialization began the Millionaires Club a decade ago to recognize faculty members who had earned significant research dollars. Since 2000, 100 faculty members have been named to the Millionaires Club, bringing to UCF almost $1.1 billion in research funding. This year’s 41 honorees comprise the largest number of Millionaires Club members in UCF history.

Dr. Cole was recognized for receiving nearly $1.3 million in research funding for his work to investigate how the body’s natural antibiotics called “antimicrobial peptides” could be used to fight diseases such as HIV. His 2010 grants include $100,000 from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the organization’s first grant to a UCF professor.

Dr. Fernandez-Valle was honored for $1 million in grants that fund her research specialty: Neurofibromatosis type 2 (NF2), a disease that can leave children and young adults deaf, partially paralyzed or brain damaged. She is investigating proteins that may help treat tumors associated with NF2. Although the tumors are benign, their locations, usually in the hearing and balance nerve in the brain, lead to deafness and facial paralysis.

UCF’s 10-year research celebration recognized Dr. Jack Cheng and Dr. Ella Bossy-Wetzel as previous millionaire club members and Dr. Henry Daniell and Dr. P.E. Kolattukudy as Millionaires Club members in multiple years.

New Peer Mentor Program Established

During the fall semester, an extraordinary group of undergraduate students volunteered to participate in a pilot peer mentor program. These 10 students were invited to become peer mentors based not only on their academic achievements—which were outstanding—but also because of their willingness to extend a hand to other students. The peer mentors went through a six-week training course before beginning work with individual students in the spring semester. All 10 peer mentors have volunteered to help select and train next year’s new group of mentors.

The charter group of peer mentors includes Stephanie Adams, Angela Crotty, Kelsey Fleege, Jacqueline Garcia, Louis Gerena, Karnesha Goins, Eric Goldstein, Mehreen Kassoo, Quoc-Thieu Tran and Mary Jane Zamora.

News From the Biotechnology program

The M.S. in Biotechnology program received 300 percent more applicants than last year, and GRE scores were 207 points higher than other new graduate programs. Seven students graduated from the first batch, two of which are pursuing Ph.D.s, one an M.D. The rest have biotech industry jobs or federal jobs (Epic Systems, Wisconsin, Banyan Biotech FL, USDA, Maryland, Burnham, FL, etc) amidst this tight job market. Thus, all our first batch M.S. biotech students are employed or pursuing doctoral studies.

Focus on Excellence: Biomedical Sciences

As part of President John C. Hitt’s outreach to business and community leaders, he holds a series of “Focus on Excellence Breakfast” meetings. Produced by the Division of Community Relations, each event highlights a distinct area of the university. In February, the focus was on the Burnett School of Biomedical Sciences. Associate Vice President of Community Relations Diane Trees coordinated the event, working with UCF Marketing to produce the video.

Nearly 400 people listened to Dr. Pappachan Kolattukudy as he described some of the groundbreaking research being conducted by professors and graduates at the school.

UCF Board of Trustees Chair Rick Walsh, UCF President John C. Hitt and Orange County Mayor Richard Crotty