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UM Professor Presents to United Nations on Marine Genetic Resources

Seminar covers challenges associated with marine research in foreign waters

MAY 8, 2013 BY ERIN GARRETT



OXFORD, Miss. – The world’s oceans are filled with diverse plant and animal life that promise to yield new drugs and other products that could dramatically improve quality of life. Scientists are studying potential sources of these products, but the research can be challenging.

Marc Slattery, professor of pharmacognosy at the University of Mississippi, presented a seminar on this topic May 2 at the United Nations Intersessional Workshop on Marine Genetic Resources in New York.

The seminar, “Marine Genetic Resources: Benefit Sharing and Obstacles,” outlined issues associated with researching marine resources in foreign waters.



Marc Slattery, professor of pharmacognosy at the University of Mississippi

“I am honored to represent Ole Miss’s internationally-recognized natural products research groups on the biggest world stage,” said Slattery, who serves as director of the biotechnology division of the **National Institute for Undersea Science and Technology** at UM.

“This is a significant opportunity to help shape international policy regarding the use of marine genetic resources, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from developed marine biotechnology products,” he said. “Many countries are unaware of their marine genetic resources, and how to go about developing them. My goal is to provide guidance for these societies using case studies from 20 years in the field, and to make the case for the importance of sustainable marine resource use.”

The biodiversity of the oceans is virtually untapped, compared to terrestrial systems, Slattery said. There is a great deal of novel activity in marine resources from a biotechnological standpoint, as well as from a drug discovery standpoint, he

said.

In his seminar, Slattery proposed that investigating countries should offer reasonable incentives, such as education and outreach, to encourage collaboration among nations.

“Marine genetic resources of sovereign nations represent potentially significant economic value as biotechnological products, including novel drugs from the sea,” he said. “However, the path to a new drug, from discovery through clinical trials to the pharmacy shelf, can exceed two decades. With few samples making it all the way through clinical trials, the odds of monetary benefit-sharing in the next ‘billion-dollar drug’ are exceedingly small. As such, it is very important that benefit-sharing begins early and includes monetary as well as nontraditional subsidies.”

Slattery’s research has taken him to 19 countries in the Indo-Pacific region and seven in the Caribbean to examine these issues.

“It’s been wonderful from the standpoint of seeing different cultures and how they relate to the marine environment,” he said.

Slattery hopes that the workshop will ultimately lead to new research agreements.

“Hopefully these efforts will lead to significant partnerships between island nations with unexplored or unexploited marine biodiversity and biotechnology researchers in developed nations as they search for new products that ease human suffering and provide for higher quality of life,” he said.

David D. Allen, dean of the UM School of Pharmacy, said Slattery’s seminar was “a wonderful

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OXFORD, Miss. – Eleven University of Mississippi students spent their winter break learning about the people who work behind the scenes of the American government in Washington, D.C. Lead by Jonathan Klingler, assistant professor of political science, the students of Pol 391: Applied Politics met not with candidates, but with the people who make candidates’

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OXFORD, Miss. – Stephanie Jennings Teague, of Chicago, sees her commitment of \$100,000 to the Patterson School of Accountancy’s new building at the University of Mississippi as a means of saying “thank you.” “It is a way to show a small token of my appreciation to Ole Miss, the faculty and staff, and the accounting

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U.S. inflation roller coaster prompts fresh look at long-ignored money supply By Michael S. Derby NEW YORK – The amount of money sloshing around the U.S. economy shrank last year for the first time on record, a development that some economists believe bolsters the case for U.S. inflation pressures continuing to abate. The Federal Reserve’s

opportunity to showcase our expertise at an international level.”

“This is just another example of how our research at the University of Mississippi can provide a global impact,” Allen said. “Dr. Slattery’s knowledge in this field is unparalleled, and I’m positive his seminar provided great insight into marine resource research.”

Daneel Ferreira, chair and professor of pharmacognosy, agreed.

“The Department of Pharmacognosy is indeed privileged and honored to have such an accomplished scientist on board,” Ferreira said. “We are proud of his research achievements and the positive exposure that it brings not only to the department but also to the School of Pharmacy and the University of Mississippi at large.”

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