

CMBOD's Radosevich Hopes to Develop Dentistry's Business Side

Dr. James A. Radosevich, a tumor immunologist interested in cancer vaccine development, recently joined the College as a Professor and Staff Research Scientist in the Center for Molecular Biology of Oral Diseases. He's a faculty member who knows how to take care of business.

"I like to start up biotech companies, taking an idea from concept and moving it forward," Dr. Radosevich noted. "Over my career, I've been part of six or seven startups."

One of his companies has been involved in making synthetic tissues as controls for pathology. His current company, ImmvaRx, is taking a synthetic peptide cancer vaccine into the clinic environment.

Dr. Radosevich sees his role at the College as promoting cancer research, helping to connect laboratory and clinical research, and developing "the business side of dentistry," he said. "I'm interested in helping people who have ideas but don't know how to get them out into the community. Since I know a little bit of everything about setting up a business, from getting it incorporated, to getting the right team together, to intellectual property issues, to finding the funds to move the business forward, I can facilitate business development."

Even his signature ponytail is a mark of his business acumen. "Working in California, I was having trouble raising money," he recalled. "Then I grew a ponytail, and for some reason venture capitalists felt more comfortable providing me with funding. So I kept it."

Dr. Radosevich most recently was an Associate Professor and Staff Research Scientist at Northwestern University's Department of Otolaryngology. He said he joined UIC because "there is huge potential here-and a real chance to make a big difference."

He also is a staff research scientist at the Veterans' Administration Chicago Health Care System.

"I've been funded through the VA almost continuously for the past 20-some years," Dr. Radosevich explained. "VA funding is one of our nation's best-kept secrets, and there's a lot of biomedical research and engineering done in the VA. It's as competitive as the National Institutes of Health, if not more so. It's also a great way of serving your country. You don't get paid much, but you get to give something back to the U.S.A., and I felt that way long before Sept. 11, 2001."

He earned his BS from Bradley University in 1978 and his PhD from UIC in 1983.

When asked about his spare time, Dr. Radosevich laughed and asked "Who has spare time when you're doing science?" If he had more opportunity, however, he would spend it with "fretted stringed instruments, cooking, gardening, and woodworking," he said. "I love wilderness camping and fishing, and I brew my own wine. But my real passion is for my family, followed by my second love-science."