

PRESS RELEASE

FSU College of Medicine Launches Doctoral Program in Biomedical Sciences

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by Nancy Kinnally

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — The Florida State University College of Medicine has taken yet another major step forward with the addition of a doctoral program in biomedical sciences.

Associate Dean Myra Hurt, who led the development of the new doctoral program, said the medical school as a whole will benefit from the expansion of the research program to include doctoral students.

“One of the principles on which modern medical schools were constructed was that the faculty of a medical school should be generators of new knowledge,” Hurt said. “They should be problem-solvers. The people who teach medical students should be doing research in their disciplines.”

A graduate training program is a key element in such a research program. Under the guidance of the research faculty, graduate students help to develop new theories, conduct experiments, and gather and interpret data.

“All of the biomedical sciences faculty we’ve hired are looking at genes and function as it relates to human disease,” Hurt said. “We want to be able to recruit students who are excited by that and who will be training to become future faculty at medical schools or in companies doing this kind of research, where they can help bring new discoveries and products to market.”

The medical school will recruit seven Ph.D. students for fall 2004. That number is expected to grow to 50 or 55 by 2009, by which time the medical school also will have more than three hundred students pursuing the M.D. degree.

The Ph.D. degree in biomedical sciences will be the first degree offered under a new Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Program, which eventually will offer other doctoral degrees.

The medical school currently has 14 full-time faculty members in the department of biomedical sciences under whom graduate students can study, and plans call for hiring another nine faculty members in the department over the next few years. In addition, some 25 faculty members from other science-related colleges and schools at FSU will participate in the Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Program.

"The great thing about research at Florida State is that even though we're a new program, we have a distinguished research university and programs that have national recognition," Hurt said.

"We have one of the best structural biology programs in the United States. We have the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory. We have a new biomedical engineering program in our engineering school, and very

distinguished graduate programs in chemistry and biochemistry, biology, physics, statistics, nutrition, and others across the university. There's a very collegial research environment here and a big research infrastructure."