LSUHSC's Barsley elected to another national office

Robert E. Barsley, DDS, JD, Director of Oral Health Resources, Community and Hospital Dentistry and Division Head of Diagnostic Sciences at LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans' School of Dentistry, has been elected Treasurer of the Council of Scientific Society Presidents.

The Council of Scientific Society Presidents is a nonprofit organization of presidents, presidents-elect, and past presidents of about 60 scientific federations and societies whose combined membership numbers well over 1.4 million scientists and science educators. Dr. Barsley is the current President of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences.

CSSP was founded in 1973 and serves as a strong national voice in fostering wise science policy, in support of science and science education, and as a center of science policy and science leadership development.

Dr. Barsley is a 1977 graduate of the LSU School of Dentistry and a 1987 graduate of the Loyola University School of Law in New Orleans. He was admitted to the bar in Louisiana in 1987. He joined the faculty of the LSU School of Dentistry in 1980.

LSUHSC awards 138 degrees in December

One hundred thirty-eight students from LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans' Schools of Allied Health Professions, Graduate Studies, Nursing and Public Health were awarded their diplomas by the individual schools in December. The School of Nursing recognized their students at an awards ceremony. Degrees were awarded as follows:

Master of Communication Disorders
Jessica Marie Caire, Amanda Elise Godbee, Samantha Michelle McGar, Denise Robbins Obst, Jessica Marie Perez, Katherine Rebekah Peters.

Master of Health Sciences in Rehabilitation Counseling
Vincent Gerard Mitchell

Doctor of Philosophy
Nikki Lynn Hue Nguyen

LSUHSC discovery provides therapeutic target for ALS

Research led by Dr. Udai Pandey, Assistant Professor of Genetics at LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans, has found that the ability of a protein made by a gene called FUS to bind to RNA is essential to the development of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). This discovery identifies a possible therapeutic target for the fatal neurological disease. The research is available online in the Advanced Access section of the journal Human Molecular Genetics website, posted on December 20, 2012. It will be published in an upcoming issue of the journal.
The current project advances Dr. Pandey’s ALS research by teasing out specifically how the FUS gene causes the disease. To find out whether or not the RNA binding ability of FUS was required for the disease pathogenesis, the researchers mutated FUS RNA binding sites and produced a version of FUS that couldn’t bind RNA, both with and without ALS mutations. They found that not only could they eliminate FUS RNA binding, but when they blocked RNA binding, they also suppressed ALS related neurodegeneration, demonstrating that the RNA binding ability of FUS is essential to the ALS disease process.

The researchers are working with fruit flies – the first animal model of FUS-related ALS, a model Dr. Pandey developed. The fruit flies were engineered to carry and express a mutated human FUS gene. This mutated FUS gene has been shown to be one of the causes of both familial and sporadic ALS. The fly model is a valuable resource for performing drug screens to identify drugs that could modify the effects of the mutated gene in humans.

These findings pave the way for drugs that can make the defective FUS protein less toxic by targeting its RNA binding as a therapeutic intervention.