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P&A News – Brought to You by CAPA

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Latest News and Information

The Council of Academic Professionals and Administrators (CAPA) did not meet this month, however, the following brief news items are important to note:
• CAPA is now on Facebook. Become a fan <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Council-of-Academic-Professionals-Administrators/148959885889?ref=nf> of CAPA and get the latest news and updates while connecting with fellow P&A employees.
• President Bob Bruininks will speak before of the November 20 CAPA meeting. He will discuss his leadership style and philosophy but will take questions afterwards on any topic.
• The March CAPA meeting has been moved to March 26th because of the floating holiday.

Featured Article

Innovative couple
By Allison Campbell Jensen
Courtesy UMNews <*http://www1.umn.edu/news/*>

Seeking a new approach to create an HIV/AIDS vaccine is the infectious-disease focus for David Masopust. Exploring an avenue to determine why autoimmune disorders such as diabetes and multiple sclerosis can last for the lifetime of an individual is the concept for Vaiva Vezys. By nature, the two immunologists like to challenge conventional scientific thinking and pursue their own ideas. "We have strong ideas...we're stubborn," says Vezys of herself and spouse Masopust.

Following their own lights meshes well with the goals of the National Institutes of Health New Innovator Award, which in September granted Masopust and Vezys each $300,000 a year for five years. The New Innovator and two other awards are designed so that "investigators are encouraged to challenge the status quo with innovative ideas, while being given the necessary resources to test them," said NIH director Francis S. Collins. New Innovator Awards are supported by the NIH Common Fund and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Both Masopust and Vezys believe in their science. So they gambled on the Innovator Awards, each applying separately in a process that is streamlined compared with the usual lengthy, detailed, and time-consuming NIH grant application.

Masopust wanted to examine whether tricking the immune system to produce more memory T-cells at points of entry for HIV would help battle an infectious disease responsible for 5 percent of deaths annually worldwide. His approach draws on his graduate work describing where immune system cells go to fight infections, resulting in a seminal 2001 *Science* article, and recent studies that push the limits of generating immune memory, resulting in a 2009 *Nature* article.

Vezys sought funding to explore causes of flaring of symptoms that lead to ongoing tissue damage in debilitating autoimmune diseases. Previously, she developed the hypothesis that a part of the immune system which had been assumed not to participate in chronic infectious disease is required to bolster the number of infection-fighting cells. "It wound up being true," she says, "and opened up a whole new way of thinking."

Their unconventional thinking paid off: Vezys and Masopust were two among 55 scientists from around the country to receive New Innovator Awards. These early-career awards are, Masopust says, "an attempt to allow people new to the game to reach for the stars."

"I am pleased to have the strength in our department and our Medical School to attract two such able and creative faculty members," said Ashley Haase, head of the Department of Microbiology.

"Masopust and Vezys have quickly become integral members of the immunology research community here at the University," said Matthew Mescher, director of the Center for Immunology.

Vezys and Masopust met in graduate school at the University of Connecticut. In 2007, the couple left Emory University for the University of Minnesota, coming to what Masopust calls a "world class program" in immunology with an open-door culture that encourages collaboration among colleagues. Here they share, along with their home, a laboratory and an office.

That will change later this year, when they move to the Medical Biosciences Building, the latest addition to the Biomedical Discovery District, where each will have an office in the Center for Immunology. But they will continue to talk about their work and to rely on each other's scientific insights. Says Masopust of his marriage to Vezys: "I'm certainly a better scientist because of it."

Resources and Professional Development Opportunities

High impact, low prep active learning
Avoid the mid-semester doldrums by infusing your class with active learning techniques that will keep students motivated and engaged in learning. In this interactive session <https://onestop2.umn.edu/training/courseDetail.jsp?course=TL0145> , presenters will model several teaching methods and discuss their fit with learning outcomes.

Escape to northern Minnesota
Take advantage of great rates <http://mersc.pegasus.webaloo.com/viewOffer.php?o=512> this fall and winter that are offered to university employees on cabins, cottages and rooms located in beautiful northern Minnesota.

P & A Audio Spotlight
Jim Strick, assistant director of Athletic Communications

Even when it's not hockey or tennis season, Jim Strick still finds himself always keeping busy managing the media and public relations needs for three sports teams.

Click to listen. <http://mediamill.cla.umn.edu/mediamill/embed/47807>

This e-mail was sent to all current P&A staff at the University of Minnesota by the Council of Academic Professionals & Administrators.