

SHARE



The center will work closely with counterparts at the University of Maryland Institute for Advanced Computer Studies in College Park. The collaborative relationship forged between the University of Maryland, Baltimore and the University of Maryland, College Park, is part of the M-Power Maryland initiative begun by the University System of Maryland Board of Regents. This initiative establishes a new working relationship between the universities in order to increase productivity, promote innovation, generate economic benefits and improve the lives of all Maryland residents.

As Co-Director of the Center for Health-Related Informatics and Biotechnology, Dr. White's core role is to create and maintain access for all stakeholders to the unique new data resources that the center will create. Dr. White will lead the establishment and maintenance of divisions within the center, such as Clinical and Public Health Informatics and Genomic Sciences Informatics. **J. Kathleen "Kate" Tracy, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor of



Epidemiology and Public Health and Director of the Clinical and Translational Research Informatics Center, will become Director of the Division of Clinical and Public Health Informatics in the center. Dr. Tracy also will serve as Associate Director of the Center for Health-Related Informatics and Bioimaging, working closely with Dr. White to develop the center. One of Dr. Tracy's chief responsibilities in her new position will be to establish the Center for Health Informatics and Bioimaging Research HARBOR, a critical component of the new center.

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"The Research HARBOR is an interactive web-based platform that provides one-stop shopping for research support needs," says Dr. Tracy. "Through a centralized hub, researchers at the University of Maryland can access the data warehouse, identify and access research support resources, tools and services, find experts, access regulatory support, learn about educational and training opportunities, and much more."

The Research HARBOR will include data from numerous research projects at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, the other schools of the University of Maryland, Baltimore, the University of Maryland Medical System and the informatics center in College Park. The Division's top priority is to facilitate access by stakeholders to the research information contained within the Research HARBOR in order to accelerate scientific discovery in all disciplines.

"We are interested in making a positive impact on the health care system here in Maryland," explains Dr. White. "Our goal is to improve the translation of the research that happens here on campus, taking it as quickly as possible to the bedside to make a difference for patients. We will be creating a library of different kinds of information collected from consenting patients, information included in their health care records, genomic data and more. We want to create connections between researchers and clinicians and this data. If somebody walks in with a rare disease, the doctor might order genetic tests. The results would come back as a hard copy or in electronic form that is hard to share with other systems. We want to start reforming that whole process to ultimately help doctors make better clinical decisions and get information about patients to researchers looking for data and research volunteers.

"For example," Dr. White adds, "if we have a wellness mobile on the Eastern Shore, maybe it collects the names of people who are interested in participating in biomedical studies. The wellness mobile could gather information about their health – for example, high blood pressure – and that information could be taken back here to the 'mother ship.' Patients could be automatically identified as ideal subjects who are willing and qualified to participate in new clinical studies of high blood pressure. There are lots of common sense approaches like this that we would like to develop. These approaches require creating connections between what tend to be separate systems."

Dr. White earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, in 1985. He worked as a Molecular Biology Technician in the Botany Department at the University of Massachusetts from 1985 to 1987. He then earned his Ph.D. in molecular biology from New Mexico State University in 1992. He continued his training from 1992 to 1994 as a postdoctoral fellow in the Genome Informatics Department and a Research Assistant in the Molecular Biology Program at The Institute for Genomic Research (TIGR) in Rockville, Md. From 1994 to 1997, he served as a Collaborative Investigator in the Department of Bioinformatics at TIGR. He became an Assistant Investigator in the department in 1997, and Deputy Director of Bioinformatics and Associate Investigator from 1998 to 2000.

In 2000, Dr. White was named Director of Bioinformatics and an Associate Investigator at TIGR, and in 2002 he was promoted to Investigator. He served as Director and Investigator at TIGR from 2002 until 2007, when he joined the University of Maryland School of Medicine as a Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health, and Director of Bioinformatics at the Institute for Genome Sciences. In 2010, he was promoted to Associate Director of the Institute for Genome Sciences at the University of Maryland School of Medicine.

Dr. White is an internationally recognized expert in bioinformatics. At the Institute for Genome Sciences he leads a group of more than 30 scientists and engineers who are collectively responsible for the development of nearly all

production-level annotation pipelines, database systems, and tools for automated and manual annotation of genomes and metagenomic data sets at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. His primary role is to enable the researchers at School of Medicine to perform state of the art high-throughput DNA sequence generation and genomic analysis.

He is a highly regarded National Institutes of Health-funded scientist whose research focuses on building a number of genome analysis tools including tools to build bioinformatics pipelines, visualization tools, and genome standards development. He works closely with advisory committees to coordinate the development of training modules and deployment of necessary infrastructure to develop robust data management systems for genomics analysis, and to utilize clinical data in the context of genome information. He is primary investigator on a \$12.3 million grant from the National Human Genome Research Institute, part of the NIH, to run a quality assurance, coordination and analysis center for the Human Microbiome Project, a multi-million project to study the genomics of all the microbes that live on and in the human body. The Data Analysis and Collection Center (DACC) is the centralized database for the storage and distribution of all of the information gathered nationwide as part of the Human Microbiome Project.

“Dr. White is an international leader in his field, and I am certain he is the perfect choice to establish and lead our new Center for Health-Related Informatics and Bioimaging,” says Dean Reece. “This center will elevate the School of Medicine, the University and its partners in the University System of Maryland to the cutting edge of medicine, accelerating our research and allowing us to provide the very best in patient care.”