

Regents Professor Service Awards

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Health Science Center Faculty Members Receive Regents Professor Awards

Two faculty members at The Texas A&M University System Health Science Center were named today as recipients of the prestigious **Regents Professor Service Award**.

Wallace McKeehan, Ph.D., faculty member at the A&M Health Science Center's Institute of Biosciences and Technology in Houston and director of the institute's Center for Cancer Biology and Nutrition, and **Larry Bellinger, Ph.D.**, professor in the department of biomedical sciences at Baylor College of Dentistry in Dallas, received the award. The awards were presented at a meeting of The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents in College Station.

The Regents Professor Service Award is bestowed annually by the Board of Regents in recognition of awardees' contributions in distinguished service, extension, research, teaching/educational delivery and/or scholarship. Award recipients are designated as Regents Professors for the duration of their service or employment within the A&M System, receive a \$9,000 stipend payable in \$3,000 increments over three consecutive years, and receive a special medallion bearing the seal of the A&M System as well as a framed certificate signed by the chancellor and the chairman of the Board of Regents.

Wallace McKeehan, Ph.D., received his undergraduate degree in chemistry at the University of Florida and his Ph.D. in chemistry at the University of Texas-Austin. He joined IBT from the W. Alton Jones Cell Science Center in Lake Placid, NY, where he was deputy director and senior scientist and was co-founder of Upstate Biotechnology, Inc. He also held adjunct faculty posts at the University of Vermont and Clarkson University prior to coming to the Institute of Biosciences and Technology.

At the institute, Dr. McKeehan directs the Center for Cancer Biology and Nutrition and holds the J.S. Dunn Endowed Chair. He is a professor in the department of biochemistry and biophysics at Texas A&M University and a member of Texas A&M's graduate faculty of nutrition and the graduate faculty of biomedical sciences at the University of Texas-Houston. In addition, he is an adjunct professor in molecular and cellular biology at Baylor College of Medicine.

Dr. McKeehan's laboratory studies how the chemical signals (polypeptide growth factors and cytokines) in the local tissue environment control growth and specialization of different cell types of the prostate, the liver, the vascular system and neural tissue. These signals determine the normal development and function of the tissues, while aberrations result in tissue dysfunctions and diseases, such as cancer, stroke, atherosclerosis, liver and neural disease. Dr. McKeehan seeks to understand the molecular mechanisms of assembly of components of the Fibroblast Growth Factor (FGF) and Transforming Growth Factor (TGF) Beta families of intrinsic tissue regulators.

Larry Bellinger, Ph.D., received his doctoral degree from the University of California at Davis in 1974 and completed postdoctoral training in the department of neuroendocrinology at the State University of New York - Buffalo in 1976. Following his postdoctoral work, Dr. Bellinger came to Baylor College of Dentistry in 1976.

Dr. Bellinger has had a highly productive research program over the last 25 years. His research has primarily focused on the neuroendocrine control of feeding behavior. Dr. Bellinger has performed extensive studies on the role of hormones, in particular corticosterone and insulin, on the control of feeding behavior. He has also studied the role of the liver in the control of feeding behavior and is internationally known for this work.

Dr. Bellinger has worked with Dr. Dorothy Gietzen at the University of California at Davis on the role of imbalanced amino acid diets on ingestive behavior. These National Institutes of Health (NIH) studies have been published in such journals as the American Journal of Physiology and Journal of Nutrition. Dr. Bellinger, along with Dr. Lee Bernardis at the State University of New York at Buffalo, are the world's leading experts on the role of the dorsomedial hypothalamic nucleus in regulating ingestive behavior and body weight regulation. Most recently, Dr. Bellinger has used his knowledge of feeding behavior to develop a model to study temporomandibular joint pain in an animal model.

Dr. Bellinger has been principal investigator or co-investigator on 18 extramural NIH or company grants and many in-house grants. These have led to 119 peer reviewed research publications and 149 abstracts.

The Texas A&M University System Health Science Center provides the state with health education, outreach and research. Its five components, located in communities throughout Texas, are Baylor College of Dentistry, the College of Medicine, the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, the Institute of Biosciences and Technology and the School of Rural Public Health.