



December 21, 2007

Three Scholars Awarded Fulbright Scholarships for UMBI/Argentina Collaborative Research

One UMBI professor and two international scientists received prestigious J. William Fulbright Scholarship awards for collaborative research projects with scientists from two universities in Argentina.

Professor Gerardo Vasta of UMBI's Center of Marine Biotechnology (COMB) received a Senior Research/Lecturing Award to carry out research and educational activities at the Laboratorio de Investigación del Sistema Inmune (LISIN) of the National University of La Plata in Argentina. The focus of his research, conducted in the Fall of 2007, concerns the role(s) of protein-carbohydrate interactions in innate and adaptive immunity. In addition, an international course, "Mucosal Innate and Adaptive Immunity" was team taught by Dr. Vasta and Dr. A. Fossati of LISIN, and included specialist lecturers from Argentina, France, Switzerland and United Kingdom. This year, Dr. Vasta was also appointed to the International Scientific Committee of the Pasteur Institute Program for South America (AMSUD Pasteur), which also helped to support this research.

The two international scholars conducted research in the laboratory of UMBI Professor Russell Hill at UMBI's COMB facility in the Baltimore Inner Harbor.

Dr. Virginia Albarracin, a postdoctoral scholar who holds a position as Assistant Professor at the National University of Tucuman in Argentina, is focusing on the anti-malarial activity of a bacterial strain of *Streptomyces*, and will continue her stay through January of 2008.

Julian Dib, a graduate student from the National University of Tucuman in Argentina, has been studying antibiotic resistance in rare Actinobacteria isolated from the Argentinian high-altitude wetlands this Fall.



"The Fulbright Program aims to bring a little more knowledge, a little more reason, and a little more compassion into world affairs and thereby to increase the chance that nations will learn at last to live in peace and friendship."

– J. William Fulbright

This year, approximately 800 U.S. faculty and professionals received Fulbright Scholar awards to lecture and conduct research abroad; a similar number of foreign scholars received awards to come to the United States. These Fulbright Scholars join the nearly 100,000 scholars who have received a Fulbright award since the program's inception in 1946.

The flagship international educational program sponsored by the United States Government, the Fulbright Program is designed to "increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries..." With this goal, the Fulbright Program has provided over 279,000 participants — chosen for their academic merit and leadership potential — with the opportunity to study, teach and conduct research, to exchange ideas and to contribute to finding solutions to shared international concerns.

The Fulbright Program provides grants for Graduate Students, Scholars and Professionals, and Teachers and Administrators from the U.S. and other countries.

For further information about the Fulbright program, please visit their web site at <http://exchanges.state.gov/education/fulbright/>

With research centers in Baltimore, Rockville, and College Park, the University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute is the newest of 13 institutions forming the University System of Maryland. UMBI has more than 60 ladder-ranked faculty and a 2007 budget of \$59 million. Celebrating the institution's 20th year of service to Maryland and the world, UMBI is led by microbiologist and former biotechnology executive Dr. Jennie C. Hunter-Cevera. For more information visit www.umbi.umd.edu.

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