

# Neuroscience research center celebrates five years of making connections

By Steve Schultz, Comm '98

In a research climate where external funding is often based on perceptions of campus environment, Marquette neuroscientists have made some critical connections to build their discipline. But that wasn't always the case. Shortly after joining the faculty in 1995, Dr. William E. Cullinan began to search the university for faculty members working on the study of the nervous system. He started making inquiries to faculty and staff, flipped through the Campus Directory, and surfed Marquette's first Web site.

"I was surprised even at that time to find 8 or 10 neuroscientists at Marquette spread across separate departments who didn't seem to know too much about each other," Cullinan, now associate professor of biomedical sciences, says. "I thought, how hard could it be to get together to meet?"

For the past five years, faculty joining Marquette have found an easier way to connect with fellow specialists through the Integrative Neuroscience Research Center, which Cullinan now administers as director with faculty representatives from four other departments. The center — the university's largest interactive research affiliation with more than 30 members — has established itself as a catalyst for the exchange of neuroscience ideas, resulting in clusters of specialists with whom local researchers, clinicians and educators can collaborate.

"The INRC gives a formality to all of our research interests," says Dr. Alexander V. Ng, an assistant professor in the Exercise Science Program of the Department of Physical Therapy. "If I have an idea and it brings me to a new area of neuroscience, I can connect with people and get feedback. It's great just to have someone else with similar expertise to talk to so you're not isolated."

Through initial funding from the colleges of Health Sciences and Arts and Sciences, the INRC was created to enhance the neuroscience environment in order to secure extramural funding as well as to build bridges within the Marquette community and with other universities. While funding for neuroscience research at Marquette has increased dramatically, the center has also been instrumental in other ways, such as providing seed money for pilot research projects and helping bring to campus a \$250,000 laser imaging system utilized by researchers across disciplines. The INRC also sponsors a series of public outreach lectures and events including demonstrations each spring as part of National Brain Awareness Week.

Continued support from the College of Health Sciences and an annual continuing education course taught by center members has allowed the INRC to provide its most visible collegiality: a bi-monthly seminar series during the academic year that attracts Marquette faculty and students as well members of the Medical College



Dr. David A. Baker, assistant professor of biomedical sciences, and senior Jason Komp of Hartford, Wis., examine brain neurotransmitter levels using a high-performance liquid chromatography apparatus. The researchers are tracking changes in brain chemistry that accompany the addiction process.

of Wisconsin and the University of Wisconsin — Milwaukee.

"If you're the only one who does what you do on a college campus, it's not very conducive to collaboration," says Dr. Michelle Mynlieff, associate professor of biological sciences.

"If you really want to have scientific discussions about something, you need another neuroscientist to talk to. Just seeing each other as part of the seminars is valuable, because now you have a reason to get together."

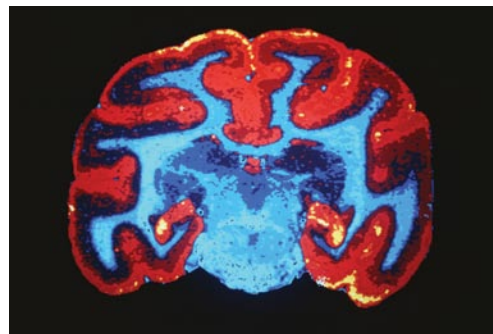
As interest in neuroscience continues to increase, a newly expanded neuroscience Ph.D. specialization centered around faculty in the departments of Biological and Biomedical

Sciences will be launched this fall. The effort, which was fueled by the success of neuroscience research in the departments and supported by the relationships fostered by the center, comes at a time when the number of neuroscience graduate programs and students has

increased more than three-fold in the past 20 years.

"A lot of the research work in neuroscience involves searching for cures for neurological diseases for which there are currently no effective treatments," says Dr. Douglas C. Lobner, associate professor of biomedical sciences. "It's an expanding

final frontier. Having a collaboration of neuroscientists established at Marquette continues to advance our teaching and research."



## MARQUETTE HAPPENINGS

### Two new members join the Board of Trustees

Rev. James G. Gartland, S.J., president of Cristo Rey Jesuit High School in Chicago, and John P. Lynch, Arts '64, a senior partner at Latham & Watkins L.L.P. in Chicago, were elected to Marquette's Board of Trustees at its regularly scheduled meeting this month. Gartland was part of the founding team of Cristo Rey in 1999 and became president in 2004. Lynch was formerly a trustee from 1998 to 2001, when he relocated to Paris to lead Latham's offices in Europe.

### Way-Klingler Young Scholars honored at annual Distinguished Scholars Reception

Dr. Jane E. Dorweiler, assistant professor of biological sciences; Dr. Kristin Haglund, assistant professor of nursing; Dr. Debra L. Oswald, assistant professor of psychology; and Dr. Daniel S. Sem, assistant professor of chemistry, have received Way-Klingler Young Scholars Awards. The awards, for which each will receive a one-semester sabbatical award, are part of the Way-Klingler Faculty Development Program made possible by the generosity of Helen Way Klingler, whose \$18 million donation to Marquette was announced in May 2004.

The Way-Klingler Young Scholars Awards are presented to junior faculty in the three years after their third-year review. The awards of up to \$32,000 are intended to fund \$2,000 in operating costs and up to 50 percent of salary to afford recipients a one-semester sabbatical.