

Tuesday, Aug 15, 2017

## **OU Biology professor awarded grant for corneal research**

Sheldon R. Gordon, Ph.D., a professor in the department of Biological Sciences, has been awarded a \$15,000 Eye and Vision Research grant by Eversight, a global nonprofit network of eye banks. The grant was awarded in support of his work in the area of corneal research.

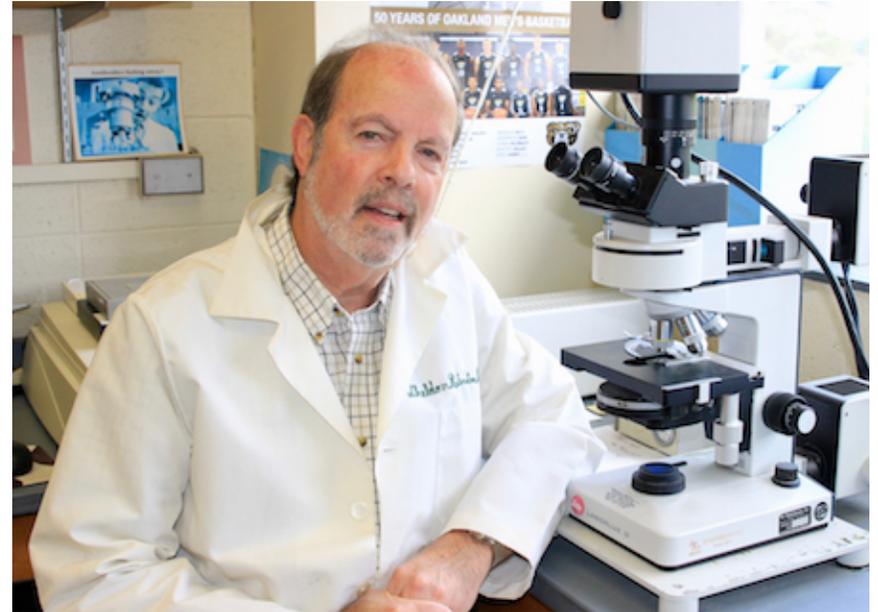
Dr. Gordon is among nine recipients who received grants from Eversight for research projects that align with the organization's mission to restore sight and prevent blindness. The awards are determined by an independent review panel composed of distinguished scientists, ophthalmologists and health services researchers.

"This grant provides us with funding to continue our studies and to explore a protein that seems to play a critical role in endothelial physiology and in wound repair," said Dr. Gordon. "With the resources we have now, we'll be able to delve deeper into our studies and determine its exact nature. If these studies turn out the way I hope they will, then we will have positioned ourselves to really be the first to identify this protein and to show what it does specifically."

His lab is currently investigating a protein his team discovered on the surface of corneal endothelial cells that appears under stress-like conditions. Previous studies by Dr. Gordon's team indicate that this protein belongs to a class of molecules called nectins, which are adhesion molecules.

Studying the protein will increase our understanding of its role when the cornea is overwhelmed with fluid and loses transparency as a result of diseases or endothelial injury. It could lead to a novel therapy for certain conditions like Fuchs' dystrophy that can lead to vision loss and blindness.

The Eye and Vision Research Grant program has awarded more than \$3.5 million since 1980 to stimulate new and pioneering research. Several of these grant projects have led to larger studies and financial support from the National Institutes of Health.



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Professor Gordon receiving his grant award from Holly DeMasi, public relations manager with Eversight, at ceremony on August 15, 201

**About Eversight:** Eversight is a charitable, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization whose mission is to restore sight and prevent blindness through the healing power of donation, transplantation and research. The Eversight Center for Eye and Vision Research is one of the only eye bank-led programs focused on providing scientists with innovative resources the need to find new cures and treatments for blinding eye conditions. For more information, visit [eversightvision.org/research](http://eversightvision.org/research).

**About OU's Biological Sciences:** The Department of Biological Sciences offers exciting opportunities to explore the life sciences through diversified coursework, exceptional faculty-research labs, and real-world experiences. Our undergraduate biology programs include a Bachelor of Arts in Biology, Bachelor of Science in Biology and a Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Sciences. The expansive research interests of our faculty provide ideal opportunities for students in our graduate training programs, the Masters of Arts in Biology, Masters Science in Biology and the Ph.D. in Biological and Biomedical Sciences.