

Birmingham Professor Wins National Award for Mentoring

Posted on Wednesday 6th September 2006

A senior Professor at the University of Birmingham has won a major award sponsored by the Journal Nature and NESTA (the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts) for his work in mentoring young academics.

Steve Watson, who is British Heart Foundation Professor in Cardiovascular Sciences and Cellular Pharmacology at the University's Medical School will be presented with the award at a ceremony on September 4th. The awards, which are now in their third year, recognise examples of outstandingly good management in UK labs, particularly the way lab heads empower their students and postdoctoral fellows.

Professor Watson's group works primarily in investigating platelets, small cells in the blood that clump together at sites of injury thereby preventing excessive loss of blood. Their particular focus is on the mechanisms that control platelet activity and how these contribute to thrombotic diseases such as heart attack and stroke, and certain bleeding disorders.

To give young researchers greater opportunities to discuss their work with other experts in the field, Professor Watson set up the UK Platelet Group, which holds regular meetings where the focus is on work presented by post doctoral researchers. In a similar vein the group also run a regular "Platelet Summer School" to provide young researchers with an overview of the latest research in the field.

Professor Watson explains: "I am obviously delighted to get, this award and I hope it will help to bring into focus the role senior academics have to play in helping young researchers develop their careers both during their time lab and beyond. It is sometimes very easy to concentrate entirely on producing research papers or winning the next grant, but is just as important that we provide PhD students and Post-Doctoral researchers with the opportunity to work on projects that are significant and suited to their particular skills, and that they also have the right toolkit when leave to enable them to build their careers.

Although our research continues over a long period of time, every researcher gets only one chance to achieve their personal goals as part of the group. Ultimately the success of any research project depends on the individuals feeling like they are an important part of the group. "

Jocelyn Auger a post doctoral researcher in Professor Watson's group who helped organise the nomination, said: "As a new researcher it is extremely important that your PhD supervisors should be approachable and trust you to take on responsibility. I was encouraged to write up my research and present my work, the kind of experience, which is invaluable if you want to develop your career as an academic. The fact that 18 researchers volunteered to contribute to the application form, shows how hard Steve works to create an environment in which you feel valued."

Professor Watson will be presented with his award at a ceremony at the British Association annual meeting in Norwich on the 4th September 2006 from 5.00pm to 6.00pm. The meeting takes place at the Garden Restaurant, Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, University of East Anglia.

ENDS

For more information please contact Ben Hill, Press Officer at the University of Birmingham, telephone 0121 414 5134, mobile 07789 921163, email b.r.hill@bham.ac.uk

[Privacy](#) | [Legal](#) | [Cookies and cookie policy](#) | [Accessibility](#) | [Site map](#) | [Website feedback](#) | [Charitable information](#)

© University of Birmingham 2015

