



January 20, 2006

All Faculty
College of Medicine
Medical University of Ohio

Dear Colleagues:

In keeping with our institution's Commitment to Excellence strategy, we are pleased to announce the establishment of the *Center for Diabetes and Endocrine Research* (CeDER) within the Department of Physiology, Pharmacology, Metabolism and Cardiovascular Sciences. As you no doubt realize, diabetes and related endocrine and metabolic disorders have reached epidemic proportions in our country. In Ohio, diabetes is the second leading cause of death. On this basis alone, dedication of institutional resources to the study of this fast-spreading problem is a logical move. In addition, multiple other compelling reasons drove this important decision.

First, we believe that establishment of the CeDER will be beneficial to many, if not all, of our Featured Academic Strategic Tracks (FASTs). With diabetes and its underlying metabolic aberrations being responsible for a host of cardiovascular and neurological pathologies, this center should serve as a nexus for research and inter-disciplinary collaboration for many of our investigators and clinicians. Second, the two founding members of this center, Drs. Najjar and Sanchez, have the credentials and background to successfully establish a nationally recognized CeDER, and to advance our institution's commitment to the development of this *center of excellence*.

We have asked Dr. Najjar to serve as director of the CeDER. Dr. Najjar has developed an outstanding reputation in recent years in the area of diabetes and metabolism research. Her leadership in the field has been recognized by her recent appointment as a permanent member to the Integrative Physiology of Obesity and Diabetes (IPOD) Study Section of NIH/NIDDK. She has also served regularly on the Cellular Aspects of Obesity and Diabetes Study Section (CADO) and on NIH Fellowship Study Sections. Her laboratory has published several high-profile articles in prestigious journals that are attracting much attention. In fact, one of her recent articles in *Science* was cited by *Nature Medicine* among the most notable metabolism research papers in the last few years. This recent success in the laboratory has garnered Dr. Najjar several invitations as speaker at national/international meetings and at major research universities. More importantly, her laboratory has received new funding from the NIH, USDA, and the American Diabetes Association to pursue her new discoveries.

Dr. Najjar also has a key role in an important collaborative study with Dr. Marcia McInerney at the University of Toledo to investigate the Genetic and Dietary Risk Factors in Obesity and Diabetes. Thus, Dr. Najjar is in a strong and respected leadership position to promote the growth

of this center over the next several years. We further believe that with her knowledge, skill and personal drive, she is well equipped to act as director of a new endeavor and we have the utmost faith that she will be successful in this goal in the competitive climate of NIH funding.

The second senior member of the CeDER is Dr. Edwin Sanchez. Dr. Sanchez has been a faculty member at MUO since 1989 and during that time has had almost continual funding from NIH. The Sanchez laboratory studies steroid receptor action, with an emphasis on accessory proteins that regulate these receptors. Recent discoveries by Dr. Sanchez and collaborators have uncovered new roles for these proteins in control of fertility. The potential implications of these discoveries are such that Dr. Sanchez was recently awarded a new NIH R01 award as PI to investigate this problem, as well as a second new NIH R01 as Co-PI. In addition to serving as editor to four journals, Dr. Sanchez is about to begin his second rotation as permanent member of the Molecular and Cellular Endocrinology (MCE) Study Section at NIH/NIDDKD. Thus, like Dr. Najjar, the Sanchez laboratory is in a strong position to promote success of the CeDER in the years to come.

We are all dedicated to making this new center at MUO a success. To achieve this goal, CeDER will soon recruit several new faculty members with expertise in metabolic diseases, and will seek to establish ties with related centers of excellence at MUO and other universities nationally and internationally. We urge you to investigate how this center, as it grows and evolves, can suit your own research and clinical goals as a basis for ongoing collaboration. Focusing on excellence, creating opportunity and aligning our research, educational and clinical strategies.

Yours truly,

Amir Askari, Ph.D.

Jeffrey P. Gold, M.D.