UPDATE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Director’s Report
UAB Center for Biodefense and Emerging Infections

Four items should be brought to the attention of the UAB academic community. First, over the next year the Center for Biodefense and Emerging Infections (CBEI) will merge with the Center for Emergency Care and Disaster Preparedness (CECDP). The alignment of the two centers under one umbrella is designed to enhance both the synergy and interactions. As designed, the CECDP, under the direction of Dr. Tom Terndrup will continue to focus on biodefense preparedness while the current CBEI will address fundamental research issues.

Second, significant advances have occurred at SERCEB. As most are aware, Bart Haynes successfully competed for the CHAVI grant. The grant demands a full time effort on his part. As a consequence, he has had to step down as the Principal Investigator for SERCEB. He will be relinquishing this role over the next several months to his UNC colleague, Fred Sparling. The die hard Carolina fan, Fred, will accept a position at Duke so that the grant can remain at that Institution.

Program 2 of SERCEB is housed at UAB and focuses on the development of drugs to treat orthopox virus infections. Over the past six months tremendous progress has been made toward this end. Drs. Debasish Chattopadhyay and Larry DeLucas have been able to crystallize three vaccinia enzymes: dUTPase, uracil deglycosylase and thymidine kinase (Figure 1). Dr. Ming Luo has expressed several orthopox enzymes for high throughput screens. Earl Kern, Mark Prichard and Debra Quenelle continue to advance promising molecules in animal models. Finally, Jack Secrist and Joe Maddry have identified three new classes of molecules that have activity in the in vitro and animal model systems of the Kern Laboratory. As this work advances, in collaboration with Dick Moyer at the University of Florida, cidofovir resistant vaccinia mutants have been developed and are now be tested in pathogenesis models.

Lastly, the UAB CBEI and SERCEB are planning a product development workshop at UAB in order to expedite translational research. The workshop will involve scientists from industry and academia in order to develop avenues for expedited product development, a key ingredient of the RCE applications.

Homeland Defense Graduate Course

A new graduate level class on homeland defense will be offered this spring through the School of Health Related Professionals at UAB. The course entitled “Homeland Defense-Security Principles and Practices” (CLS691) will meet on Tuesdays 5:30-8:00 pm. For more information see attached flyer and syllabus, call 205-934-5995, or e mail greenup@uab.edu.
**Dual-Use Module Completed**

The SERCEB Policy, Ethics and Law (PEL) Core has completed a web-based educational module on “dual use” for training of basic researchers at all levels, particularly graduate students and post-docs. The module includes case studies and a detailed outline of the issues surrounding the problem of dual use which refers to the potential positive and negative use of research findings, especially in the bioterrorism realm. Understanding of dual use policies is critically important for all lab personnel.

To view the module, go to:  
www.serceb.org/pel

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**SERCEB ANNUAL MEETING**

The 3rd SERCEB annual meeting was held at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill on October 9-12, 2005.

As noted above, the major announcement at this meeting was the appointment of Fred Sparling of the University of North Carolina to be the Project Director of SERCEB. He will receive a joint appointment at Duke, thus allowing current staff and subcontracts to remain at Duke, insuring a smooth transition.

The next annual meeting will be held on Oct. 17-19, 2006 at the University of Florida, Gainesville.

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**Calendar of Events**

**November 18, 2005**
Third Annual Conference, Medicine in the Time of Bioterrorism. Marriott Hotel, Providence, RI. For more information  
http://bms.brown.edu/cme

**January 29-February 3, 2006**
BSL 4 training, Emory University, Atlanta GA.

**February 19-24, 2006**
BSL 3 training, Emory University, Atlanta GA.

**March 26-28, 2006**
National RCE Meeting will be held at the Sheraton New York Hotel and Towers in Mid-town Manhattan. More details will follow when available.

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**Training Opportunity**

Emory University will offer the first pilot 5-day training course at their “mock” BSL 3 and their second training course at BSL 4 laboratory (Atlanta, GA). If you are interested in attending either session, please complete the application at www.sph.emory.edu/CPHPR/biosafetytraining.


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**Funding Opportunity**

Research applications are now being accepted for new and innovative research projects in biodefense and emerging infections. The application date is January 1, 2006 with an award date of approximately March 1, 2006. For further information, please go to http://www.serceb.org.