UC SANTA BARBARA

THE Current

September 12, 2000
Edith Inta

UCSB RESEARCHER WINS CCSB'S POST DOCTORATE FELLOWSHIP

Timothy Bloss, a postdoctoral researcher at the University of California, Santa Barbara, has won this year's Post Doctorate Fellowship Award from the Cancer Center of Santa Barbara.

Bloss, who is a fellow in the Department of Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology, has received $39,375 for one year to further his research on p53, the most important tumor-suppressor gene known, by studying a similar gene in the roundworm Caenorhabditis elegans. (This animal made scientific history two years ago when scientists decoded all of its genes, becoming the first animal to have its all of its genes decoded. About 40 percent of its genes are closely related to those in humans.)

His research looks specifically at CEP-1, a homologue, or close relative, of p53, found in the roundworm. By studying this homologue, he hopes to learn the pathways that p53 uses to suppress tumors and to identify similar genes and proteins involved in p53's tumor suppressing ability.

The gene p53 instructs a cell to kill itself if the DNA in that cell is damaged extensively. Tumors often develop when p53 malfunctions.

A member of Joel H. Rothman's research team at UC Santa Barbara, Bloss works with the associate professor in the Department of Molecular, Cellular and Developmental

Biology in unraveling the mechanisms that regulate programmed cell death (PCD) and cell division to better understand its role in creating cancer and neurodegenerative diseases. The researchers are characterizing molecules that control PCD and cell division, including some that are homologues of human tumor-suppressor proteins and oncogene products.

Bloss holds a Ph.D. in cell and molecular biology from the McArdle Laboratory for Cancer Research at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He began his postdoctoral fellowship at UC Santa Barbara in 1999.

"The Cancer Center has made a superb choice of a talented scientist who is studying deeply important problems in cancer," said Rothman. "Support by the Center of basic cancer studies in our research group has already made it possible to develop large-scale research initiatives that have recently translated to new methods for identifying anti-cancer drugs."

Established in 1997, the Cancer Center of Santa Barbara's Post Doctorate Fellowship Award program is available only to researchers at UC Santa Barbara. The program funds basic science research at the university that promises to attract the support of major funding organizations such as the National Institutes of Health or the American Cancer Society.

The fellowship is funded by proceeds from the Doolan Fund for Cancer Research and the annual Santa Barbara Terry Fox Run. The Cancer Center's research department facilitates the selection of the fellowship recipient. This research program also brings national clinical research studies with new drugs or treatments to Santa Barbara community members who are affected by cancer as well as offer oppurtunites for participation in chemo prevention trials. The program involves studies for both adults and children.

"We are proud to be sponsoring this program, which in its first three

years has already produced an extraordinary amount of important new science, and that we are particularly proud to be assisting in the career development of promising new scientists like Tim Bloss, " said Dr. Fred Kass, medical director of the Cancer Center of Santa Barbara Research Department.

Formerly the Cancer Foundation of Santa Barbara, the Cancer Center of Santa Barbara is a community-supported non-profit organization that provides the highest

quality medical care, as well as emotional and practical support to Santa Barbara residents regardless of age, background or financial means.

For more information about clinical trials at the Cancer Center of Santa Barbara, call 898-2119 or visit the center's website at http://www.ccsb.org/.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.