DIRECTOR’S NOTES

I want to thank everyone who participated in and attended the March 31, 2010 UAB Center for Metabolic Bone Disease (CMBD) Scientific Symposium on Bone Biology and Disease held in conjunction with an External Advisory Committee (EAC) review of the CMBD. The major focus of the symposium was integrated research on basic, clinical and translational aspect of bone biology and disease. Members of the EAC were: Laurie K. McCauley, DDS, PhD, University of Michigan; Carlos M. Isales, MD, Medical College of Georgia; Janet Rubin, MD, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and Steven L. Teitelbaum, MD, Washington University School of Medicine. I agree with the EAC that the success of CMBD “can be clearly attributed to the enthusiasm of involved faculty and students working toward a common goal, and deserve commendation”. Your continuous support to CMBD remains the key to success of the Center.

As most of you know, I will retire on December 31, 2010 and will hand over several of my CMBD “hats” to other faculty at UAB. Selvarangan Ponnazhagan, PhD, Professor, UAB Department of Pathology, has officially been endorsed by UAB administration, the CMBD 2010 External Advisory Committee and NIAMS to succeed me as Principal Investigator of the NIH P30 UAB Core Center for Basic Skeletal Research (CCBSR). Majd Zayzafoon, MD, PhD, will continue in his role as Core Center Co-Director of this grant.

I am happy to announce the recent recruitment of Yi-Ping Li, PhD, as Professor, Department of Pathology. Dr. Li, an established bone pathobiologist, will contribute considerably to the bone and hard tissue teaching mission at UAB.

I am also happy to announce that Yabing Chen, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Pathology, and a member of the CMBD Steering Committee, has kindly accepted the role as coordinator and editor of the CMBD newsletter. Sam Brown, EdD, who held this role since its inception in 1996, officially retired last September. I want to personally thank Dr. Brown for his dedication to the CMBD over the past 14 years and wish him the best in his retirement.

Below is a summary of the report from the 2010 EAC edited by Dr. Chen. Copies of the report are available.

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SUMMARY NOTES OF THE 2010 EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT

The 2010 External Review Committee once again praised the Center and concluded that it is “clearly in the top tier of centers that focus on mineralized tissue research in the U.S.” The EAC was impressed with:

- “the vibrant growth of this Center in a challenging funding environment”;
- “the integration of the Center within the University allowing for multidisciplinary bone research”;  
- “the CMBD’s contribution to the health of the Dental School, and to the bone health of the Birmingham community”; and
- “the strong and dedicated leadership, the impressive institutional support, and the effective operation of core facilities”.

As CMBD Director, Dr McDonald’s ability to network on this campus was commended as “a role model to the community”. The EAC was impressed with the strong institutional support for this Center, as well as the prominent, integrated and highly active clinical research associated with the center. The EAC praised the highly successful training programs in bone and mineralized tissues with three NIH T32 Institutional Training Grants, and the Pilot and Feasibility Program for its strong track record of funding emerging projects in the bone field.

The succession plan for replacement of Dr. Jay McDonald, who developed and directed the CMBD since 1996, was considered as careful and thoughtful. The succession plan endorsed by the EAC includes:

- Dr. Ponnazhagan, identified as principal investigator for the P30 renewal, was recommended to “work closely with Dr. McDonald so that he can benefit from Dr McDonald’s extensive administrative experience in orchestrating the P30, as well as in the guiding principles by which Dr McDonald has brought together such diverse and multidisciplinary stakeholders that have made the successful whole much more than the sum of its parts”.

- For the active search for a new Director of the Center, “a key recommendation is that the next Director should have a track record of leadership in research along with credibility in the clinical arena”.

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