

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE BIOTECH CENTER
August 2009

Faculty Activities and Accomplishments

The Dean of the Postgraduate School at the University of Ibadan (UI), Nigeria, Professor Labode Popoola, visited Rutgers University August 4-5 to explore collaborative opportunities for faculty/student exchange and graduate programs in sustainable development. **Albert Ayeni** (Plant Biology and Pathology) arranged meetings with the Office of Technology Commercialization (OTC), the Graduate School, SEBS Communications Office, the EcoComplex, Bordentown; and Rutgers Agricultural Research and Extension Center (RAREC), Bridgeton. Assistant Director **David Specca** gave Dean Popoola a guided tour of the EcoComplex, and RAREC Director **Bradley Majek** conducted the visitor round the research and extension center.



Photo shows Dean Popoola at meetings with: (A) Vice President **Michael Pazzani** and Executive Director **Heidi Syzmanski**, OTC; (B) Associate Dean **Harvey Waterman**, Office of the Graduate School, New Brunswick; and (C) Director **Mike Green**, SEBS Office of Communications. Dean Popoola is a strong supporter of ongoing RU/UI collaboration through the USDA-funded International Science and Education (ISE) initiative at Rutgers headed by

Michael Lawton (Plant Biology and Pathology, Biotech Center). Dean Popoola wants to expand the collaborative activities initiated this summer by our student interns currently studying agricultural systems in Nigeria.

Student Activities and Accomplishments

Emily Lamprecht successfully defended her PhD thesis July 24. The title of her thesis is: "Inflammatory response and antioxidant status of horses undergoing intense exercise and nutritional supplementation." **Carey Williams** and **Carol Bagnell** (Animal Science, Biotech Center) are her co-advisors.

Grants and Fundraising Efforts

The Department of Education has made a 5-year training award to the University of Turabo, Puerto Rico through its FIPSE program (Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education). Rutgers University and two Brazilian universities are partner institutions in the "Alliance for Environmental Biotechnology and Sustainable Development." A total of 18 students from the U.S. and Puerto Rico are to be trained, with the same number from Brazil. Spearheading the effort from Rutgers is **Lily Young**, Dean of International Programs and Research at SEBS (Environmental Sciences, Biotech Center). The project will run from September 2009 through August 2013 with support of \$239,000. Jose Perez, a former postdoc from Dr. Young's lab, is the PI at the University of Turabo. The Brazilian partners are the Universidade Estadual do Norte Fluminense and the University of Sao Paulo.

Ilya Raskin (Plant Biology and Pathology, Biotech Center) received a one-year training grant of \$57,000 from Louisiana State University through NIH's T32 program. The award will support a postdoc working on botanical approaches to combat metabolic syndrome. The training award builds on the NIH-funded Botanical Center for Metabolic Syndrome at LSU's Pennington Medical Research Center, in which Dr. Raskin is a Co-PI.

Conferences, Seminars, and Other Events

Elisabetta Bini (Biochemistry and Microbiology, Biotech Center) was an invited seminar speaker at the Gordon Research Conference on "Archaea: Ecology, Metabolism and Molecular Biology", held in Waterville Valley, NH. On July 28th, she gave a talk titled "Physiological response of *Sulfolobus* to copper: the ups and downs of transcriptional regulation." Her student **Aramis Villafane** also attended the GRC and presented a poster on "Copper exposure and regulation of oxidative stress in *Sulfolobus solfataricus*."