The Tulane Hypertension and Renal Center of Excellence (THRCE) has been funded since 2002 by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Current funding includes an NIH award of $5.4 million for the grant entitled, Translational Research in Hypertension and Renal Biology and another NIH grant of $413,000 for the study entitled, Potential of Urinary AGT as a Novel Biomarker for Intrarenal RAS Activity in T1DM. The Center has provided training and research support for 16 junior faculty members, 19 postdoctoral fellows, 12 graduate students, and 29 medical students. Currently the Center supports 33 Tulane investigators, 5 core facilities, and 3 pilot projects.

L. Lee Hamm, MD; L. Gabriel Navar Co-Directors

Because hypertension and associated kidney and cardiovascular diseases are highly prevalent in Louisiana, the Hypertension and Renal Center of Excellence was established. The objective was to create a center of excellence in hypertension and renal that would foster research on the basic mechanisms responsible for hypertension and on the interactions between environmental and genetic pathophysiological causes of hypertension. Peer-reviewed publications by Center-supported investigators and by investigators who have used the core facilities total more than 650 publications since the Center began. Participation at regional, national, and international scientific meetings by Center-supported investigators average more than 90 presentations each year.

Highlights for the 2013-2014 academic year

Dr. L. Gabriel Navar was awarded the inaugural Oliver Fund Award for Excellence in Faculty Mentoring. He was elected by the AAMC Board of Directors as an Emeritus Member of the AAMC, served on the external advisory committee for the Program Project grant at New York Medical College, and participated in the Bioinnovation IGERT Advisory Board Meeting. He was the recipient of the 2-year grant from Novartis to study, “Effects of Seralaxin on renal microcirculation under control and high angiotensin conditions,” and an AHA funding for a Health Sciences Fellowship.

Assistant Director of the COBRE Clinical and Translational Core facility, Dr. Jiang He, was awarded a five-year grant from NIH/NHLBI, to study the effectiveness of a comprehensive intervention program to improve hypertension prevention and control among uninsured patients and their families in Argentina.

Dr. Andrei V. Derbenev received the New Investigator Award from the Central Nervous System Section of APS at the 2014 EB meeting held at San Diego, California.

Dr. Dewan S. A. Majid was a key-note speaker for the first Annual International Conference on Advanced Research: Physiology (ARP) held in Singapore in July 2014 and was selected as its Editor-in-Chief. The conference was organized by the ‘Global Science and Technology Forum’ based in Singapore. He also received 2013 IUPSAPS Travel Award to attend the International Union of Physiological Sciences (IUPS) Congress held in Birmingham, England.

Dr. Kenneth D. Mitchell was appointed Chair of the T1 Curriculum Committee. He was welcomed as a new member of the International Association of Medical Science Educators (IAMSE), an unique organization serving instructional faculty in the health sciences.

Dr. Jing Chen received NIH-R01 grant to support her research. Dr. Chen was a Center-supported junior faculty investigator for her study: “Urinary Angiotensinogen Excretion and Salt-Sensitivity of Blood Pressure.” A manuscript: “Circulating Adipocytokines and Chronic Kidney Disease,” by Dr. Chen and others was highlighted in an issue of the ASN online bulletin.

Dr. Kailash N. Pandey was recognized for his distinguished work in the field of research in cardiac function and awarded the Hans-Peter Krayenbuehl Memorial Award. He was presented this prestigious award at the International Academy of Cardiology-18th World Congress on Heart Disease held in Vancouver, Canada.

Highlights continued on back of page...
Highlights for the 2013-2014 academic year continued

Dr. Minolta Prieto became an invited member of the Committee for Scientific Sessions Programming (CSSP) of the Kidney in Cardiovascular Disease (KCVD) Council. She was also awarded a three-years grant by the Brazilian Government (CAPES and CNPq) for the project "Salt sensitivity in Angiotensin II-dependent Hypertension: Unraveling the molecular mechanisms explaining the progression to renal damage."

Dr. Kathleen Hering-Smith was promoted to Research Associate Professor in Medicine-Nephrology with adjunct appointment in Physiology. At the 2013 ASN meeting, she mentored for the ASN Mentoring Program for Medical Students and Residents, and participated in the ASN Physiology, Cell, and Molecular Biology Advisor Group that sponsored graduate and medical students from Morehouse University.

Dr. Andrea Zsombok was awarded a five-year, NIH/R01 grant for her study, "TRPV1-dependent autonomic control in diabetes." She was also appointed to the Editorial Board of the Scientific Reports journal.

Core Facilities for the THRCE
Administrative Core provides coordination of activities and is led by Drs. Navar and Hamm.

Molecular, Imaging, and Analytical Core facility serves as the resource for instruments and equipment and support training of junior faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate and medical students.

Animal and Gene-Targeted Core supports the study of genetic traits in intact animals.

Mouse Phenotyping Core facility assist investigators with techniques related to performing physiological measurements.

Clinical and Translational Core promotes and facilitates clinical and translational studies in hypertension, kidney disorders, and related cardiovascular diseases.