Dear OCNS Faculty, Staff and Students

In my 10th year as Director of OCNS, I have seen our OCNS members face many significant funding challenges; however, I also see this as a time of unprecedented opportunity for neuroscientists on the OUHSC campus based upon President Obama's announcement of his BRAIN (Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies) Initiative.

Engaging the OCNS membership is key to our future success. With the support from professor John Campbell, we have seen new programs and initiatives developed at OCNS. Additionally, our translational research initiative pioneered by professor Calin Prodan is starting to show results and we plan on continuing this pilot program in 2013/2014.

Over the past 10 years we have seen the exciting growth of the Stephenson Cancer Institute and the Harold Hamm Diabetes Center. To address the future growth of Neuroscience on the OUHSC campus, I plan on forming a subcommittee of the OCNS Executive Board to reach out to the OUHSC leadership to advocate for growth of Neuroscience Research and finding cures for disorders of the brain such as Parkinson's Disease, Alzheimer's Disease, Autism, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Anxiety and Depression, Chronic Pain and Stroke. I would also like to urge all OCNS members to get involved and to advocate for Neuroscience Research by explaining its importance and relevance whenever possible.

In my ongoing capacity as Director of OCNS, I plan on devoting significant energy to ensuring the success of OCNS, though mentoring of our junior investigators and working with professor James McGinnis to prepare our graduate students for careers within and outside the academic arena. I will also work with professor Michelle Callegan to invite quality seminar speakers to our campus. We will continue our educational mission by growing the Neuroscience graduate program, hosting the OCNS symposium in September 2013, and developing outreach programs to the community.

Once again it is an honor to serve as the Director of OCNS and I appreciate all your hard work and look forward to your thoughts and input.

Have a wonderful summer season.
The Oklahoma Center for Neuroscience Presents The Second Annual Raniyah Ramadan Distinguished Lecture held on July 17th, 2013 at the Samis Education Center.

This year’s presentation will be given by professor James Chodosh. Chodosh’s lecture entitled “The Evolution of Human Adenoviruses” is sponsored by the Dr. Raniyah Ramadan Foundation and the Oklahoma Center for Neuroscience.

Chodosh is a David Glendenning Cogan Professor of Ophthalmology in the field of Cornea and External Disease at Harvard Medical School. He completed his medical school and residency training in ophthalmology at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, clinical fellowship in Corneal Diseases at the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in Miami, Florida, research postdoctoral fellowship in Virology and Molecular Biology and Infectious Diseases at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee, and Masters of Public Health degree with a concentration in Biostatistics from the University of Oklahoma.

Professor Michelle Callegan’s research focuses on identifying the pathogen and host factors involved in blinding ocular infectious diseases. Her research focuses on the interactions between bacteria, the toxins these organisms secrete, the host innate immune system, and delicate tissues of the interior of the eye during infection. In severe bacterial ocular infections, these interactions can result in loss of vision or loss of the eye itself. She has collaborated with OUHSC physicians and pharmaceutical companies to investigate new anti-microbial agents, anti-inflammatory drugs and therapeutic and surgical regimens to improve the visual outcome of bacterial infections of the eye. The testing of antibiotics, anti-inflammatory drugs, and surgical regimens in experimental ocular infection models by Callegan’s research team has been instrumental in identifying therapeutic windows of opportunity in which treatment can successfully preserve vision. Callegan’s group is currently testing combinations of novel anti-inflammatory and anti-toxin-based preparations with more potent antibiotics for use against severe forms of ocular infections. These studies will greatly impact the fight against blinding infections of the eye caused by pathogenic organisms.
Neuro Night

Our presenters for the Oklahoma Center for Neuroscience NEURO NIGHT on “The Brain and Hearing Loss” January 15 were professor Kenneth Dormer, Terry Stull and Wayne Berryhill. “The Developing Brain” February 19 were professor Amy Wisniewski, Sheila Algan, and Dawn Kennedy. “The Brain and Locomotion” March 19 were Carolyn Craven, Jeanne Ann King, and Joe Chambers. “The Brain and Alzheimer’s Disease” April 16 were professor Bruce Carnes, Mandi Brock, and Elliott Ross.

We appreciate each of our Neuro Night panelists for the expertise they brought to our audience. We also thank the Fountains at Canterbury for hosting the event and serving a delicious dinner.

OCNS News

Happy Retirement, professor David Garrison!

We wish you happy retirement for the hard work you have done, for the support you have given OCNS, and the help you have rendered. May all your coming days be filled with many more rewards of joy and fulfillment!

Garrison was a long-term member of OCNS and was heavily involved in graduate education. We appreciate all his efforts on behalf of OCNS and wish him all the best during his well-deserved retirement.
OCNS Member Awards & Honors

Professor Robert E. Anderson, Professor Martin-Paul Agbaga and Blake Hopiavuori received a collaborative Donald W. Reynolds Foundation for March 2013 – February 2014. The project is entitled “Role of Very Long Chain Fatty Acids in the Aging Brain”.

Amanda Brock received a GSA Travel Grant for GREAT 2013. Professor Michelle Callegan is in the ARVO Fellows Class of 2013 as a Gold Fellow. Assistant professor Carrie Ciro was recently awarded an NIH “Clinical and Translational Science Award” grant that is between the University of New Mexico and OUHSC. Professor Beverley Greenwood-Van Meerveld received a VA Merit Grant for Central Mechanism Modulation Visceral “2013-2017”.

Blake Hopiavuori received a Donald W. Reynolds Pre-doctoral Fellowship award for April 2013-June 2014. Anthony Johnson received a GSA Travel Grant for GREAT 2013. Kathryn Klump received COM Student Association Travel Scholarship, OU College of Medicine. She also received a Young Investigator Travel Award, American Association of Anatomists/EB 2013. GSA Travel Award for GREAT. She was a nominee for O. Ray Kling Outstanding Graduate Student Leadership Award. She was a Poster competition finalist – Experimental Biology 2013 and OUHSC Christian Medical and Dental Association (CMDA) female Student of the Year 2013. Professor Thubi Hlapang Kolobe received an Edith Kinney Gaylord Presidential Professorship.

Congratulations to all of our OCNS members!

Student Section

Special congratulations to Blake Hopiavuori, Dawn Kennedy and Chelsea Larabee for the successful completion of their General Examinations!

We welcome two new students to the OCNS program. Albert Orock is being mentored by professor Ferenc Deak, and Erik Hodges is being mentored by professor William Sontagg.