Honors society issues research grant

By Nicole Santore
Ad Solicitor

The national undergraduate honors society, Sigma Xi, has presented senior Jennifer Szczynskiowski, a biopsychology major and health administration minor, with a $500 grant for her research on how chemotherapeutic drugs might change the effects of stress on the immune system.

“They more understand how chemotherapy drugs change the nervous system in addition to the immune system, the more we can understand why cancer patients are more susceptible to certain infections,” Szczynskiowski said in an interview with The Rider.

“Understanding the neurochemical interactions between the nervous system and the immune system may help us someday reduce the side-effects of chemotherapeutic treatments in people,” Szczynskiowski has been working with Dr. Jonathan Karp from the biology department on this research since her freshman year.

“I had been an instrumental part in this research,” said Karp. “She likes learning new things so mentoring her laboratory research has been fun.”

Patients use chemotherapeutic drugs as treatments for cancer, lupus and organ transplants. These drugs kill dividing cells and help prevent tumor growth or organ rejection. One side effect of these drugs is that they can also alter how healthy cells work.

Szczynskiowski has been researching how chemotherapy changes the hormonal environment in which surviving cells exist. In particular, she has been studying substances such as norepinephrine that are released by the nervous system in response to chemotherapy treatments. These substances can alter susceptibility to disease by altering the ability of the nervous system to influence the immune system.

“Jennifer is intelligent, independent and loves to learn,” said Karp. “She took advantage of everything that Rider could offer. For Jennifer, conducting research is a natural extension of her college experience.”

She worked in Karp’s lab for her first two summers at Rider, and last summer she worked at the Kimmel Cancer Center at Thomas Jefferson University Medical Center in Philadelphia.

“I love Rider; this is the place that nurtured my love for research,” she said. “It’s an amazing feeling when you’re looking at information that you have generated as a result of an experiment.”

Szczynskiowski talked with Karp before she came to Rider and he played a big role in her decision to come to Rider. She began working in his lab freshman year, and has maintained her interest in research.

“I hope to get my work published in a peer reviewed journal,” said Szczynskiowski.

In addition to receiving this grant, Szczynskiowski has also had many other accomplishments. She has papers from Rider and Thomas Jefferson going through peer review. Besides being in the Sigma Xi honors society, she is an Andrew J. Rider scholar with a 3.9 GPA.

“A university career is exciting because it provides the perfect atmosphere for collaboration on a variety of projects,” Szczynskiowski said. “I want to interact with other university scholars and develop an interest in science the way Dr. Karp did for me.”

Szczynskiowski is the president of the Protestant Campus Ministry, arranges the university’s involvement in Midnight Run, is a member of the Gill Chapel, and a member of the Scientific Research Society.

“I wish we had more people like Jennifer,” said Karp. “She is hard working, dependable, and will represent Rider well after graduation.”

Students attend NYC anti-war rally

By Laura Sass
Executive Editor

Despite the freezing temperatures and impending snowstorm, at least 100,000 people converged on New York City on Saturday, Feb. 15, to participate in the largest anti-war rally since the 1960s, according to the Associated Press.

The multitude of protestors squeezed into a 20-block area outside of the United Nations headquarters. Veterans of both the Vietnam War and of World War II attended, along with civil rights groups, peace groups, housewives, children, lawyers, educators and students. Among those students and educators were Rider attendees Dr. Barry Seldes, professor of political science and Joe Rotkowitz, a freshman communications major.

“I looked down Third Avenue and saw this incredible sea of people,” said Seldes. “There was a fantastic sense of humanity.”

Rotkowitz, who met protestors at the rally from Palestine, France and Ireland also felt the unity and energy among the crowd.

“They were chanting slogans. ‘No blood for oil’, ‘Money for jobs not for war’ and ‘Drop Bush, not bombs’ were the three biggest ones,” said Rotkowitz. “Many of us had signs as well. The ralliers began on the sidewalks then spilled into the streets when the police couldn’t control the crowd.”

Many people, due to the police barricades, were unable to reach this part of the rally, where speakers ranging from South African Bishop Desmond Tutu to actor Danny Glover spoke out against the war, advocating that President Bush allow the inspectors more time before attacking Iraq.

Dr. Linda S. Materna, professor of foreign languages and literature, was also present at the rally, and cited another reason why America shouldn’t rush into war.

“We will spend billions of dollars while our economy falters, while our environment is being degraded by the burning of fossil fuels that turn big corporate profits, instead of questing for alternative clean and cheap energy, while the administration is filling our federal court system with increasingly conservative federal judges that endanger women’s reproductive freedoms, and while our civil liberties are being eroded in the name of a perpetual war,” she said.

Rotkowitz is concerned about the effect the war would have on our national security.

“We all know that the war will create more global anti-Americanism and will leave us more vulnerable to attacks,” he said. “We still haven’t found Bin Laden, and our police and fire departments are still not prepared to deal with chemical or biological attacks. We need to get our priorities straight.”

The police officers were present at the rally because of the large number of protestors and the recent warnings of a terrorist threat. They were also needed because of the decision of Judge Barbara S. Jones, who ruled against attempts to secure a permit for a march past the U.N. building on account of security concerns, according to The Columbus Spectator.

“It was a very glorious day,” said Seldes. “There were lots of different groups and points of views, but we had all come together. Even though the day was bitterly cold there was a common goal purpose.”

For Rotkowitz, the most memorable part of the rally was when he got close to the barricades, “That’s literally what they called it. Once you were inside, you couldn’t get out, even to leave the demonstration.”

Despite the presence of both police and demonstrator agitations, the rally was a positive and even uplifting experience for many who attended.

“It was a very glorious day,” said Seldes. “There were lots of different groups and points of views, but we had all come together. Even though the day was bitterly cold there was a common goal purpose.”

For Rotkowitz, the most memorable part of the rally was when he got close enough to the stage to hear the speakers.

“They began to mention the massive numbers of protestors who came out throughout the world to rally against this war,” he said. “Many have said that this was the largest world mobilization against war, ever.”

According to The Statesman, the rally in Rome had the biggest turnout, with one million people demonstrating. London had the city’s largest protest ever, with 750,000 people attending.

“It was a great feeling to know that we were not alone,” said Rotkowitz. “The entire world came together in unity.”

Security Briefs

All information provided by Vickie Weaver, director of Safety and Security

Firebirds

A bird’s nest in the boiler room of Fine Arts caused a minor fire at approximately 10 a.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 19.

Following a power surge, the nest, which was located near the generator, caught on fire. Students and faculty were asked to evacuate the building for a 15 to 20 minute period.

Security and facilities were able to relieve the smoke and put out the fire while the Lawrence Road Fire Co. provided ventilation fans to clear the smoke.

Full Contact B-ball

A physical altercation occurred at the Alumni Gym at approximately 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 18.

Security learned from the male student victim that one of the suspects had taken his basketball while he was playing and claimed it as his own. After a brief verbal argument, the suspect threw the ball at the victim, hitting him in the face.

The same suspect then punched the victim while another suspect delivered blows from behind. A male staff member had to separate the parties.

Both male suspects were charged with physical abuse and one was charged with failure to complete as he initially refused to produce identification. The victim requested the assistance of Lawrence Police Department (LPD) and filed a report as well.

Snow TIres?

A male student reported to security that his vehicle had overturned in the commuter parking lot at approximately 5:00 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 17.

While driving with one other passenger in the car, he attempted to go over a snowbank, causing his vehicle to overturn.

Although both the driver and his passenger came out unscathed, LPD, Lawrence firefighters and the Lawrence Rescue Squad were dispatched by security.

The student is facing campus charges of reckless endangerment and was charged with reckless driving by LPD.