The department continues at it's previous momentum this year with several wins as you will read. Our research division continues to bring in more research funds, especially through the new NIH's stimulus initiatives this past year. Collaborations between stereotactic and functional neurosurgery (Dr. Steve Takacs) and Psychiatry (Dr. Nahas) have allowed us to advance the field of Neuromodulation and functional neurosurgery. The collaboration recently published their excellent results with treating depression using epidural frontal cortical stimulation - a first in the world! Excitement is brewing with preparations for the Gamma Knife slated to begin treating patients early 2010.

Renovation plans are firmed up in two phases for the CSB 3rd floor. This will house all the clinical faculty and administrative offices for the entire department. This quarter begins the interview season for our two residencies (Neurology and Neurosurgery). A dramatic increase in applicants in the past two years reflects the growing reputations of the two divisions.

Global activities through the Madaktari Program continue with vigor. This year so far three Neurosurgery faculty (Patel, Ellegala and Johnson) have visited Haydom Lutheran Hospital (Haydom, Mburu, Tanzania) to train local physicians to perform neurosurgical procedures.

As we approach the year end holidays, with Thanksgiving around the corner, Peter and I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone here in the department and those we work with on campus for their dedication and helping hand to build the Neurosciences Department at MUSC. ~Sunil Patel, M.D.
Welcome New Employees!!!

Volunteer
Sarah Berger
Sallie Clark
Jonathan Hart
Will Hendricks
Rebecca Madell
Yoichiro Otsuka
Qinyan Peng
Joseph Secor-Taddia
Aihua Wang

Research Specialist 1
Eleni Bucuvalas
Nicholas Gregory
Thad Modlin
Ashley Morse

Student Research Specialist 1
Stephen Green
Brandon Mizroch

Post Doc
Joseph Mingoia
James Prisciandaro
Xiushong Wang
Luyi Zhou

Assistant Professor
M. Foster Olive

Graduate Assistant
Matthew Pava

NP III
Beth Safrit

Student Assistant
Nicole Vilardo

Student
Stephanie Gregg
Britany Varner

Inpatient Midlevel
Beth Griffin
Neurology RN
Lisa Arent—working with Dr. Sunil Patel & Dr. Alex Vandergrift
Andrietta Barnett—working with Dr. Dilan Ellegala

Administrative Coordinator
Beth Whitaker

Goodbye and Goodluck!!!

Program Assistant 1
Deborah Ashman

Research Specialist 1
Savannah Bandurraga
Sarah Deptula
Ashley Gantt
Adrian Gomez
Ashley Morse

Associate Eng. II
Kousik Govindarajan

Post Doc
Alejandra Pacchioni

Terri Schochet
Student
Nicholas Boatwright
Bryndi Condi
Katie Cribben
Lauren Jamison
Emily Knight
Grace R. Lopez
Natasha New
Dhyanesh Patel
Michael Stefanik

Administrative Manager
Marilyn Edge

Inpatient Midlevel
Blair Turnage
Rose Tragesser

Former MUSC Neurologist, Dr. John Allen Gross, passes away:

John Allen Gross, M.D., a physician board certified in psychiatry, electro-diagnostic medicine and neurology with added qualifications in clinical neuropsychology, passed away in his Gainesville home after living with Lewy Body Dementia. He was 70 years old. Dr. Gross graduated from medical school at Ohio State University and completed residencies in psychiatry at University of Florida and internal medicine at Cleveland Clinic Hospital and a residency in neurology and fellowship in neuromuscular diseases at Medical College of Georgia. From 1979 through 2002, he was an academic neurologist at the Medical University of South Carolina.

Dr. Gross was known for his quiet altruism. He volunteered at muscular dystrophy summer camps, arranged private hospital suites for indigent patients and gave his patients a car for transportation to the hospital. Until he was unable, Dr. Gross took care of his wife Betty Jo, who has lived with Alzheimer’s Disease for at least fifteen years. Since late 2005, she has resided with their youngest daughter.

In his memory, a gift contribution in support of environmental and animal welfare causes may be sent to John Gross Memorial Fund, c/o Laura Gross, P.O. Box 358866, Gainesville, FL 32635.
What’s Happening?!

New and Continued Grants in the Department!!!

**AARA Awards!!!**

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Totals                                                  2,406,934 657,892  3,064,826

**Non AARA Grants Awarded!!!**

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NIH Awards

$28.7M ARRA Funds to MUSC!!!

_The National Institutes of Health_ received $10.4 billion earlier this year as part of the _American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)_ . NIH developed a number of different funding opportunities for this investment in science and technology as part of the larger economic stimulus program.

MUSC faculty competed in all of the NIH funding opportunity areas. To date, we have submitted 300 applicants totaling more than $114 M, including $38M for research infrastructure and $6.5M for shared research instrumentation.

As of October 5, 2009, the NIH has given $28.7M in ARRA-fund grants to MUSC!!!

The types of awards vary in category—from the lab, to the clinic, to the community. These awards include Challenge Grants: $9.5M will be used as supplements or expansion of currently funded projects and $4.1M for faculty recruitment.

* A list of all ARRA awards made by NIH across the country can be viewed at the following links: [http://report.nih.gov/recovery/arragrants.cfm](http://report.nih.gov/recovery/arragrants.cfm) and [http://report.nih.gov/recovery/arrasupplements.cfm](http://report.nih.gov/recovery/arrasupplements.cfm)
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**TOTALS**

|               |                 |                   | 6,523,646 | 2,122,094 | 8,645,740 |

Dr. Bruce Frankel, Principle Investigator for the 3 year grant from the FDA (A Phase I/II Study of Intraventricular Depocyte (Orphan Drug Designation 06-2348) in Patients with Recurrent Glioblastoma) to study the brain tumor, Glioblastoma, would like to thank all of the individuals in our department who made this possible:

1) Dr. Chiang Wang (Co-Investigator)  
2) Dr. Joyce Nicholas (Co-Investigator)  
3) Dr. Pierre Giglio (Co-Investigator)  
4) Dr. Sunil Patel (Co-Investigator)  
5) Dr. Jacobo Mintzer (Co-Investigator)  
6) Bonnie Munz-Pope, RN

Congratulations, and thank you to everyone who played a part in obtaining these grants for our department. All of these grants are a great testament to the talented and hard-working group of individuals we have in the Department of Neurosciences!
Welcome Dr. Patrick Mulholland and Dr. Art Riegel,
Our Two New Tenure-Track Assistant Professors!!!

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our two new tenure-track assistant professors who each received a P30 grant to fund their start up! P30 grants are awarded by the National Institute of Health (NIH) and are designed to enhance innovative programs of excellence by providing scientific and programmatic support for promising research faculty and their areas of research.

Please see below, Dr. Mulholland and Dr. Riegel introduce themselves and their exciting research programs:

My name is Patrick Mulholland, and I am one of the new hires through the P30 mechanism in the Department of Neurosciences. I am excited to be a part of Neurosciences, as well as the Charleston Alcohol Research Center. My research is focused on understanding the role of K+ channels in regulating alcohol-associated plasticity of glutamatergic synapses. Under the supervision of my postdoctoral advisor Dr. Judson Chandler, we have recently demonstrated that chronic alcohol down-regulates function and surface expression of small-conductance Ca2+-activated K+ (SK2) channels in dendritic spines. This functional reduction in SK2 channels contributes to alcohol withdrawal seizure severity, suggesting that SK2 channels are a novel therapeutic target for the treatment of alcohol dependence. We have also demonstrated an alcohol-induced reduction in surface expression of voltage-dependent K+ (Kv4.2) channels. Kv4.2 channels control the amplitude of back-propagating action potentials (bAP) and play an important role in spike-timing dependent synaptic plasticity. Working in collaboration with Dr. Sven Kroener, we have exciting new data showing that the reduction in Kv4.2 surface expression is associated with an increase in amplitude in bAP-induced Ca2+ transients in distal dendrites of CA1 pyramidal neurons.

My interest in alcohol and drug addiction began while I was an undergraduate student in the Psychology Department at Edinboro University where I conducted studies examining the rewarding properties of kavapyrone, an intoxicating extract from the root of a pepper plant that is abused in Polynesian and Micronesian societies. I continued my studies on the addictive properties of drugs of abuse at the University of Kentucky where I obtained my PhD in behavioral neuroscience. During my graduate training, my studies were aimed at understanding how elevated stress hormones and nutritional deficiencies contribute to alcohol withdrawal-associated neurotoxicity in hippocampus and cerebellum. These studies were largely descriptive in nature, so I pursued postdoctoral training on a molecular level so I could address cellular mechanisms that underly alcohol dependence. While a postdoctoral fellow at MUSC, I gained expertise in methods to analyze surface trafficking and function of K+ channels involved in alcohol-associated adaptive plasticity of dendritic spines. It is my long-term goal to continue my studies on K+ channels and to be an integral part of the neuroscience and alcohol addiction community here at MUSC.

My name is Art Riegel. I am also a new hiree and delighted to join the Department of Neurosciences. In our laboratory we investigate dopamine for its broad role in motor and motivational functions including cognition, attention and learning. We investigate the synaptic brain circuitry in animals tuned to support these behaviors. We also investigate the related neuroadaptive changes (synaptic plasticity), which may underlie prevalent diseases such as Parkinson’s disease, psychosis, chronic pain and schizophrenia. Much of our work focuses on addiction, a disease of abnormal learned behaviors. We’re interested in the cellular mechanisms underlying the transition from normal to abnormal behavior. We look at excitatory and inhibitory synapses (e.g., glutamate GABA, acetylcholine and norepinephrine) impinging upon dopamine neuron dendrites and investigate how various neuromodulators such as stress peptides (dys)regulate neurotransmission. Through collaboration with the MUSC Neurobiology of Addiction Research Center (NARC) and a talented group of younger scientist from the College of Charleston (Courtney Williams, Sara Berger, Natalie Quaranto and Erika Trent), we are now exploring these mechanisms during drug self-administration, withdrawal and reinstatement. This combination provides an exciting opportunity for us to integrate behavioral approaches with in vitro techniques in brain slices including patch-clamp electrophysiology, calcium neuroimaging and flash photolysis (uncaging) of intracellular signaling agents. Together, we anticipate that these experiments will tell us a lot about the brain mechanisms driving addictive behavior.

Before joining MUSC, I worked at The Vollum Institute (Portland, Oregon) and the NIDA Intramural Research Program (Baltimore, Maryland). I was privileged to work with John Williams and Carl Lupica and learn about synaptic transmission and the local release of opioid peptides and endocannabinoids that control dopamine neuron excitability. This work was a natural extension of my graduate studies at the University of Arizona with Edward French investigating the reinforcing properties of drugs of abuse, using in vivo electrophysiology, behavior and neurotoxic brain lesions of the mesolimbic dopamine system. I’ve enjoyed these experiences and am thrilled to have an opportunity to merge my past experiences with the excellent research going on at MUSC. MUSC Neurosciences is a strong department with a collegial group of motivated, bright and talented graduate students, post-docs and faculty that I look forward to interacting with. This, and the fact that Charleston is such a friendly and charming city, has made for a smooth transition from the rainy Pacific Northwest. All I need now is a boat.
Three Members of our Department Received Service Awards!!!

Congratulations and thank you to our three team members on receiving State service awards, which were presented by Dr. Greenburg on September 17, 2009. Each of these individuals have done all of their service here at MUSC!

We thank you for your continued commitment to MUSC, and the Department of Neurosciences:

1. Rick Bennett, LPN—Neurosurgery Clinic (10 years)
2. Cindy Fitzgerald, RN—Pain Management Clinic (20 years)
3. Sharon Vendrick, RN—Neurosciences Clinic Manager (30 years)

ACGME Approves Increase in Number of Fellows for Clinical Neurophysiology!!!

Dr. Paul Pritchard was notified by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) that our Clinical Neurophysiology team has been approved for an increase from 1 fellow per year to 2 fellows per year!!! This increase will be made effective on July 1, 2010.

*The ACGME is located in Chicago, and is responsible for regulating and approving residencies and fellowships in the United States.*

Society for Neurosciences provides Travel Awards for the Annual Meeting in October 2009!

Justin Gass and Khaled Moussawi were awarded travel awards by the Society for Neurosciences (SFN) to attend the Annual SFN meeting, held in Chicago this year from October 17-21, 2009.

Dr. Gass is a post-doctoral fellow in Dr. Foster Olive’s laboratory and Khaled Moussawi is an MD/PhD student in Dr. Peter Kalivas’ lab.

These travel awards are part of the mission of the SFN Membership and Chapters Committee and Justin and Khaled are representatives of the South Carolina Chapter for the Society for Neurosciences.

Congratulations to the following members of our PGY-IV Neurology Residents Class on their Upcoming Fellowships!

Dr. Wayne Feng has been accepted to Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center/Harvard Medical School for Vascular Neurology fellowship!

Dr. Patricia Graham will continue in the Department of Neurosciences here at MUSC for Neurophysiology fellowship.

Dr. Brody Graham will also continue in the Department of Neurosciences at MUSC for his Neurophysiology fellowship.

*All 3 residents are to begin their fellowships in July 2010.

MUSC Board of Trustees Unanimously Approved New Neuro ICU the Phanor L. Perot Neurosciences ICU!!!

In August 2009, the Medical University of South Carolina Board of Trustees met and unanimously approved naming our new Neurosciences ICU the Phanor Perot Neurosciences ICU, in honor of Phanor L. Perot, Jr., M.D., PhD, who is Professor Emeritus of Neurosurgery at MUSC, and past Department Chairman.

Here are a few words from Dr. Sunil Patel on the amazing achievements of Dr. Perot: “Dr. Perot really is the ‘father of Neurosurgery’ at MUSC and in the state of South Carolina. Some of his achievements include maintaining a NIH funded lab in Spinal Cord Injury for 20 years; starting the first Neuro ICU here at MUSC in the early 1970s (when at the time there were none in the South and less than 20 in the country); and having mentored most of the Neurosurgeons in the state during his tenure as Chair of Neurosurgery.
Bilateral Epidural Prefrontal Cortical Stimulation for Treatment-Resistant Depression—First Case in the World was Done Here at MUSC!!!

There have been many advances over the years in treating depression, and yet those who suffer from treatment-resistant depression continue to present a major challenge to doctors who are searching for ways to help them. Recently, researchers at the Medical University of South Carolina succeeded with a new, revolutionary technique that holds promise for the severely depressed—bilateral epidural prefrontal cortical stimulation. This project was lead by Dr. Ziad Nahas, M.D., M.S.C.R., Associate Professor, Director of Mood Disorders, and Medical Director of the Brain Stimulation Laboratory in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Medical University of South Carolina.

In February 2008, they implanted the first case of bilateral epidural cortical stimulation in the world in an attempt to treat severe depression. The procedure is a form of brain surgery, which consists of implanting four paddles that deliver chronic and intermittent electrical stimulation to the surface of the part of the brain governing mood and socialization. The device that is inserted is similar to a pacemaker, and has been used to stimulate the spine as a means of combating pain.

The patients that were studied have typically failed many treatments and suffered recurrent and severe depression for decades. Because of the experimental nature of this approach, they had to meet many criteria—to put it simply, the main criteria was that there didn't seem to be another option for them.

Please see below, a statement from Dr. Ziad Nahas, discussing this remarkable achievement:

“Today, these results are posted online in Biological Psychiatry as a Priority Communication. We report the safety and feasibility of our approach and most importantly, 3 out of 5 very treatment resistant patients achieved remission after 7 months of treatment.

This work was funded by NARSAD (National Alliance for Research on Schizophrenia and Depression—aka “The World's Leading Charity Dedicated to Mental Health Research”) through an Independent Investigator Award, but it would have not been possible without my collaboration with Steve Takacs and Scott Reeves.”

~Ziad Nahas, MD, M.S.C.R.

http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.biopsych.2009.08.021

The NARSAD press release can be viewed at: http://www.narsad.org/?q=node/11209/latest-research

*We would like to congratulate Dr. Ziad Nahas and our own Dr. Istvan “Steve” Takacs, Neurosurgeon, on this remarkable achievement!

Congratulations to Bonnie Muntz-Pope, BSN, RN, CNRN, on Receiving the State Chapter of the Year Award for the SC ThinkFirst Program!!!

We would like to congratulate Bonnie Muntz-Pope, our Sr. Study Coordinator in the Translational Research Unit of the Department of Neurosciences, on receiving the State Chapter of the Year Award for the Charleston, South Carolina ThinkFirst Program!

Bonnie is the State Chapter Director, and accepted this award on her chapter’s behalf at the annual meeting that was held in the Chicago suburb of Oakbrook in June 2009.

ThinkFirst is a National Injury Prevention Foundation that focuses on public education. The S.C. Lowcountry ThinkFirst Program covers Charleston, Dorchester, and Berkeley counties primarily. Their primary emphasis is on 2 educational programs geared towards teens and young adults, and children in grades K-3rd. Their role as a state chapter is to help create, train, and collaborate with new and existing chapters throughout South Carolina.

In this past year, the SC State ThinkFirst Director established a working relationship with the SC Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, Division of Head and Spinal Cord Injuries in order to establish additional ThinkFirst chapters in South Carolina. The state chapter received a grant through the Department of Disabilities to train new and existing chapter directors and volunteers, and in addition conduct 2 VIP workshops. They also helped the Lowcountry chapter write a similar grant which was funded for the local area.

Remember these ThinkFirst Slogans......

“Prevention is the only cure!”

“Use your Mind to Protect your Body!”

“You have a Brain, Use it Don’t Abuse it!”
Stroke Program Re-accreditation!

Congratulations and thank you to all members of the stroke and cerebrovascular team. The Joint Commission just completed its review of the certified primary stroke center. We passed without recommendations, the best possible outcome, and were recognized as the regional leader for stroke care!

Special thanks to Beth Grannell and Dr. Robert Adams and to all those who helped them gather the data that represented everyone's hard work in a concise and unmistakable manner.

EEG and NIOM Programs Receive Accreditation!!!

Adam Kornegay, Jill Loli, & Jessica Barley

We are pleased to announce that both our electroencephalography (EEG) and Neurophysiologic Intraoperative Monitoring (NIOM) programs were accredited by the American Board of Registration of Electroencephalographic and Evoked Potential Technologists (ABRET).

For over 40 years, ABRET has been a nationally recognized organization that is responsible for establishing and maintaining the highest standards in the industry. Our accreditations mean that we have demonstrated excellence in all areas of our respective programs. We were evaluated in many areas including: medical and technical standards; quality; specific, complete and thorough policies and procedures; management and organization of the programs, as well as medical expertise. Our EEG lab is the only accredited site in South Carolina and one of the 9 hospitals in the Southeast region. Our NIOM program is currently one of only 5 programs accredited in the United States! This is a true accomplishment and a testament to the dedication and commitment from every level of our Neuroscience Service Line to deliver the highest level of care to the patients that we serve daily.

*ABRET will be sending a letter announcing our accreditation to our local Epilepsy Foundation chapter. It will also be announced in the ASET publications and on the ABRET website. Finally, there is a link from the Epilepsy Foundation website to the list of ABRET accredited EEG laboratories.

“We passed without recommendations, the best possible outcome, and were recognized as the Regional Leader for Stroke Care!”

Left to right: Adam Kornegay (Manager), Tara Barber, Kevin Satterfield, Jie Zhang, Michael Townsend, Jill Sadlier, Rhonda Butler, Hannah Hutmacher, Greg Talley, Gary Semb, & Josh Haumschild
Now is the Time to Send Your Entries for the Next Neuro Newsletter!!!

If you have information that you would like included in the next edition, please send it to Rachel Beard at beardr@musc.edu. Please send your requests for inclusion NO LATER THAN Monday, January 11, 2010.