

Flick receives state 'Young Investigator Award'

4/14/05

Dr. Lisa M. Flick, assistant professor of biology at Alfred University, is one of 10 young faculty members at institutions across New York State to receive a James D. Watson Young Investigator Award for biotechnology. The award, announced jointly Wednesday by Gov. George Pataki, Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno and Assembly Speaker Sheldon, carries with it a \$200,000 grant to support Flick's research efforts. "Receiving a Watson Young Investigator award is truly an honor for Dr. Flick and for Alfred University," said Dr. William Hall, interim provost. "This is a highly competitive award, one that attests both to the quality of the research Dr. Flick has been doing, and to the promise in her future work." Flick, who joined the AU faculty in fall 2002, will be developing a standardized panel of tests to assess the biocompatibility of various orthopedic and dental implants. "I'm going to be looking at both the in vitro (cell culture) response to specific materials, and how those materials react in a live animal," explained Flick. "Various parameters will be examined, including whether a material causes inflammation, integrates into the bone, or causes bone erosion. We know, for example, that metals are more likely to cause inflammation, and ceramic materials and plastics tend to be better accepted by the body." Flick stresses she's not going to be testing the design of specific implants or devices, only the materials used in their manufacture. Her research has commercial applications, Flick noted. "A manufacturer of medial devices or implants would be able to either use the standardized panel of tests we develop and conduct the research on the material itself, or it could contract the testing of the materials to a university laboratory or even to a company that specializes in conducting such tests." A 1997 graduate of Nazareth College with a B.S. in biology, Flick earned both her M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in microbiology and immunology from the University of Rochester. A native of Wellsville, NY and a 1994 graduate of Wellsville High School, Flick is the daughter of William and Patricia Childs of Riverview Heights, Wellsville. She is married to Damon Flick, also from Wellsville. They now make their home in Dansville. According to the press release from Gov. Pataki's office, the James D. Watson Young Investigator Awards are "designed to recognize and support outstanding scientists and engineers who, early in their careers, show potential for leadership and scientific discovery in the field of biotechnology." "These grants will support the world-class research being performed by some of the best young minds at New York's colleges and universities and will complement our other high-tech economic development initiatives such as our Centers of Excellence program," said Governor Pataki. "In addition, this support will help to further secure New York's role as an international leader in high-tech and biotechnology research and economic development. "As we continue with our comprehensive plan to create a high technology economy, we will ensure that our best and brightest young minds have every opportunity to secure a good paying, high-tech job and can build their future right here in New York State," Governor Pataki added. "And with every such step we take, we move closer toward our goal of creating one million new jobs by the end of the decade." Senate Majority Leader Joseph L. Bruno said, "New York State is at the forefront of emerging high-tech and biotech innovations. As we continue to ensure New York's place as a national and global leader in these fields, it is critically important to recognize and reward the best and brightest young minds who support the research and development initiatives that continue to keep New York State competitive. We want to provide every opportunity for our most promising scientists and engineers to stay right here in New York State." Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver said, "This is a smart investment in the backbone of New York State's emerging biotechnology industry, our renowned scientific research centers, colleges and universities. Not only are they key to improving the state's economy and establishing high-paying employment opportunities, but even more importantly, these New York institutions will develop products and services that will improve the quality of life for people here and around the world." The James D. Watson Investigator initiative is part of the \$225 million Generating Employment through New York State Science (Gen*NY*sis) program, which was created to maximize the potential of the world-class life sciences research being conducted at New York's public, not-for-profit and private academic research institutions. The program complements New York's comprehensive efforts to make the Empire State an international leader in high-tech and biotechnology-related research and economic development. Russell W. Bessette, M.D., executive director of the New York State Office of Science, Technology and Academic Research (NYSTAR), said, "The awards being announced today will encourage these early career biotechnology scientists to stay and conduct their critically important research here in New York State. In doing so, these scientists will be positioned to make the important advancements in biotechnology that will lead to the State's future economic growth." The purpose of the Watson program is to assist New York State's leading research institutions in recognizing, retaining and professionally

developing early career scientists who demonstrate leadership potential at the frontier of knowledge in the life sciences and conduct research that is anticipated to enhance economic development in the State. The program supports NYSTAR's other programs to spur technology-based research and economic development in New York State; promote national and international research collaboration and innovation; better leverage the State's research expertise and funding for investments from the federal government, foundations, businesses, and others; acquire venture capital funding.