Richard Nowakowski

"Cell Proliferation in the CNS after Spinal Cord Injury" - Completed

"Five Year Named Chair" - Open

1/2006

Currently, I have one grant from the NJ Commission on Spinal Cord Research. The grant that I have is one of the Senior Professorship Awards. I am, therefore, a "New Jersey Professor of Spinal Cord Research." There have been, to my knowledge, only 2 Senior Professorships awarded. We have published a few abstracts on our work, but to date we have no publications in peer reviewed journals. We are working on a big project and anticipate that it will be several more months before we expect to be able to have enough data to submit a full paper.

I have received no departmental recognition for this award. However, the most important impact of the NJ Commission grant has been its facilitation of collaborations. Outside of the Department, the NJ Professor of Spinal Cord Research has been of tremendous benefit. Since receiving this award, I have been named "Associate Member" of the Keck Center for Collaborative Neuroscience at Rutgers University." I am the only Associate Member of the Keck Center. I have also been appointed to be a member of the Executive Committee of the NJ Stem Cell Institute and I am coordinating the Quebec/NJ Stem Cell Alliance. I was also invited to an international stem cell meeting in Guandong, China. Within the Department, I have established firm collaborative projects with Dr. David Crockett. Outside of the Department I have established firm collaborative projects with Dr. Ron Hart of Rutgers University and Dr. Rebecka Jornsten of Rutgers University. All of these projects are directly supported by the NJ Commission grant. Finally, the title of NJ Professor of Spinal Cord Research has been of tremendous value in opening doors and avenues of communication between my laboratory and the neurotrauma field.

My NJ Commission on Spinal Cord Research grant supported, in part, preliminary results that resulted in the award to me of a Stem Cell grant from the NJ Commission on Science and Technology. In addition, my spinal cord work funded by the NJ Commission has been used as background for a multi-investigator grant on brain trauma. This grant was recently submitted to the NJ Commission on Traumatic Brain Injury, and we expect to also submit this grant to NIH and the Department of Defense.

The NJ Commission on Spinal Cord Research grant has allowed me to build a mouse spinal cord injury group inside of the Department. This group consists of me, Dr. Hayes, Dr. Crockett and several people from joint labs. We work together well. As part of the NJ Stem Cell Institute, we are working to get equipment for an animal behavior-testing core that would be focused on neurological behavioral assessment in mice. This will be a valuable addition to the local spinal cord injury research effort as the Keck Center focus is on rat models of spinal cord injury. Moving the spinal cord injury paradigm into the mouse means that the widely available mouse genetic models, knockouts and transgenics can be brought to bear on our search for a cure.