

Center for Biomedical Research  
Annual Report 2008-2009  
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This is the first of what I plan to be annual reports on the activities of the Center for Biomedical Research at Oakland University. I became director of the CBR officially on January 5, 2009 for a three year appointment ending August 14, 2011. However, I was functioning as CBR director (and being paid as director) starting in September, 2008. For the last several years there had been no CBR director, since Denis Callewaert stepped down from that position in August 2005.

One change in the CBR starting this year is that it is now administratively under the office of the Provost, rather than the College of Arts and Sciences. Thus, the CBR now had a wider responsibility, and its activities include the School of Engineering, the School of Health Sciences, and the School of Nursing, in addition to the College.

One of my first activities as CBR director was to talk to several faculty members to get their input about the role of the CBR at OU: Arik Dvir (Chair of the Department of Biological Sciences), Frank Giblin (Director of the Eye Research Institute), Art Bull (Chair of the Department of Chemistry), Jack Nachman (Chair of the Department of Mathematics & Statistics), and Pieter Frick (Dean, School of Engineering and Computer Science). I also talked to members of the School of Nursing at one of their faculty meetings. These discussions—plus those with Associate Dean Kathy Moore and Provost Virinder Moudgil—helped shape my plans for the coming year.

The CBR website ([www.oakland.edu/cbr](http://www.oakland.edu/cbr)) was quite out-of-date, so I overhauled it. With the help of OU Communications and Marketing, the website was transferred to the Careworks software for maintaining websites. The content of the website was updated, except for the equipment list (which I am still working on). In particular, I have periodically updated the CBR News section of the website to highlight research accomplishments and news about biomedical research at OU. My goal is to make this feature a way for those inside and outside of OU to be able to keep up with the many accomplishment of CBR researchers.

Much of what the CBR accomplishes is reflected in its budget. Below lists how the CBR money (including the Research Excellence Fund) was spent.

• Other	3,714
Total	308,055

The source of these funds is the \$250,000 REF funding, plus the CBR operating account (approximately \$55,000). A CBR gift fund is also available, now holding about \$65,000, which I have keep in reserve for the first year, as I learned about the CBR budget.

Graduate student support represented about 50% of the total budget. These funds were used to support two students in the Biomedical Sciences: Medical Physics PhD program, two students in the Biomedical Sciences: Health and Environmental Chemistry PhD program, and two students in the Biology MS program. The students are listed below:

- Haneen Al-Hmoud, Chemistry (fall)
- Farid Badar, Physics
- Lauren Beene, Biology (winter)
- Scott Hopkins, Physics
- Yan Li, Chemistry
- Matthew Oetjens, Biology
- Julie Zachwiega, Biology (fall)
- Rehana Zaidi, Chemistry (winter)

Graduate student support will change somewhat in future years. First, I have applied for and obtained support for part of the graduate tuition expenses from the research office through the GReAT program. For the upcoming academic year, 64 research credits (about \$32,704, using in the state tuition rate of \$511/credit) should be covered by the research office, increasing the funds available to support faculty research. I expect that in the near future, the Department of Biological Sciences will start using REF funding to support PhD students, rather than MS students. If six graduate students are supported with \$14,000/year, the total graduate student stipend support should be \$84,000. It was slightly higher in 08-09 because of some summer stipend support that will not recur in the future.

The other large expense in the budget is support for faculty research. A competition for REF funds was held in the winter 2009. Out of \$224,000 in requests, \$115,870 (a little over half) were supported. Funding decisions were made by an ad hoc committee consisting of myself plus Arik Dvir, Art Bull, Ken Mitton, and Fiki Shillor. Faculty who were supported are:

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|-------------------------------------|-------|
| • Roman Dembinski, Chemistry        | 14400 |
| • Sumi Dinda, SHS                   | 15000 |
| • John Finke, Chemistry             | 15000 |
| • Nessen Kerrigan, Chemistry        | 15000 |
| • Shailesh Lal, Biological Sciences | 12000 |

• Qu/Lindemann, Biology and SECS	5000
• Anna Spagnuolo, Math and Statistics	12670
• Doug Wendell, Biological Sciences	11800
• Xiangqun Zeng, Chemistry	15000
Total	115,870

These funds were awarded to help these faculty members perform their research, with the goal of stimulating external research grant proposals.

Because CBR membership is for a 3-year term, all memberships had technically expired by the time I became director. I sent out a call for member applications. The criteria for members is now set at: 3 biomedical research publications in the last 3 years, and either an active external grant or 3 grant applications in the last 3 years. The present list of members is given below:

- Amy Banes-Berceli
- Rasul Chaudhry
- Ferman Chavez
- Shravan Chintala
- Roman Dembinski
- John Finke
- Frank Giblin
- Andrew Goldberg
- Ravindra Khattree
- Shailesh Lal
- Zijuan Liu
- Kenneth Mitton
- Lakshmi Raman
- Bradley Roth
- Michael Sevilla
- Susmit Suvas
- Douglas Wendell
- Keith Williams
- Patricia Wren
- Yang Xia
- Xiangqun Zeng

The CBR has been involved with numerous other activities during the 2008-2009 academic year. A list of some of these is given below

- I wrote letters to the PEW and Searle Fellowship programs, to get OU included in their new investigator competitions. Unfortunately, this was not successful.
- I attended the 4th Annual MichBio Expo & Conference at the Rock Financial ShowPlace in Novi, MI

- The CBR started a “pre-peer review” program to help faculty prepare NIH proposals. Unfortunately, only one faculty member has taken advantage of this program.
- I met with a number of faculty in the School of Engineering to discuss the CBR and its relationship to Engineering.
- A CBR Festival was held in the hall outside of 201 DHE. Faculty from OU and Beaumont presented posters about their work. This festival was on the same day as the Sigma Xi Annual Lecture.
- With funding from the Research Office, a new CBR brochure is being prepared. It should be finished in the fall of 2009.
- I presented a talk titled "Biomedical Research at Oakland University" to the Birmingham Rotary Club.
- Kelly Conway and I visited Kelly Scientific to request continued support for undergraduate summer research.
- I submitted a proposal to NIH for support through their P30 program of a “Core Center in Quantitative Biology”. The proposal was funded, and a new faculty member will be hired, with the goal of starting winter 2010.

In summary, my main accomplishment for the year was to get the CBR back to being a vital mechanism to support biomedical research at Oakland. I look forward to continuing this task in the upcoming fiscal year.