

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

I want to thank everyone who participated in and attended the May 17, 2006 UAB Center for Metabolic Bone Disease (CMBD) Scientific Symposium held in conjunction with an External Advisory Committee (EAC) review of the CMBD. Members of the committee were: John S. Adams, MD, University of California-Los Angeles; Lynda F. Bonewald, PhD, University of Missouri at Kansas City; Ted S. Gross, PhD, University of Washington; Theresa A. Guise, MD, University of Virginia; and Mone Zaidi, MD, PhD, FRCP, Mount Sinai School of Medicine. In addition, William J. Sharrock, PhD, Health Science Administrator and Director of the Bone Biology Program at the NIH National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS), also participated in the symposium updating us on the priorities and trends at NIH and NIAMS.

The EAC met May 16-18, 2006 to review the Center, assess its growth, and suggest ways that it might be strengthened. Since 1999 the CMBD has benefited from four EAC site visits. The charge to these committees has been to review the Center in the context of its national prominence and its planned program development. The site visits have been invaluable and have resulted in significant strides by the CMBD in research and faculty recruitment.

What follows below is a brief description of the report from the 2006 External Advisory Committee. Please contact me if you would like a copy of the entire report.

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SUMMARY NOTES OF THE 2006 EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT

The CMBD has many strengths, placing it in a position of national prominence in overall bone research. "The size and scope of the basic research programs within the Bone Center was a source of envy for reviewers." Selected highlights include the following:

- "...the recent renewal of the P30 Center grant against extraordinarily strong competition..." was noted. Awardees include Yale, Cleveland Clinic, University of Pennsylvania, New York Hospital for Special Surgery and UAB (Dr. McDonald, PI).
- The Pilot and Feasibility Program was singled out as being exceptionally strong. The quality of the young scientists, the scientific strength and sophistication of the mentors, and the interdisciplinary nature of the research was noted.
- The scientific cores received laudatory comments with special mention made that the three reviewed in the recent P30 application were all rated outstanding by the NIH Review Panel.
- The NIH T32 Institutional Training Grant (Dr. McDonald, PI) and the HHMI Graduate Program Award (Dr. Clemens, PI), two externally funded training programs, were mentioned as significant strengths.
- The creation of the Bone and Joint Institute, involving Orthopaedic Surgery, the Arthritis Center and the CMBD, was viewed as a strength.
- Development of the Biomatrix Engineering and Regenerative Medicine Center (Drs. Wick and Murphy-Ullrich, Co-Directors), which will bring together researchers from the Schools of Engineering, Dentistry and Medicine, was noted. This Center will be housed in the 30,000 sq. ft. of new space provided in the Shelby Building.
- The leadership provided by Drs. McDonald (Director) and Clemens (Associate Director) was viewed as a major strength of the Center. Dr. McDonald's key role as Associate Director of the UAB CTSA application places the CMBD at the forefront of changes as UAB redesigns its clinical and translational research program.
- The recruitment of new faculty by UAB schools and departments to support the CMBD research programs was acknowledged as a strength.

Recommendations of the committee include:

- Focus on development of intellectual property, especially for devices and small molecules.
- Access indigenous minority populations for students and research subjects.
- Build the clinical/translational research and increase the use of patient subjects in the Osteoporosis Clinic.

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