

William R. Wiley

# EMSL In Brief

Environmental Molecular Sciences Laboratory

## Pakrasi Installed as Freiburg Professor of Biology in Arts and Sciences

The lead investigator of the Environmental Molecular Sciences Laboratory's (EMSL's) Membrane Biology Grand Challenge was installed in early October as a George William and Irene Koechig Freiburg Professor of Biology in Arts and Sciences at Washington University in St. Louis.

Himadri Pakrasi, professor of biology and energy at the university, received the award that was established in 1983 to honor faculty in the field of biology who have demonstrated leadership in research and teaching.

Pakrasi's research involves systems biology, photosynthesis, membrane biology, metal homeostasis, redox processes, and genomics. In 2005, he forged a partnership between the university and EMSL to form one of EMSL's first Scientific Grand Challenges, addressing membrane biology. This Grand Challenge, which involves researchers from six institutions, has led to determination of a new class of proteins that transport carbon and nitrogen across cyanobacteria membranes, providing insight into nature's methods for carbon sequestration and nitrogen fixation.

Pakrasi was also recently named director of Washington University's International Center for Advanced Renewable Energy and Sustainability—or I-CARES—created to encourage and coordinate university-wide and external collaborative research in renewable energy and sustainability, including biofuels, CO<sub>2</sub> mitigation, and coal-related issues. He has served as an Alexander von Humboldt Fellow at Munich University in Germany, a Distinguished Fellow at the Biosciences Institute of Nagoya University in Japan, and a Lady Davis Visiting Professor at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Pakrasi is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and a member of the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, the American Society of Plant Biologists, and the American Society for Microbiology.

The award is named after George Freiberg, who joined the university's Base Hospital 21, serving in England and France during World War I, and his wife, Irene Koechig Freiberg, who taught chemistry and microbiology at the university's School of Nursing and biological chemistry at the School of Medicine. For more information, contact Mary Ann Showalter (509-376-5751).



*Washington University professor and EMSL user Himadri Pakrasi (second from left) was named the university's prestigious George William and Irene Koechig Freiburg Professor of Biology in Arts and Sciences. From left to right: Allison Campbell, EMSL Director; Dave Koppelaar, EMSL Chief Technology Officer; and university Chancellor Mark Wrighton. (Photo courtesy of Mary Butkus/Washington University in St. Louis)*

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