

## ***Summary of 2011 GRC on Cilia, Mucus and Mucociliary Interactions***

The 2011 Gordon Research Conference on "Cilia, Mucus and Mucociliary Interactions" was held in Ventura, CA February 13-18, 2011. This was a multi-disciplinary meeting involving basic and clinical research scientists from academia and industry (pharmaceuticals and biotechnology companies). The 2011 conference was the fourth in a series that historically has an outstanding record for bringing together world authorities on basic cell and molecular biology of cilia and mucus under normal and pathologic conditions. The relatively small size of the meeting -- 132 participants -- and the traditional GRC emphasis on discussion created an ideal atmosphere for interactions and collaborations among investigators and between investigators and trainees. The environment was further enhanced in that participants came from key laboratories in the USA, Europe, New Zealand and Asia.

The meeting opened Sunday night with three 30-minute keynote talks from Drs. Pazour, Thornton, and Boucher, who gave overviews on motile and primary cilia in biology and disease, mucus and mucins in the epithelial tracts, and mucociliary interactions in the respiratory tract, respectively. These talks laid out the interdisciplinary challenges for the future and provided a framework for discussions throughout the remainder of the conference. This session was followed by a total of 8 plenary sessions from Monday morning through Thursday evening. Each typically consisted of 20-minute talks by invited speakers followed by 10 minutes of discussion. In some sessions, shorter talks (selected from submitted abstracts) were also presented. As is the tradition for GRCs, talks focused predominantly on new data not yet published. Approximately one-third of the speakers (24%) and discussion leaders (41%) were women; 21% of the speakers were young investigators (students, postdocs or recent Assistant Professors). Discussion leaders gave brief introductions in all but one of the sessions to provide a perspective on the topics to be covered; they also did an excellent job keeping the sessions on schedule and stimulating discussion.

In addition to the 45 plenary platform presentations, 64 posters were on display from Monday through Thursday afternoon. Formal poster sessions were held from 4:00-6:00 PM every afternoon. The poster sessions were well attended and the presentations stimulated extensive discussions that carried over into the dinner hour. Except for the poster sessions, afternoons were left open in order to allow one-on-one interactions and discussions within small groups. Many of these discussions promise to result in future collaborations as well as sharing of data and reagents.

A notable feature of this meeting was the emphasis on rare genetic diseases impacted by defective cilia (ciliopathies, heterotaxy, primary ciliary dyskinesia) and/or defective mucus (cystic fibrosis, idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis). Many of these are diseases that markedly impact health and development of neonates and children.

The GRC asks participants to fill out Conference Evaluation Forms at the conclusion of all GRC meetings and analyzes these responses using multivariate analysis and performance rating methodology. While the evaluation data for individual meetings will not be available until after the GRC Board meeting in October, 2011, the written comments on the forms for our 2011 Cilia, Mucus and Mucociliary Interactions were overwhelmingly positive and congratulatory. After October, GRC submits a report to all federal contributors on behalf of the conferences. We appreciate the support of the ORDR in making this meeting possible and for providing support to young investigators working in these areas.

Mary C. Rose, Ph.D.  
Genetic Medicine Research  
Children's National Medical Center  
Washington D.C.

