

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE BIOTECH CENTER

February 2009

Faculty Activities and Accomplishments

Two new research projects will expand the international collaboration developed by Max Häggblom with colleagues at several institutions in Finland. Dr. Häggblom is PI on a new 3-year project "Assessing the Potential for Anaerobic Microbial Dechlorination of PCDD/Fs in River Kymijoki Sediments" funded by the Nessling Foundation in Finland. The work will be conducted mainly at the University of Helsinki, Department of Ecological and Environmental Sciences in collaboration with the Häggblom lab at Rutgers. The grant will support a Ph.D. student at the University of Helsinki, co-supervised by Dr. Häggblom.

In the second project, Dr. Häggblom is Co-Investigator on a new 3-year grant funded by the Academy of Finland on "Physiological, ecological and chemical characterization of novel bacteria dominating forest and tundra soils of Arctic Finland (BIOARMI)". The research project is a collaboration between Åbo Akademi University, Finland, The Finnish Forest Research Institute and Rutgers University and builds on the previous work on characterizing the bacterial communities of Arctic tundra and forest soils.

Grants and Fundraising Efforts

Gerben Zylstra will undertake a research project for the Picatinny Arsenal on "Enzymatic nitration and the potential for biosynthesis of butane triol trinitrate (BTTN)." The contract, signed last week, is his third award from the group in two years.

Conferences, Seminars, and Other Events

Wendie Cohick served as a reviewer for the DOD Breast Cancer Research Program Concept Awards - Cell Biology section. This was an on-line panel with reviews and panel discussions taking place over the last two weeks of January. Thousands of one-page proposals were submitted. The concept awards are designed to fund novel ideas that are potentially high-risk, but if successful, would translate into significant advances for breast cancer research.

Assistant Research Professor Rong Di gave an oral presentation at the 3rd Annual Mini-Symposium "Microbiology at Rutgers" Jan. 29-30 entitled "New drugs against hepatitis C virus." Poster presentations were made by students from the labs of Drs. Häggblom, Tumer, Bini, Lawton, and Young.