

Faculty & Friends



HHMI appointment for Rob Martienssen

The Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation selected CSHL Professor Rob Martienssen as one of the nation's 15 most innovative plant scientists. The honorees will share \$75 million in research funding over five years. Martienssen is a pioneer in unraveling epigenetic mechanisms, which help regulate how genes work, and is an expert on transposons, sequences of DNA that skip around the genome, often altering gene activity.



Brain & Behavior Research Foundation award for Josh Huang

The Brain & Behavior Research Foundation (BBRF) awarded CSHL Professor Josh Huang a NARSAD Distinguished Investigator Grant to study how genetic alterations associated with behavioral symptoms of schizophrenia disturb the development and function of neural circuits. Using a genetically engineered mouse strain, Huang will study chandelier cells, which are key to inhibitory circuits in the brain's frontal areas. NARSAD Distinguished Investigators are selected by BBRF's 124-member Scientific Council.

Early career award for Chris Vakoc

CSHL Fellow Chris Vakoc has been selected by the Burroughs Wellcome Fund to receive the 2011 Career Awards for Medical Scientists. The five-year \$700,000 award helps M.D.-Ph.D.s — a unique set of scientists able to connect research to patients — bridge postdoctoral training and the early years of faculty service. Vakoc's award supports his work identifying epigenetic vulnerabilities in chemotherapy-resistant leukemia.



Honorable Patrick Kennedy and CSHL President Bruce Stillman

2011 President's Council highlights

Hon. Patrick J. Kennedy, co-founder of "One Mind for Research," opened the 27th annual President's Council on October 14, greeting donors whose \$25,000 gifts support CSHL's most talented young scientists. The retreat focused on "The Science of Addiction" and featured: Susan Foster, Columbia University; Joanna Fowler, Brookhaven National Laboratory; Philip Low, Chairman, Neuro Vigil; Eric Nestler, Friedman Brain Institute and Mount Sinai School of Medicine; and Howard Shaffer, Harvard Medical School. CSHL Assistant Professor Adam Kepecs discussed his work on the neural circuit principles behind decision making, which he hopes will lead to better treatments for diseases such as addiction. Thanks to event chairmen Howard Morgan, Cynthia R. Stebbins and Steve Wiggins.