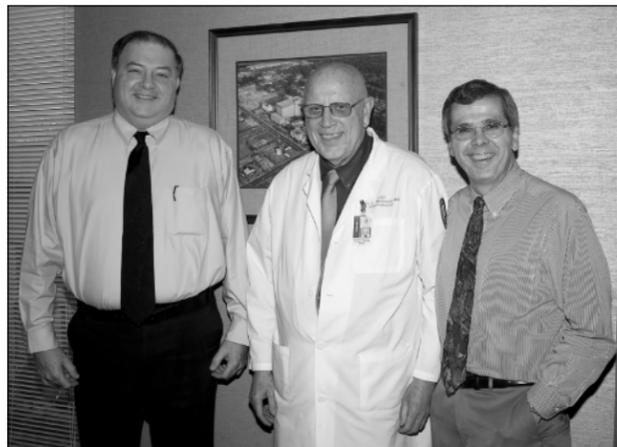




# ON THE INSIDE

LSU Health Sciences Center in Shreveport

## LSU Names Dr. O'Callaghan Boyd Professor, Top Professorial Rank



Dennis O'Callaghan, Ph.D. (left) receives congratulations from Chancellor McDonald (center) and fellow Boyd Professor D. Neil Granger, Ph.D. (right) following announcement of Dr. O'Callaghan's latest honor.

Dennis J. O'Callaghan, Ph.D., Professor and Head of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology and Willis-Knighton Chair in Molecular Biology, has been designated as a Boyd Professor, the LSU System's highest professorial rank.

The LSU Board of Supervisors voted to bestow the Boyd Professorship upon Dr. O'Callaghan during its April 19 meeting.

Dr. O'Callaghan became the 63<sup>rd</sup> Boyd Professor to be named since the award was established on June 1, 1953. He is only the second LSUHSC-S faculty member ever to be so honored. D. Neil Granger, Ph.D., Boyd Professor and Head of Molecular Physiology and Biophysics, was named in 1998. Before 1998, there were no Boyd Professors north of Baton Rouge.

Faculty on any of the LSU campuses who have attained national or international distinction for outstanding

teaching, research, or other creative achievement may be designated as a "Boyd Professor," according to the *Bylaws and Regulations* of the LSU Board of Supervisors.

Dr. O'Callaghan also holds the distinction of being the first faculty member in LSUHSC-S history to be appointed to an endowed chair. He was named to the Willis-Knighton Chair in Molecular Biology in 1997.

Internationally recognized for his work on the molecular biology of herpesviruses, Dr. O'Callaghan is immediate past president of the American Society for Virology, the premiere scientific organization in that discipline with approximately 3,000 members worldwide. Full membership in this virological society is by election only.

He is a member of dozens of other academic and professional organizations and serves on the editorial boards of several major medical journals in the discipline of virology. He is the author of more than 300 scientific publications, all concerning the nature and replication of viruses.

During his career, Dr. O'Callaghan has been the principal investigator for research funded by the National Institutes of Health totaling many millions of dollars, and his major NIH grant was renewed recently until 2007 at a recommended funding level of more than \$2.5 million dollars.

A New Orleans native, Dr. O'Callaghan received his B.S. degree from Loyola University there and his Ph.D. in Microbiology-Virology from the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson. He was a NIH Predoctoral Fellow and his Postdoctoral Fellowship was from 1968-1971 at the University of Alberta School of Medicine, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, where his mentor was Dr. John S. Colter.

The Boyd Professorships are named for Thomas and David Boyd, brothers who were early faculty members and presidents of Louisiana State University and its predecessor, the Seminary of Learning of the State of Louisiana. ■

## NIH Taps Dr. Aw for Prestigious Panel

Tak Yee Aw, Ph.D., Professor of Molecular and Cellular Physiology at LSU Health Sciences Center in Shreveport, is one of only 21 research scientists invited to serve on the NIH Study Section Boundary Team for the Digestive Sciences (DIG) Integrated Review Group (IRG) to help create and define new study sections for this IRG.

"I am sitting on a panel that helps determine future assignments of applications to study sections that best fit nature of the research proposals," said Dr. Aw.

The Center for Scientific Review (CSR) at the NIH is undergoing a major re-organization of its Integrated Review Groups. The purpose of the re-organization is to position the CSR peer review system so that it best fosters the expanded research opportunities created by the successes and new directions of health-related research enterprise.

Dr. Aw's expertise in digestive sciences as well as her familiarities in the workings of the NIH program were among the criteria on which she was selected to serve on the DIG IRG Boundary Team.

"The idea is to set the boundaries of new study sections that will fit the nature and volume of applications that NIH receives in the area of digestive sciences" said Dr. Aw. "It is an honor to be selected as a representative of my peers in this important task."

The Team was asked to evaluate the abstracts of applications and recommend how they should be grouped to form new study sections. The Team will then write a description of the scientific boundaries and propose a name for the new IRG and the study sections.

According to Dr. Aw, the IRG organization needs to be flexible enough to adjust to the rapid changes in scientific opportunities and emerging fields expected in the years ahead.

The NIH peer review system is designed to ensure that taxpayer dollars for the support of health-related research are allocated as the result of a fair and rigorous competition among scientists. ■

## Dr. Bharwani Receives Top International Research Award

Sulaiman Bharwani, M.D., Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at LSU Health Sciences Center in Shreveport, recently won top honors at the 4<sup>th</sup> International Biennial Alex Mowat Meeting and Pediatric Hepatology Update in London.

Dr. Bharwani received the first prize award for the best abstract presented at the Young Investigators' Forum.

His presentation, "Effects of gender on reduced size liver ischemia and reperfusion injury in mice: implications in partial liver transplantation," was one of only nine abstracts selected internationally for oral presentation.

The aims of the meeting were to celebrate Professor Mowat's distinguished career, to share recent developments in scientific research into liver disorders of childhood and its application to the clinical setting, and to celebrate the 2000 liver transplants completed at King's College Hospital in London.

Dr. Bharwani is the only Pediatric Hepatologist within a 200-mile radius of Shreveport. His bench research, in collaboration with Drs. Matthew Grisham and Hirohisa Harada, has great clinical significance in the areas of liver regeneration as well as patient and graft survival in living related and split-liver transplants, an important technique given the persistent organ shortages. Their findings will impact the therapeutics and management of both adult and childhood end stage liver diseases and transplants. ■

Current and past issues of "On the Inside" can be viewed on the LSUHSC-S web site at <http://www.sh.lsuhscc.edu/our.html>.

*On the Inside* is published monthly by the Office of Information Services for employees, students and friends of the LSU Health Sciences Center in Shreveport. Please contact Jessica Thompson, editor, at 318-675-5408 or [jthomp13@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:jthomp13@lsuhsc.edu) to submit information, comments or suggestions.

## National Legislation and Community Research on Pharmaceuticals for Children

The Pediatric Pharmacology Section at LSUHSC in Shreveport is at the forefront of clinical research with its NIH Pediatric Pharmacology Research Unit (PPRU) Network. LSUHSC-S investigators in the PPRU network have been instrumental in drug labeling and information decisions for rational use of drugs in children.

One particular study, under way with Department of Pediatrics faculty John T. Wilson, M.D., Professor and Chief of Section on Clinical Pharmacology, and Kim G. Adcock, Pharm.D., Assistant Professor, offers a perspective on Nifedipine labeling as rationale for expanded legislation on pharmaceuticals for children.

Their work was recently published in the national journal *Pediatrics* and serves as the first concrete, well-documented discussion of strategic approaches to study off-patent medicines used off-label in children. Nifedipine has been used for approximately 16 years for the off-label treatment of high blood pressure in children.

The article "Nifedipine Labeling Illustrates the Pediatric Dilemma for Off-Patent Drugs," attests to enactment of the *Best Pharmaceuticals for Children Act*, signed into law January 2002, which encourages pediatric testing of drugs whose patents have expired. The bill established a government fund for grants to test off-patent drugs in children.

According to Dr. Wilson, the Best Pharmaceuticals for Children Act creates mechanisms for funding of drug studies such as those on Nifedipine. "We now have a concrete documentation of why that legislation is so important. To my knowledge, this is the first time that the pediatric labeling dilemma for off-patent drugs has been documented, set forth in this fashion and published in a national journal," he noted.

Our local community of scientists, along with LSUHSC-S, is addressing this national dilemma. "The collaboration with Sage Pharmaceuticals, which produced the Nifedipine formulation, and with Red River Statistics for data analysis, both located in Shreveport, has enabled the research" said Dr. Wilson. Clinical trials are performed at LSUHSC-S which obtained approval of the protocol by the NIH PPRU Network for eventual testing at multiple national sites.

It is Dr. Wilson's expectation that satisfactory test results will be presented to the FDA and published to provide information for safe and effective use of Nifedipine in hypertensive children.

Dr. Wilson believes the local community effort is a very real and ongoing illustration of how the Governor's concept for medical school and community interaction to foster economic development will be successful. ■

## Fellowship Program to Benefit from Aventis Grant

The Feist-Weiller Cancer Center has received a \$100,000 grant from Aventis to support the Cancer Center's Fellowship Program.

The program is expanding from six to nine medical doctors who are studying to become oncologists. It is a three-year program.

The FWCC program is one of the largest in the Southeast United States. Many of the graduates remain in Louisiana practicing in areas including Ruston, Eunice, Lafayette, Monroe and the Shreveport-Bossier area.

The grant money will be used to purchase textbooks, send fellows to educational and national meetings such as American Society of Clinical Oncology and the American Society of Hematology, and provide other enhancements to the fellowship program. ■

## FAQs from HRM

*What is the difference between a classified and an unclassified position?*

Classified positions are either competitive or non-competitive. The candidate must meet the minimum requirements of the job and may be required to take a written exam or obtain an experience and training rating issued by the Department of Civil Service. Classified employees are paid biweekly.

Unclassified positions require meeting the minimum qualifications for the job and possessing the degree indicated. Unclassified employees are paid monthly.

*What are the steps in taking the Civil Service test?*

Completely fill out the State Civil Service application SF-10 indicating which test you want to take. Refer to website [www.dscs.state.la.us/](http://www.dscs.state.la.us/) for exam schedule. It will list dates, times and locations of test.

*I have a degree; am I exempt from taking the exam?*

The degree may substitute for the minimum requirements. It does not waive the selection procedure.

*What positions are currently available?*

Job line **675-5627** or website <http://sh-aux.lsuhs.edu/HRM/> (posted every Monday and Wednesday)

*What is the salary?*

The base rate of the Civil Service scale will be quoted; however, the individual salary will be determined upon official offer. ■

## Optional Treatment of Aneurysms Available for LSUHSC-S Patients

Today, doctors are finding new ways to treat brain aneurysms before and after they rupture. An aneurysm is often described as a blood vessel that develops a balloon-like blister; the wall of that balloon weakens and eventually pops.

A major rupture is often preceded by a new or uncharacteristic headache followed by nausea and vomiting. When an aneurysm ruptures inside the head, it is called a subarachnoid hemorrhage.

This is a very critical condition because half the people who experience subarachnoid hemorrhage will not survive, according to Claudio Schönholz, M.D., Associate Professor of Radiology at LSUHSC in Shreveport.

Dr. Schönholz specializes in endovascular interventional radiology. He offers LSUHSC-S patients optional endovascular treatment for intracranial aneurysm. This new procedure called coiling, approved by the FDA in 1995, uses microcatheters to deliver coils to the site of the enlarged blood vessel.

"We feed a catheter from the groin into the effected blood vessel. Once we are inside the aneurysm sac, we fill the balloon with micro coils," said Dr. Schönholz. "The coils are manufactured with platinum that promote clotting. Therefore, the aneurysm will not rupture again."

The standard treatment of aneurysms requires a

neurosurgeon to drill through the skull and place a clip around the blister-like pouch. This brain surgery is quite effective; however, major surgery causes patients trauma and long recovery time. Coiling is less invasive, does not require an open operation, and may be more suitable for some patients.

Dr. Schönholz began treating brain aneurysms with endovascular therapy at LSUHSC-S in January 2002. He now has successfully performed five catheter-based coiling techniques for treatment of intracranial aneurysms, and reports that all five cases effectively blocked the aneurysm.

While the best method of securing the aneurysm should be made on an individual basis, the value of coiling is for aneurysms that are in hard to reach places.

"LSUHSC-S now offers the patient the option to receive both types of treatment, conventional surgery or endovascular interventions," said Dr. Schönholz. "The patients are seen in common by physicians of neurosurgery and radiology. We decide together what is best for the patient."

LSU Health and Sciences Center in Shreveport is able to serve patients with state-of-the-art interventional radiology equipment, and is the only institution in the area with, coiling techniques used to treat vascular diseases. ■

## Health Literacy Efforts Help Bridge the Communication Gap

A routine doctor's visit may involve medical terminology, a standard consent form, directions for taking medications, and an appointment slip. Imagine you lack the skills to understand and act on this important health care information.

Studies have shown that literacy has a direct impact on health. The ability to make informed decisions about healthy lifestyle choices may be impossible without essential literacy skills. People of all ages, races, and economic levels can have trouble reading. LSUHSC-S patients are disproportionately represented in the lower reading levels.

In addition to not understanding the health information, many misunderstand it, leading them to take inappropriate action.

According to Terry Davis, Ph.D., Professor of Medicine and Pediatrics at LSU Health Sciences Center in Shreveport, understanding the factors that contribute to miscommunication is important in solving the problems posed by low health literacy.

People with low literacy need relevant and essential information without unnecessary details. "Understanding the factors that contribute to miscommunication is important in solving the problems posed by health literacy," said Dr. Davis. "We need to tune into patients' concerns and bridge the communication gap between physicians and their patients."

"You cannot tell whether people are low-literate by merely looking at them or talking to them," said Estela Marin, M.A., Research Associate in Dr. Davis's lab. "While some low-literate people may have trouble expressing themselves orally, others have a surprisingly expansive vocabulary." Because of this, it is important that patient information be presented in a way that anyone can understand.

Recently, government health agencies, volunteer health agencies, health care systems, and providers have increasingly focused on improving health literacy. LSU Health Sciences Center in Shreveport, a leader in this emerging field, is ahead of the curve on health literacy.

LSUHSC-S recognizes the need for ensuring that patients have adequate understanding, and has a special mission to effectively communicate with people who might have low health literacy.

Dr. Davis is on the national health communication panel for Healthy People 2010. She has worked with several departments within LSUHSC-S and with other institutions to develop patient education materials, including a video for the American Medical Society on Health Literacy. Currently she is working on obesity, vaccine, HIV, prostate cancer, colon cancer and breast cancer projects that have health literacy components. ■

## Dr. Chesson Exemplifies Humanism in Medicine

Andrew Chesson Jr., M.D., Professor of Neurology and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at LSU Health Sciences Center in Shreveport has been recognized by his students as a positive and caring role model and physician. Dr. Chesson is also director of the LSUHSC-S Sleep Disorders Center.

He was selected as a distinguished finalist for the 2001 Humanism in Medicine Award, an annual award sponsored by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) through the support of the Pfizer Medical Humanities Initiative.

To commence the process which led to Dr. Chesson's nomination, the Organization of Student Representatives (OSR) chapter of each U.S. medical school was asked to submit to the OSR Administration Board national selection committee a nominee who embodies the finest qualities in a teacher of healing, exemplifying humanism in medicine.

Dr. Chesson is one of fifty-six honorees from across the nation nominated by the AAMC Organization of Student Representatives, based on five defining characteristics of humanism in medical education: positive mentoring skills, active in community services, compassion/sensitivity, collaboration and observance of professional ethics.

Dr. Chesson's nomination for this special award is a tribute to his commitment to training and mentoring medical students here at LSUHSC-S. ■

## Chancellor McDonald Honored by the American Heart Association

LSUHSC-S Chancellor/Dean John C. McDonald, M.D., among the nation's pioneer organ transplant surgeons, will be honored by the American Heart Association on May 10 for founding the LSU/Willis-Knighton Regional Heart Transplantation program.

Presentation of the prestigious award will highlight the annual AHA fundraiser that begins at 7 p.m. at the Shreveport Convention Center. Theme for this year's gala is "Hearts and Harleys."

Chancellor McDonald, longtime former chair of the Department of Surgery at LSUHSC-S, was among the first surgeons to perform kidney transplants in the United States. In the late 1960s he performed the first organ transplant in North Louisiana.

Money raised by "Hearts and Harleys" will help fund cardiovascular research including stroke research, as well as public education programs about heart and stroke.

Tickets, \$125 each, are available from the office of American Heart Association, Southeast Affiliate, Caddo/Bossier Division, 222-2328, according to Linda F. Harkey, Senior Regional Director. Event sponsorships are also available.

Mary C. Mancini, M.D., Ph.D., medical director of the LSU/Willis-Knighton Heart Transplantation Center, and Debbie Henry of the Department of Family Medicine, a longtime AHA volunteer, are gala co-chairs. ■

## Correction

Kevin Sittig, M.D., is Professor of Surgery, not Associate Professor of Surgery as reported in April's *On the Inside*.



Chancellor John McDonald welcomes Senator John Breaux to LSUHSC in Shreveport during the Senator's visit to participate in the Reach Out and Read program last month. Senator Breaux, a strong advocate of children's literacy often volunteers to read to youngsters.

## SMART Program Final Presentation

LSU Health Sciences Center in Shreveport will host Science and Medicine Academic Research Training Program (SMART) final presentations for the 2001-2002 group on Monday, May 6 at 4 p.m. in the BRI Atrium.

This year, ten high school students from Caddo and Bossier Parishes were selected to work with research teams in the departments of Orthopaedic Surgery, Medicine, Cellular Biology and Anatomy, Pathology, and Urology.

Family members, lab personnel, and friends are encouraged to attend this event. ■



## Employee Appreciation Day

In conjunction with National Hospital Week, LSUHSC in Shreveport will host its 11<sup>th</sup> Annual "Employee Picnic" from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. on "H" Lot, south side of hospital.

Chancellor John McDonald, M.D., and other top LSUHSC-S officials support the annual picnic to say "thank you" to all employees, each of whom contributes to the overall success of our institution. ■

## New Faculty, March 2002

Sami Bahna, M.D., Dr.PH., Professor of Pediatrics and Medicine  
Susan Drez, M.D., Assistant Professor, Clin. Family Medicine  
William Kilmstra, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Microbiology and Immunology  
Audrey Mallory, Instructor, Clin. Child and Family Service  
Paul Matthews, M.D., Assistant Professor, Family Medicine  
Yolanda Ramin, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Clin. Family Medicine  
Katherine Ryman, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Microbiology and Immunology  
Steen Trawick, M.D., Instructor, Clin. Pediatrics

## 11th Annual Carroll W. Feist Symposium on Breast Cancer

Friday, May 3, 2002, 8:00 am  
Room 1-400, Auditorium, LSUHSC-S  
For pre-registration, contact CME at 675-4629