Staff Writer
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Desrosiers Laboratory Hosts Two New Junior Faculty Members and Award-Winning Postdoctoral Associate

Ronald C. Desrosiers, Ph.D., professor and vice chair of basic research, and Merce Jorda, M.D., Ph.D., M.B.A., chair, were pleased to announce the appointment of two new research assistant professors earlier this year. Dr. Jose Martinez-Navio received his Ph.D. from the University of Barcelona in Spain in 2008, and Dr. James Termini received his Ph.D. from the University of Miami in 2014.

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James Termini, Ph.D.; Jose Martinez-Navio, Ph.D.; and Sebastian Fuchs, Ph.D.

“It has been impressive to hear about the remarkable progress of these two scientists,” Dr. Jorda said. “They are a credit to Dr. Desrosiers’ efforts, and this matriculation to faculty makes for an exciting time and a redoubling of our support to energize more basic and translational research opportunities.”

Drs. Martinez-Navio and Termini have both worked in Dr. Desrosiers’ laboratory for several years. With many prominent publications, they have also been awarded considerable

independent funding. For Dr. Martinez-Navio, this includes an R21 grant from NIH, a Campbell Foundation grant, and pilot awards from Miami Center for AIDS Research (CFAR), the State of Florida, and HIV/AIDS Emerging Infectious Disease Institute (HEIDI). Dr. Termini's funding includes the Discovery Award from the Department of Defense and pilot awards from Miami CFAR, the State of Florida, and IAEID.

Other members of Dr. Desrosiers' laboratory have also met with success recently. Earlier this year, assistant scientist Sebastian Fuchs, Ph.D., was awarded a prestigious Krim Fellowship from amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research. The goal of this two-year grant is to help establish young investigators in independent HIV research. Dr. Fuchs' project is titled "Protein pre-exposure for the induction of immune tolerance toward AAV vector-mediated anti-HIV antibody delivery."

The team of Drs. Martinez-Navio and Fuchs also recently made two presentations regarding the AAV vector at the 25th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Gene & Cell Therapy (ASGCT).

Dr. Desrosiers joined the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine from Harvard Medical School in 2013, and has built an impressive research group that is housed in the Life Science Technology Park/Converge Building. Credited with the discovery of the monkey counterparts of human HIV and Kaposi sarcoma herpesvirus – called SIV and RRV, respectively – Dr. Desrosiers' research focus for his four NIH grants is the use of vectors to delivery potent neutralizing antibodies for the treatment and prevention of HIV infection.

He was recently given the opportunity to reflect on how far

his field of study has come when he gave an invited presentation, “Contributions of SIV to our Knowledge Base for HIV/AIDS” at the Fifty Years of Reverse Transcriptase meeting at the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory.

On the advancement of these fine researchers, Dr. Desrosiers said, “We have been fortunate to assemble a terrific group of individuals here in Miami. Drs. Martinez-Navio, Termini, and Fuchs are exceptional young researchers. We are poised to ensure that the research activities of the laboratory will be able to continue for a long time to come.”

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