When 50 WCMC surgeons and Cornell-Ithaca biomedical engineers met for a two-day research retreat hosted by the Biomedical Engineering Department (BME) this past July in Ithaca, it was for the expressed purpose of encouraging surgeons and biomedical engineers to further explore, develop, and pursue a wide array of collaborative research projects. These types of bi-campus collaborative research efforts have been identified as a major priority for President David J. Skorton and Dean Antonio M. Gotto Jr. The generous gift to BME by James C. and Rebecca Morgan, along with support from friends and grateful patients of the Department of Surgery, will be used as seed money for collaborative research projects proposed by the retreat’s participants.

Michael L. Shuler, chair of BME, Caren Heller, assistant dean for Intercampus Initiatives, and I spent months in advance of the retreat meeting with our faculty and brainstorming potential areas of mutual research interest. The BME/Surgery research retreat offered faculty of both campuses the unique opportunity to hear about each other’s areas of interest and expertise and to think outside the box for creative new solutions to difficult surgical challenges.

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Many exciting new ideas were generated through a series of lectures, discussions, informal networking, and social events that enabled an open exchange of information and creative brainstorming among faculty from our Cornell campuses. We encouraged participants during the retreat to stretch their imaginations, to reach well beyond the normal, expected collaborative opportunities, and to seek innovative solutions to the many surgical problems and challenges discussed during the retreat.

We planned the next BME/Surgery research retreat for winter 2008 to be hosted by the Department of Surgery on the WCMC campus. We look forward to building on and expanding the important work done so far and to engendering more collaborative research.

Fabrizio Michelassi, Chairman, Department of Surgery, Weill Cornell Medical College Surgeon-in-Chief, NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center

Photos in this article: Jason Koski/CU and Lindsay France/CU unless otherwise noted
Cornell Bioengineers and Surgeons Converge

“Engineers love to solve problems. What problems can engineers solve for surgeons?”

- Michael L. Shuler, Chairman, Biomedical Engineering
[01] Anthony Reeves, Electrical and Computer Engineering
[02] Yi Wang, Radiology/Biomedical Engineering
[03] John Boockvar, Neurological Surgery
[04] Moonsoo Jin, Biomedical Engineering
[05] Rache Simmons, Surgery (breast cancer)
[06] Chi-Chang Chu, Fiber Science and Apparel Design
[07] [l.] Fabrizio Michelassi, chair, Surgery, [r.] David Putnam, Biomedical Engineering
[08] Rebecca Williams, Biomedical Engineering
[09] Philip Barie, Surgery (critical care and trauma)
[10] Jonathan Butcher, Biomedical Engineering
[12] [l.] Peter Doerschuk, Biomedical Engineering, [r.] David Lipson, Biomedical Engineering (senior lecturer)
[14] [l.] Chris Schaffer, Biomedical Engineering, [r.] Theodore Schwartz, Neurological Surgery
[15] Lawrence Bonassar, Biomedical Engineering/ Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering
[16] [l.] Sunil Singh (medical student working with Spector), [r.] Jason Spector, Surgery [reconstructive microsurgery/plastic surgery]
[19] Susan Pannullo, Neurological Surgery
[20] Michael Stewart, chair, Otorhinolaryngology
[21] Warren Zipfel, Biomedical Engineering
[22] Shivaun Archer, Biomedical Engineering (senior lecturer)
[23] Palmer Bessey, Surgery [burns/critical care/trauma]
[24] Craig Kent, Surgery [vascular]
[25] Michael Shuler, chair, Biomedical Engineering
[26] Roger Yurt, Surgery [burn surgery]
[27] Nasser Altorki, Cardiothoracic Surgery
[28] Fabrizio Michelassi, Chair, Surgery
[29] Rasa Zarnegar, Surgery
[30] Claudia Frishbach-Teschl, Biomedical Engineering
[31] Theodore Schwartz, Neurological Surgery
[32] Michael Kaplitt, Neurological Surgery
[33] Abraham Shroock, Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering
[34] Jeffrey Milson, Surgery [minimally invasive/ colorectal diseases]
[35] Michael Lieberman, Surgical Oncology
[36] Robert Ward, Otorhinolaryngology
[37] William Gilbricht, Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering

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Jason Koski/Al; Lindsay Franco/CU
In two dynamic retreats, Cornell bioengineers and surgeons dealt with topics such as wound healing, tissue engineering, drug delivery systems, imaging, biosensors, surgical devices for minimally invasive procedures, and more.