

JUNE 20, 2008

HHMI Appoints Marian B. Carlson as Senior Scientific Officer

The Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) has appointed Marian Carlson as senior scientific officer. Carlson, 55, will work from the Institute's headquarters in Chevy Chase, Maryland, to support the research of HHMI investigators in more than 300 laboratories across the nation.

Carlson joined the Institute April 1, 2008. She comes to HHMI from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, where she was Vice Dean for Research, and professor of genetics and development and microbiology. Carlson has been a faculty member at Columbia since 1981.

“Marian Carlson brings a richness of academic and administrative perspectives to the HHMI Science department,” said Jack Dixon, vice president and chief scientific officer. “She comes to us with impeccable credentials, and we are delighted that she has joined us.”

Carlson says her new position at HHMI is “an opportunity to have a broader impact on the scientific research community, at an organization with the resources to fund innovative science.”

Carlson is working with HHMI scientific officer Carl Rhodes to guide the Institute's new Early Career Scientist Program. The program, which was announced earlier this year, will provide much-needed support for up to 70 of the nation's best early career faculty. The new program is aimed at researchers who have run their own labs for two to six years and are now at a critical point in establishing their own vibrant, independent research programs. HHMI will select its first group of early career scientists in spring 2009. Carlson will work to identify opportunities for the Institute to help these researchers manage successful laboratories and make important discoveries.

Carlson will also continue to manage her laboratory at Columbia, where she studies a family of proteins, known as the SNF1/AMP-activated protein kinases, that plants, animals, and fungi use to alter their metabolism and gene activity in response to stress. In humans, this protein kinase is associated with metabolic disorders such as diabetes and obesity. Carlson's lab uses yeast to study how these protein kinase signaling pathways activate the genes cells need to adapt to nutrient deprivation and other forms of environmental stress.

Carlson received her A.B. *summa cum laude* in biochemical sciences from Harvard College and her Ph.D. in biochemistry from Stanford University. She carried out her postdoctoral training at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Academy of Microbiology. She has also served as president of the Genetics Society of America.