Touro College
Lander College of Arts & Sciences - Flatbush

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FOR RELEASE

TOURO COLLEGE UNDERGRADUATE BIOLOGY STUDENTS DISCOVER POMEGRANATE EXTRACT KILLS BACTERIA

Group Presented Research Findings at American Society for Microbiology General Meeting

Discovery Could Lead to New Developments in Antibacterial Products in Hospitals, Schools

New York, N.Y., June 8, 2010 -- Undergraduate biology students at Touro College's Lander College of Arts & Sciences in Flatbush have discovered that pomegranate extract effectively kills bacteria. The discovery could lead to new developments in antibacterial products in hospitals, schools and other settings.

The research concentrated on the antibacterial effect of pomegranate extract. The students presented their findings at the 110th annual American Society for Microbiology (ASM) general meeting held May 23 - 27, 2010 in San Diego, Calif.

"Our results indicate that pomegranate extract is bactericidal, and not only prevents bacteria from multiplying, but kills it as well," said the students' advisor, Dr. Milton Schiffenbauer, a microbiologist and chairman of biology at Touro College's New York School of Career and Applied Sciences (NYSCAS) and a professor of biology at Touro College's Flatbush campus in Brooklyn, N.Y.

The results, Dr. Schiffenbauer explained, were obtained by inoculating a dozen types of common bacteria in diluted pomegranate extract and then comparing the growth of bacterial colonies to those in a control group.

"Results varied, from 99-100 percent reduction of bacterial population for some bacteria, to slightly lower percentages for others," he said. "Our findings indicate that pomegranate extract is an effective lethal agent against potentially pathogenic microorganisms."

Touro students who participated in the research included Cipi Steinmetz, Aura Lagnado, Eric Rosenfeld, and Miriam Braun, of Flatbush, Brooklyn; Chacko Dickey of Williamsburg, Brooklyn; Israel Itzkowitz and Chavi Friedlander of Boro Park, Brooklyn; and Jacklyn Starr of Toronto, Canada. Lagnado, Dickey, Itzkowitz, and Friedlander accompanied Dr. Schiffenbauer to the ASM general meeting in San Diego.

"Touro science faculty members are continuously engaged in motivating students to broaden their learning experience through such research projects," noted Dean of Students Robert Goldschmidt, adding that several Touro students are currently actively engaged in research at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and SUNY Downstate Medical Center, for example.

Steinmetz was enthusiastic about the research findings. "This discovery could lead to new developments in antibacterial products for use in hospitals, schools, and other health care or public settings," she said, adding

that the control of harmful bacteria has become a top priority as the world's population continues to grow and bacteria continue to mutate.

Her colleague, Itzkowitz, concurred. "The fact that this compound actually kills harmful bacteria, rather than just inhibiting its growth, is significant," he said. "I am proud to be part of the research team at Touro that made this discovery and am flattered that I was asked to accompany the group to the ASM meeting in San Diego."

The Lander College of Arts and Sciences in Flatbush, with separate divisions for men and women, is located at Avenue J and East 16th Street in the Midwood section of Brooklyn. More than 1,000 students are enrolled each semester at the campus. Encompassing more than 90,000 square feet, the campus was inaugurated in the spring of 1995.

The American Society for Microbiology is the oldest and largest single life science membership organization in the world. Microbiological research includes infectious diseases, recombinant DNA technology, alternative methods of energy production and waste recycling, new sources of food, new drug development, and the etiology of sexually transmitted diseases, among other areas. Microbiology is also concerned with environmental problems and industrial processes. Microbiology boasts some of the most illustrious names in the annals of science--Pasteur, Koch, Fleming, Leeuwenhoek, Lister, Jenner and Salk--and some of the greatest achievements of mankind. Within the 20th century, a third of all Nobel Prizes in physiology or medicine have been bestowed upon microbiologists.

Undergraduate biology students in Touro College's Lander College of Arts & Sciences in Flatbush--who researched the effectiveness of pomegranate extract against potentially pathogenic microorganisms--presented their research findings at the 110th annual American Society for Microbiology (ASM) general meeting held May 23 through 27 in San Diego. They are, from left, Israel Itzkowitz of Boro Park, Brooklyn; Chacko Dickey of Williamsburg, Brooklyn; Dr. Milton Schiffenbauer, chairman of biology at Touro College's New York School of Career and Applied Sciences (NYSCAS) and a professor of biology at Touro College's Flatbush Campus, Brooklyn; Aura Lagnado of Flatbush, Brooklyn; and Chavi Friedlander of Boro Park, Brooklyn.

Touro is a system of Jewish-sponsored non-profit institutions of higher and professional education. Touro College was established in 1971 primarily to enrich the Jewish heritage, and to serve the larger American community. Approximately 17,500 students are currently enrolled in its various schools and divisions. Touro College has branch campuses, locations and instructional sites in the New York area, as well as branch campuses and programs in Berlin, Paris, Jerusalem, Moscow, and Florida. Touro University California and its Nevada branch campus, as well as Touro College Los Angeles, are separately accredited institutions governed in common by the same Board of Trustees as Touro College. For further information on Touro College, please go to: http://www.touro.edu/media/.

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