

# BIG BOOST FOR BIOMED

As part of his efforts to make a strong department stronger, Richard Nowakowski has just hired four faculty members who represent his vision of the future: Excellent researchers. Accomplished teachers. Eager to collaborate with colleagues across campus.

Nowakowski, who has led the Department of Biomedical Sciences since early 2010, is excited about these new arrivals. He even got his top recruit, a Harvard heavyweight he's known for 20 years.

The faculty members are:

- Professor Pradeep Bhide, first occupant of the Jim and Betty Ann Rodgers Eminent Scholar Chair of Developmental Neuroscience, and director of the new Center for Brain Repair. In addition to his neuroscience Ph.D., he has a degree in veterinary medicine. (He says he's clinically qualified in six species, Nowakowski said with a laugh.) Bhide has been at Harvard's Massachusetts General Hospital about 20 years. Florida's University System Board of Governors approved a Scholar's Boost Grant to help recruit him.

- Assistant Professor Jinmin Zhu, also from Massachusetts General, where he has worked with Bhide. Zhu has an M.D. along with a Ph.D. in neurobiology and master's in informatics. He and Bhide are a package deal, Nowakowski said.

- Associate Professor Michelle Arbeitman, who got her Ph.D. in developmental biology and has been teaching at the University of Southern California. Nowakowski called her a top-notch geneticist, exploring gender-specific behaviors. He credited faculty members in the adjacent Biological Science Department with persuading her to come to Florida State.

- Associate Professor Eric Laywell, from the University of Florida, who researches ways to destroy brain tumors through chemotherapy and also is an accomplished teacher. Nowakowski calls him a "double whammy." Laywell knew Clinical Anatomy Course Director Lynn Romrell when both were at UF. Now he is Romrell's assistant course director.

Actually, Nowakowski said, all four new faculty members are double whammies.

Take the Ritalin research of Bhide and Zhu. The ingredient methylphenidate works to control the hyperactivity of ADHD, but it can be addictive – and is often abused. They've discovered that adding an anti-opiate cancels out Ritalin's addictive qualities. They have a combination drug in clinical trials, Nowakowski said, and it should be abuse-proof.

Yet these two researchers will also teach medical and graduate students and help strengthen the postdoctoral program, which Nowakowski calls the equivalent of the medical residency program.

Hiring top faculty members is a smart investment for Florida, he said. They bring grant money with them, usually from outside the state. "Every dollar they bring in contributes jobs," he said, "and all of the people they hire pay taxes." In its first 10 years, he said, the College of Medicine zoomed from accounting for 0 percent of the university's grant support to now about 20 percent. He predicts that percentage will double by 2021.

Getting top-flight faculty to Florida State is not a tough sell, he said: wonderful city, beautiful university, young medical school on the rise, fantastic science programs all across campus, collegial relations with those faculties, easy access to the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory ("with the best animal imaging facilities in the world") and, just downstairs from his office, the cutting-edge Translational Science Lab.

"We're going to become known as a place that produces good-quality people who can teach and do research," Nowakowski promised, "and that is always in demand."



Current fourth-year medical student Jared Rich's artwork was on the cover of the April 2011 issue of Academic Medicine.

## Covered art

When Jared Rich presented an original painting to Professor Lynn Romrell in the summer of 2008, he only wanted to say thanks. On behalf of the Class of 2012, Rich expressed gratitude for Romrell's teaching in a piece of art representing the knowledge students gain from those who donate their bodies for use in medical education.

Nearly three years later, Rich's artwork was selected to be on the cover of Academic Medicine, the journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges. The publication is distributed to medical schools nationwide.

The painting depicts a medical student's hand reaching out to the hand of a cadaver. Romrell, who teaches gross anatomy at the College of Medicine, has the original hanging in his office.

Wrote Rich for a statement in Academic Medicine: "The tremendous amount of knowledge we gain from our silent teachers is the first step in our pursuit and our conviction to become protectors of life."