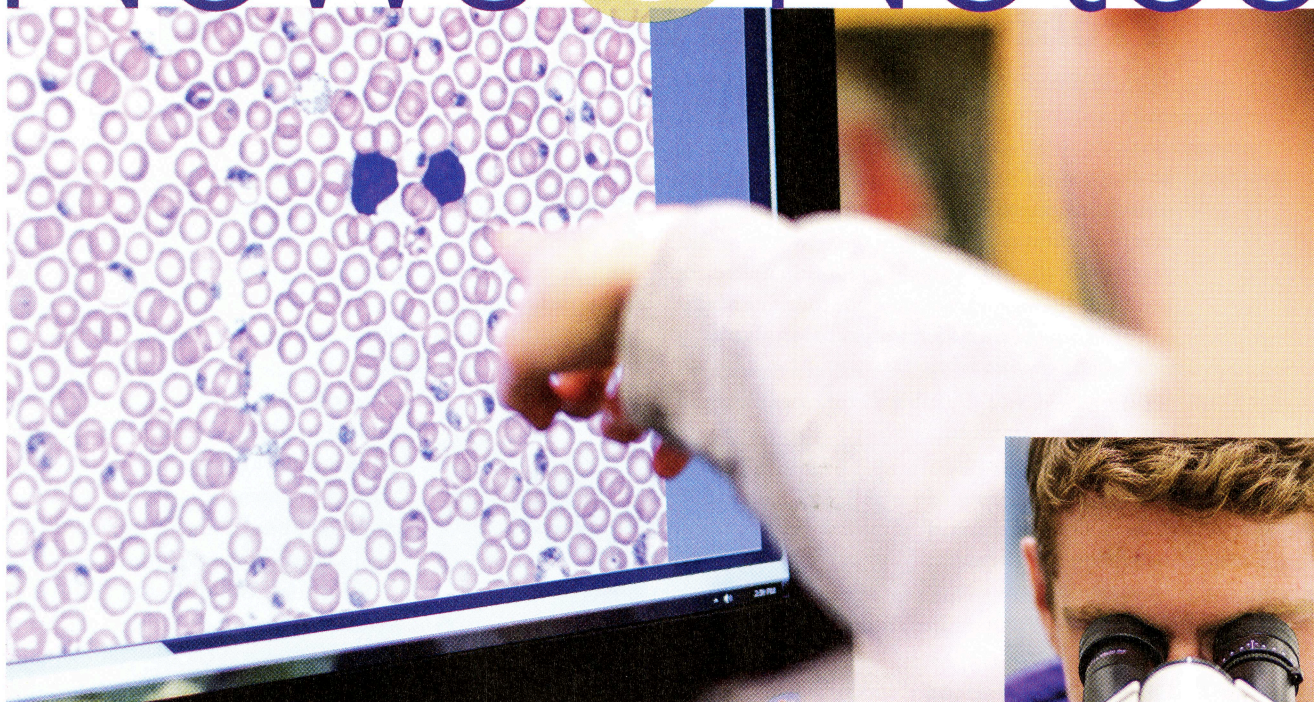


News & Notes



Malaria research nets NIH grant

JMU biologists to explore protein's role in body's immune system

Finding new ways to diagnose and fight malaria is pretty important to the National Institutes of Health, and the agency likes the approach a JMU biology professor is taking.

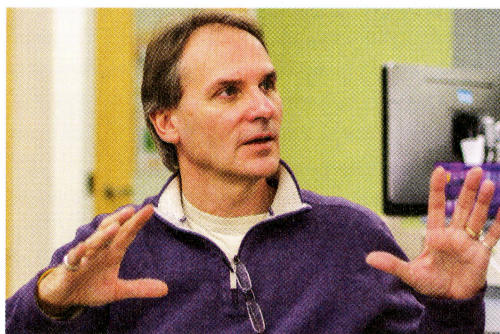
Chris Lantz ('90) recently received a \$445,500 grant from the NIH to fund potentially groundbreaking research into the role of a protein the body produces in response to certain diseases. Lantz will use the new grant to advance his exploration of how Interleukin3, or IL-3, works in the body's immune system. In 2010, Lantz and his lab students made a startling discovery about IL3—it

appears to hamper the body's defense against malaria.

For now, Lantz and his students are concerned with finding out what cells are responsible for producing IL-3 and the timing involved in its production. To do that, they will study mice with genes that are modified to alert researchers to the presence of IL-3.

If the research pans out, Lantz said, it could lead to improved clinical approaches to diagnosing and treating the disease.

"That's always the hope, but like any area of research, my work will have to be confirmed."



Chris Lantz ('90) and his students are investigating which cells produce IL-3.

'We want to understand the mechanism of how this protein is actually working ... so we are now focused on its role in the body's immune response against malaria.'

— CHRIS LANTZ ('90), *biology professor*