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Winter 2006

# Research Works

At Rhode Island College

## Welcome

On behalf of the Office of Research and Grant Administration at Rhode Island College, allow me to welcome you to the first issue of *Research Works* at Rhode Island College.

Our focus, as always, has been to help our colleagues realize their goals, and in times of financial uncertainty the importance of using grants to champion academic excellence and foster collaboration could not be higher. That is why, in our first issue, I wish to call to special attention the unique and lasting intra and inter-collegiate partnerships we have developed in recent years. We are proud to count a number of our faculty as participants in RI-INBRE. Our office has further strengthened ties with the Rhode Island College Foundation, and our growing funding search options and workshops (with few exceptions) have been made available to members of all three state institutions of higher education. Finally, we intend to continue our philosophy of transparent office procedures to both simplify and encourage the proposal-writing process; those internal notices may be found further in this issue.

I encourage you to contact us with any comments or ideas - as with our office, this growing publication will only be as successful as your interest and participation. Best wishes for a safe and happy holiday season,

Anne Pascucci  
Interim Director, Research & Grants

## Featured Researcher

*Rebeka Merson*

### **Environmental molecular toxicology**

When asked about my research I say that I study environmental molecular toxicology. That is a mouthful and a mindbender to most people. So I try to make a connection by explaining that certain chemicals found in the environment are toxic to wildlife and humans and that I study **how** these compounds cause harm. Compounds

of particular interest are part of the halogenated aromatic hydrocarbon (HAH) and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon (PAH) classes of chemicals, which enter the environment by fossil fuel burning, incomplete waste combustion, and by dumping. And some of these chemicals are present in cigarette smoke. They are present in wildlife and human tissues, including that of people inhabiting remote areas, far from the sources.



Photo Source:  
Wes Pratt and  
NMFS

The overall research objective of the Merson Lab is to reveal mechanisms underlying toxicity of HAH and PAHs. We know many toxic effects depend on binding and activation of intracellular receptor proteins, which also act as transcription factors, proteins that control gene expression. We study structural/functional diversity of these receptors and the relationships between target genes and species sensitivity to chemical exposure.



Photo Source: Suzanne Conklin, RIC

Innovation is a hallmark of the Merson Lab; by combining cutting-edge and traditional methods with diverse laboratory and environmental models, we investigate the effects of environmental chemicals at multiple

organizational levels (molecules to ecosystems). Students are integrated into every aspect of scientific pursuit from project conception, literature search, experimental design, and laboratory work, to writing up the results in scientific papers and reports to funding agencies. This mission provides a dynamic learning experience, creates enthusiasm for research and an appreciation for current and emerging issues in environmental toxicology, and endows students with hands-on laboratory training.

**INBRE Grant title: Role Partitioning by Aryl Hydrocarbon Receptors (AHR) in Cell Regulation and Toxicity**

Articles? Features? Ideas? Get involved!  
Email submissions to [kmiddleton@ric.edu](mailto:kmiddleton@ric.edu)

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Joan Rollins, Maria Lawrence, Maureen Newman << **Recent Proposals**  
Roland DeGouvenain, Eric Roberts, Richard Weiner << **Recent Awards**

the A list



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## A New Resource

A new funding search resource awaits: Rhode Island College is set to join the Community of Science! Community of Science (COS) is the leading global resource for hard-to-find information critical to scientific research and other projects across all disciplines. Further, COS maintains one of the world's most comprehensive funding resources, with more than 22,000 records representing nearly 400,000 opportunities, worth over \$33 billion.

Our office will also continue to offer the Foundation Directory, an excellent resource for locating private foundation funding, through at least the end of the fiscal year (6/30/07). Please contact us if interested in accessing either resource.

## Break The Grant-Writing Jinx!

Join us for an exciting Friday the 13th workshop! The Rhode Island College Office of Research and Grant Administration, together with the Rhode Island College Center for Public Policy, are sponsoring a free grant writing workshop on Friday, April 13th 2007 from 9 AM to 4 PM in Alger Hall room 110. The featured presenter, Robert Porter, Ph. D., has more than thirty years' experience as a tenured professor, private consultant and research administrator. He has presented papers and workshops on grant writing at national conferences and has published articles on the subject in the SRA Journal of Research Administration. Dr. Porter is currently serving as Program Development Manager in the Research Division at Virginia Tech.

A general grant-writing session will be held in the morning, as well as a specialized NSF session that will be offered in the afternoon.

This offer is open for free to researchers and community members from all three state institutions of higher education. However, spots are limited! To reserve your seat, email [kmiddleton@ric.edu](mailto:kmiddleton@ric.edu) or call (401) 456-8228.

**You must RSVP by Friday, February 9th 2007 in order to attend.**

## Funding Highlights

[National Institutes of Health Genetic and Genomic Analyses of Xenopus](#)

[Earthwatch Educator Grants](#)

[HP Technology for Teaching Grant Initiative](#)

[Protein Biomarkers of Infection-Associated Cancers](#)

## Join The Team

Our office has added a number of new features in the past year - please consider volunteering for or utilizing any of the offerings below!

### **Grant Mentoring**

Some of the College's experienced and helpful PIs have volunteered their time and services in serving as mentors in proposal writing and grant management. Please fill out our [mentor request form](#) if you are interested in receiving such assistance and we will work diligently to match you to a mentor! Our helpful volunteers can be found in many departments and schools across campus, bringing a wide variety of skills and experiences to assist you in proposal development.

### **Peer Review Program**

A new service also offered by ORGA and made possible by the time and effort of the College community is a "blind review" service. If you'd like a fresh pair of eyes to give an honest and new look at your proposal prior to submission, you may submit it through ORGA to a team of experienced volunteers. Please [contact us](#) to utilize the service or to volunteer to be a reviewer.

### **Faculty Research Interests**

Interested in funding opportunities? How about collaboration with fellow researchers? Our office is compiling a comprehensive database of faculty research interests from across campus in order to better connect our brightest minds and best funding opportunities. To enroll, simply [contact us](#) to request a questionnaire. When funding opportunities or chances for collaboration within a related field arise, we'll try our best to notify you. That's all it takes!