Professor receives patent to kill ‘superbug’


Ablordeppey’s recent patent was created to develop a compound that is not so expensive in combating Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA). MRSA is typically more problematic for the elderly, for people with weakened immune systems, including cancer patients on chemotherapy and for patients undergoing kidney dialysis or using venous catheters or prosthetics. Just about anyone, however, can be infected by MRSA.

According to Ablordeppey, the major problem of hospital-acquired and community-acquired MRSA is that we may be on the last lines of defense against this resistant microorganism, sometimes referred to as the “superbug.” Hence, the need to develop new and novel entities that can overcome this dreaded bug cannot be over-emphasized.

“These agents are not currently available for public use, but are undergoing the usual pre-clinical studies that would move them toward the clinic,” Ablordeppey said. “This patent would enable us to work more ardously to achieve that objective to get the drug to healthcare facilities everywhere.”

Ablordeppey’s recent patent was created to develop a compound that is not so expensive in combating Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA).

FAMU addresses SACS’ concerns

The university remains committed to addressing the areas of concern, and ensuring that FAMU is compliant with all SACSOC accreditation standards. Students will continue to receive a first-class education from FAMU.

FAMU is working with staff and key officials to address the concerns expressed by the Southern Association on Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSOC) that surfaced as a result of a Nov. 19, 2011, hazing incident. In addition, the university has addressed issues highlighted in a Board of Governors report.

On Dec. 20, 2012, the university received official notification from the SACSOC that while the university will remain accredited, it was placed on probation for a year. The areas of concern were: Principle 1.1 (Integrity), Comprehensive Standard 3.2.8 (Qualified administrative/academic officers), Comprehensive Standard 3.10.3 (Control of finances), and Comprehensive Standard 3.11.2 (Institutional environment) of the Principles of Accreditation.

Chancellor of the State University System of Florida Frank T. Brogan and the Florida Board of Governors’ Inspector General Derry Harper issued a rapport on Dec. 28, 2012, that reviewed how FAMU handled the Nov. 19, 2011, hazing death of a band student. In FAMU’s response to the report, the university outlined some of the sweeping changes that have occurred to enhance campus safety and address other concerns.

“We are committed to addressing the areas of concern, and ensuring that FAMU is compliant with all SACSOC accreditation standards. Our students will continue to receive a first-class education from FAMU.”

The university has formed a team of outstanding faculty, staff and students to work on developing the response for SACS, which is scheduled to visit the university in the fall of 2013. In addition, FAMU has the support of the Florida Board of Governors in its efforts.

Bernard Kinsey looks on as his wife, Shirley Kinsey (far right), discusses the Kinsey Collection exhibit at Epcot. The Kinseys were joined by actors Chandra Wilson and James Pickens Jr.

Kinsey Collection gets a new home at Disney’s Epcot Center

For philanthropists and FAMU alumni Bernard and Shirley Kinsey, the African-American narrative is a part of the narrative of America. In March the Kinseys’ exhibit, “Re-Discovering America: Family Treasures from the Kinsey Collection,” went on display at Epcot’s American Adventure located at Walt Disney World in Orlando.

“All we ask people to take away from the exhibit is the saying, ‘I didn’t know that,’” Bernard Kinsey said at the official opening of the exhibit that welcomed more than 300 guests. “If we can do that, we know we are filling that hole in your heart.”

The exhibit represents more than 400 years of African-American achievements and contributions. It has been displayed throughout the United States, including the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. Approximately 40 pieces are on display for Epcot guests for a three-year run of the exhibit.

“Art is everything,” Bernard Kinsey said. “It connects the African-American story of accomplishment and achievement through a one and two-dimensional world.”

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Bryan F. Smith is working to address hazing as the new special assistant to the president for anti-hazing. Previously, Smith, who is a FAMU graduate, was the executive director/co-founder of Destined for Success Educational Services, Inc. in Decatur, Ga.

“This position requires a high level of communication with various entities around campus, with the local community and with investigative agencies,” Smith said. “I am very confident in my abilities and I vow to be organized, timely, fair, proactive, open and honest, ethical and hard-working. It will be my goal to change any culture of hazing through a variety of strategies, to maintain an efficient reporting process for any allegations of hazing, to facilitate tangible information sessions regarding hazing, to ensure that the Student Code of Conduct is being adhered to and to help maintain the integrity of the university.”

Smith received his juris doctorate from John Marshall Law School, a master’s degree in public management from FAMU and a bachelor’s degree in political science from North Carolina A&T State University. He encourages students and others to report hazing allegations at stophazingatfamu.com.
Community celebrated football coach Earl Holmes

By Denzel Willis

Rattler fans, friends and family celebrated the appointment of FA- MU’s new head football coach Earl Holmes during a community meet-and-greet rally. The Department of Athletics announced Holmes as FA-

MU’s 16th head football coach in January. Athletic Director Derek Horne thanked the Rattler Boosters and Leon County Commissioner Bill Proctor for putting together the event. Horne said he enjoyed the energy of the crowd, and called Holmes a diamond that has already been polished.

“You have a person that is a FAMU high school graduate, a FAMU graduate, a person that has come back and done a lot, and now is the time to put the jewel in the crown,” he said.

Holmes played linebacker in the National Football League for 10 years and since then has been working as FAMU’s defensive coordinator. Holmes has been having the team watch films about former FAMU football coach Jake Gaither. “It’s all about restoring pride,” said the new coach. “It’s about guys understanding that a lot of guys who have worn orange and green have been very successful through blood, sweat and tears, hard work, dedication and determination, and that’s what it’s going to take.” Holmes attributed his success on the field to the Rattler Boosters and fans — calling them the “12th man on the field.”

Students, alumni may now order and track transcripts online

FAMU has authorized the National Student Clearinghouse to provide an online transcript-ordering service for current FAMU students and alumni. Individuals can order and track transcripts 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Other options include picking up transcripts in person with photo identification or by submitting a letter to authorize the release of transcripts (to a third party for pick up). Students and alumni may upload documents (in PDF only) to accompany their transcript. This option is available when placing an order. Examples include admission application forms for law, nursing, medical or graduate schools and scholarship application forms.

Transcripts can be ordered online using any major credit card. For more information, contact the Registrar’s Office at (850) 599-3115.

Matthews appointed dean of the new College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities

Valencia E. Matthews, a long-time faculty member at the university, will serve as dean of the Col-
lege of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities.

“I believe that she is the best person for this job as we start this new college,” said Rodner Wright, interim provost and vice resident for Academic Affairs. “She has served in a leadership role in this college for years and will be able to continue our efforts to develop a strong academic foundation for our students. As a new college, this is a great opportunity for us to create a legacy, own the challenges and own the solutions.”

Matthews has served as interim dean of the College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities since July 1, 2012, and has served as interim chair of the Department of Music from December 2011 - June 2012. In addition, she has served as assistant dean in the College of Arts and Science from 2002-2012 before the college was split in 2012 to form the College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities and the College of Science and Technology.

“I am a collaborative, team-oriented servant-leader, and as such, I am excited about the opportunity to work with the diverse disciplines that comprise the College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities,”

Living Well: Drugs in Our Drinking Water?

Antibiotics, analgesics (pain killers), lipid regulators, and antidepressants are commonly found inside of home medi-
cine cabinets. Until recently, few would think in examining the presence of these drugs in our drinking water. Yet, these pharmaceuticals and personal care prod-
ucts (PPCPs) are among a variety of organic chemicals in our drinking water. It is for this reason that the occurrence of PPCPs in sewage treatment plant run off, surface waters, seawaters, ground water, and some drinking waters has led to an increasing concern about the impact of these chemi-
cals on the aquatic environment.

It is well known that antibiotics, analgesics, and other pharmaceuticals are found in the discharge of sewage treatment plants. In fact, the aforementioned drugs were evaluated in two bays on the gulf coast of Florida: Apalachicola Bay and Tampa Bay. The compounds selected were chosen based on a national survey of the number of prescriptions, persistence in the environment, the possibility of envi-
ronmental impact, and the availability of analytical standards for testing. Scientists detected two chemicals out of the 40 ana-
yzed. Sulfamethoxazole (SMZ), a common drug used in animals and humans, exists in both bays; however, it appears to be more concentrated and dispersed throughout Apalachicola Bay than Tampa Bay. Car-
bamazepine (CBZ), an antidepressant and mood-stabilizing drug, was also detected in Tampa Bay.

Based on these results, CBZ or SMZ do not appear to threaten the ecological health of Apalachicola or Tampa Bay; however, the occurrence and threat from these chemicals and the ecological and eco-
nomical implications in the future are uncertain. In Apalachicola Bay, the compounds appear to be isolated; however, the mixing and dispersal of PPCPs in Tampa Bay are still subject to in-depth research.

The majority of PPCPs are discharged to surface waters, meaning they are used for shellfish harvesting. The occurrence of PPCPs in Apalachicola Bay continues to increase, potentially affecting the fishing industry in the bay, which will adversely affect Florida’s economy.

The occurrence of PPCPs in Tampa Bay is a concern as well, as the bay is a popular recreational area. Municipal sewage, both treated and untreated, is the most common route for drugs used by humans to enter the environ-
ment. There are several simple ways to reduce our personal contribution to the emerging concern of PPCPs in the envi-
ronment. For instance, using personal care products made of natural ingredients rather than synthetic materials. Also, liv-
ing a healthier lifestyle will further reduce our dependence on drugs and consequently reduce the quantities of PPCPs entering our water bodies. Nonetheless, lifestyle changes take a major commitment and much devotion. An equally important habit that anyone can adapt is to properly dispose expired and/or unused medications, thereby reducing the amounts of the compounds in our water supply.

Zakiya Boyett, Ph.D. is a recent gradu-
ate of FAMU who worked as research assistant to the School of the Environment Interim Dean Michael Albagli, Ph.D. on this project. Fol-
low @ FAMU LivingWell. Visit www.famu.edu/
livingwell101.
Maulana Karenga delivers powerful message during Black History Convocation

By Denzel Willis

During the 2013 Black History Convocation, Maulana Karenga, creator of the Pan-African holiday Kwanzaa and the Nguzo Saba (The Seven Principals), empowered more than 1,200 students, faculty and community members to “hold on to your heritage and never forget” where they came from.

Karenga, who served as this year’s keynote speaker, is a professor and chair of African Studies at California State University in Long Beach. Karenga touched on the cultural genocide of African-American ancestry and the immoral acts that they faced during enslavement.

He also brought attention to the words “holocaust,” “enslavement” and the morale issue of the slave trade, which he identified as genocide.

“Slavery is an act of genocide,” Karenga said. “(It is) a morally conscious act of genocide that is not only against the people targeted, but on humanity itself. Can we call what happened to the slaves, ‘a trade’?”

Karenga also spoke of the killings and the destruction of homes, towns and cultures.

“One of the things about us as a people is that no matter how horrendous our holocaust was, it never seared into our consciousness,” Karenga said. “Our history is too important to leave in media hands. We must in fact hold our history sacred, for there is no history more holy than our people and no narrative more important to be taught than our own.”

Jarius Lumpkin a third-year nursing student who attended the event, said he enjoyed Karenga’s message. He was very appreciative that the university took time to celebrate black history. Karenga said, “African Americans built the foundation of our country, and it’s important to me that black people are recognized.”

FAMU showcased the Ron McCurdy Quartet featuring special guest artist Malcolm-Jamal Warner in late January as a part of the Lynceum Series. The epic Langston Hughes poem, “Ask Your Mama: Twelve Moods Of Jazz,” features different varieties of music from different cultures. The quartet played selections of blues, Afro-Cuban mambo music, West Indian calypso and African rhythms. The Quartet guided the audience through the different moods while Warner performed spoken word.

“I enjoyed how he read the poems,” said Jennifer Ramirez, who attended the event in Lee Hall Auditorium. “His voice was strong and he led the show having his tone right for each mood.”

The multi-talented Warner, one of the stars on the Black Entertainment Television sitcom, “Keepin’ It Real,” did not entertain the audience with his acting or musicianship, but instead he showed off his spoken word talent as he recited Hughes 12-part poem. In addition to the poetry and music, the show had multimedia images of the Harlem Renaissance, the Civil Rights Movement and images of Hughes’ life.

“The visuals with the poem and the music all together made a story; it was almost like a live movie going on,” said Robinson.

Musician and FAMU Alumni Ronald C. McCurdy, who is also a professor of music in the Thornton School of Music at the University of Southern California, is past president of the International Association for Jazz Education, expressed on stage how much of an honor it was for him to be back at his alma mater performing. McCurdy is co-author of a vocal jazz improvisation series titled “Approaching the Standards” published by Warner Bros. He is the director of the National Grammy Vocal Jazz Ensembles and Combo, and also serves as director of the Walt Disney All-American College Band in Anaheim, Calif.

The Lynceum Series has been a part of the FAMU tradition since the University’s early beginnings. Throughout the history of the series, FAMU has enriched campus life and connected with the community, the artists, performers and lecturers of the day.
It shows that our people not only mattered, they produced artifacts that changed America fundamentally.”

The exhibit, which features the themes of hope, belief, courage, imagination and heritage, provides optimistic and empowering stories from American history and from voices that are not commonly seen or heard. To enrich the interactive storytelling experience for the exhibit, guests can use touch screens placed around the exhibit to further explore the art, artifacts and history.

Guest-activated lanterns help bring the story to life with narration provided by actors Whoopi Goldberg, Kerry Washington, Tyrel Jackson Williams, Chandra Wilson, James Pickens Jr. and others.

“When we were approached to be a part of something so historically significant, I felt it was required of me to do,” said Pickens, who stars on the television show Grey’s Anatomy. “To add a little panache to it, I was proud to be a part of it.”

Shirley Kinsey, who was all smiles at the event, said she felt like the athletes after the Super Bowl when they shouted, “I’m going to Disney!”

“These two kids from Florida have come full circle; we have now come back home,” said Shirley Kinsey, who married her husband 46 years ago on the campus of FAMU. “Disney is clearly a place where magic happens. It’s a place where dreams come true even if you don’t know you have that dream.”

Overseeing the collection is the Kinseys’ son, Khalil, who inspired his parents to initially build the collection.

“I’m proud of these two,” a tearful Khalil Kinsey said of his parents. “It’s an amazing thing to work with my family everyday.”

Jim MacPhee, senior vice president for Walt Disney World Parks, said the company is thrilled to bring the Kinsey Collection to Epcot guests.

To learn more about the Kinsey Collection at Disney’s Epcot, please visit treetotreeadventures.com or call 850.575.8684.

/*Upcoming Date: The 2013 Spring Commencement Ceremonies are scheduled for May 4 at 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. in the Alfred Lawson Jr. Multipurpose Center and Teaching Gymnasium*/