

Med School Watercooler

NEWS FROM FREDERICK P. WHIDDON COLLEGE OF MEDICINE
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

Wednesday, April 12, 2017

2017 Gumbo Chili Showdown a Success



The 2017 Gumbo Chili Showdown was held April 8, 2017, preceding the University of South Alabama Jaguars Spring Game at Ladd-Peebles Stadium. Approximately 500 people came to the event -- sponsored by the USA Medical Alumni Association -- to enjoy gumbo and chili prepared by 23 competing teams.

"This is a student-led initiative that speaks to the character of our students," said Dr. John Marymont, vice president for medical affairs and dean of the USA College of Medicine. "They came together to support an important cause at the College of Medicine - the [Regan Robinson Young Scholarship](#) - and the event was a huge success. It was an honor to take part in such a meaningful event."

The teams' gumbo and chili were judged on taste, aroma, consistency, aftertaste and originality. All categories, with the exception of the People's Choice Award, were judged by USA President Dr. Tony Waldrop, USA Dean of Students Dr. Michael Mitchell, USA Pediatric Gastroenterologist Dr. Daniel Preud'homme, and Ariel McSwain from iHeartRadio.

Winners of this year's event were:

Best Overall

Pallet Pleasing Hayseeds

Best Gumbo

The Gumbologists

Best Chili

How'd It Get Burnt

People's Choice

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Pallet Pleasing Hayseeds

Second Place Gumbo

The Great Gumbinos

Second Place Chili

Kappa Sigma Fraternity

The Gumbo Chili Showdown supports a scholarship at the USA College of Medicine created in memory of Regan Robinson, a medical student at USA who lost her battle with colon cancer before graduating. The scholarship provides assistance to a rising senior medical student who embodies Regan's spirit and character. This year the event raised more than \$8,000 for the [Regan Robinson Young Scholarship](#).

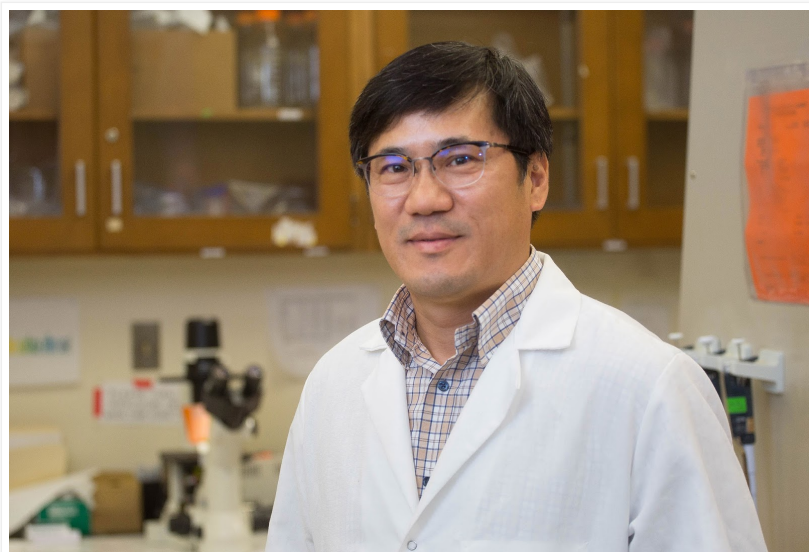
"This year's event went spectacularly," said USA medical student and event organizer Vikash Pernenkil. "We raised plenty of money for the scholarship and had a great turnout. This event is a huge team effort, and we'd like to thank all of our committee members, volunteers and sponsors. Without them, none of this would be possible."

View more photos from the event [here](#). Local news coverage of the event can be found [here](#).

Posted by Med School Watercooler at [1:57PM](#) No comments: 

Tuesday, April 11, 2017

Dr. Steve Lim Awarded \$1.52M NIH Research Grant



Dr. Steve Lim, assistant professor of biochemistry and molecular biology at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, recently was awarded a \$1.52 million four-year grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to study cell signaling that contributes to atherosclerosis, a chronic vascular inflammatory disease.

The Research Project Grant, or R01 grant, is the original and historically oldest grant mechanism used by NIH. The R01 provides support for health-related research and development based on the mission of the NIH. This is Dr. Lim's first R01 grant, which follows up on early stage funding from the American Heart Association.

"This award will allow us to investigate the detailed mechanisms of how focal adhesion kinase (FAK) regulates the vessel wall response to blood flow and inflammation during atherosclerosis," Dr. Lim said.

Atherosclerosis is caused by sustained activation of nuclear factor-kB (NF-kB), a pro-inflammatory transcription factor that drives pro-inflammatory gene

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April 13 DSS to Feature Dr. Roderick O'Sullivan

USA Libraries Hosting Book Drive for Pediatrics

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- 2016 (206)
- 2015 (205)
- 2014 (241)
- 2013 (232)
- 2012 (245)
- 2011 (262)
- 2010 (247)
- 2009 (88)

expression. Through his research, Dr. Lim found that FAK inhibition blocks sustained NF- κ B activity, thus reducing vascular inflammation in atherosclerosis.

"The goal of our study is to better understand the relationship between FAK and NF- κ B in atherosclerosis, in the hope of identifying new therapeutic options," Dr. Lim said. "Millions of people are affected by atherosclerosis in the United States, and it is the underlying problem in most cardiovascular diseases."


Preventative approaches to reduce conventional risks – such as drugs that lower cholesterol and blood pressure – help slow down the progression of atherosclerosis, but do not eradicate the abnormal vessel wall response to environmental factors that drive atherosclerosis. As an "anti-inflammatory" therapy for atherosclerosis remains elusive, Dr. Lim's research into FAK-mediated inflammation during atherosclerosis is considered to have high potential in finding a new therapeutic target.

"The research supported by this grant could advance current atherosclerosis therapies from preventative to treatable," Dr. Lim said. "A FAK inhibitor that stops atherosclerosis progression – as opposed to merely delaying it – would be very beneficial to patients."

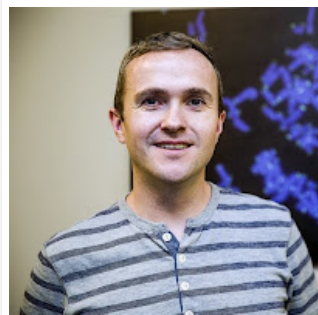
Dr. Lim said the grant will help to establish his research program, expand the research team and upgrade the quality of the current research.

He gave special thanks to his fourth-year graduate student, James Murphy, for his work on the grant. "This R01 grant expands upon James' graduate project, in which he seeks to find the molecular mechanism of FAK mediated NF- κ B regulation in the vascular wall."

Dr. Lim's collaborative research team is comprised of USA College of Medicine researchers Dr. Richard Honkanen and Dr. Robert Barrington; Dr. Hanjoong Jo at Emory University; and Dr. Yabing Chen at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Posted by Med School Watercooler at [4:00 PM](#) No comments: 

April 13 DSS to Feature Dr. Roderick O'Sullivan




The next Distinguished Scientist Seminar at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine will feature Dr. Roderick O'Sullivan, assistant professor of pharmacology and chemical biology at the University of Pittsburgh in Pittsburgh, Pa.

The lecture, titled "Finding the Achilles Heel of Telomere Maintenance by the ALT Mechanism," will take place April 13, 2017, at 4 p.m. in the first floor auditorium of the Medical Sciences Building on USA's main campus.

Dr. Sullivan earned his Ph.D. from the Institute for Molecular Pathology in Vienna, Austria, and completed post-doctoral fellowship training at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, Calif. His interests include cancer pharmacology and DNA repair.

The lecture series is comprised of distinguished scientists from other academic institutions who are invited by the USA College of Medicine basic science departments to present a seminar showcasing their latest research findings. Faculty, staff and students are strongly encouraged to attend.

Learn more about Dr. O'Sullivan [here](#).

Posted by Med School Watercooler at [9:53 AM](#) No comments: 

Monday, April 10, 2017

USA Libraries Hosting Book Drive for Pediatrics




In celebration of National Libraries Week, the University of South Alabama libraries will hold an annual book drive through April 17 for children and teens who visit pediatric clinics in the Strada Patient Care Center.

Donation boxes are located at the Marx Library and Baugh Biomedical Library on USA's main campus, the UMC Health Information Resource Center at the USA Medical Center and the Mastin Building, Room 717. Donors are invited to give new and gently used books for young readers.

The book drive supports the efforts of the Reach Out and Read Program of Alabama. Since 1996, more than 300 medical providers in 67 practices and clinics have donated more than 1.6 million books to Alabama's children.

"Multiple studies have shown that the possession of books, plus being read aloud to at an early age greatly improves a child's vocabulary and preschool readiness," said USA pediatrician Dr. Cindy Sheets. "Gently used books are wonderful, and we could use books in any language, especially Spanish and Arabic."

For more information or if you need donations to be picked up from an office location, contact Andrea Wright at awright@southalabama.edu.

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