

### Dreer Recipient of ARRA Grant from NEI and RPB Career Development Award

Dr. Laura Dreer, Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology, was recently notified by the National Eye Institute that her application to the ARRA program at NIH will be funded. The grant consists of over \$132,000 awarded as a supplement to her ongoing NIH K23 career development grant. The funds will create a new post-doctoral position to participate in Dr. Dreer's research program. There are funds to support this position for two years.

Dr. Dreer is conducting a randomized clinical trial to evaluate the impact of a problem-solving intervention in reducing depression and improving quality of life in adults with low vision. Adjusting to adult-onset vision impairment poses serious problems for many adults with irreversible eye diseases. Problem-solving therapy has proven effective in reducing adjustment disorders in other types of chronic conditions that impair function (e.g., spinal cord injury, stroke). Dr. Dreer's study will provide valuable information about the efficacy of this treatment strategy during visual rehabilitation.

In addition to the NIH K23 grant, Dr. Dreer was recently selected by Research to Prevent Blindness (RPB) for their prestigious Career Development award. This grant provides \$200,000 over 3 years to enhance the development of Dr. Dreer's research program. RPB is the leading voluntary health organization in the U.S. supporting eye research directed at the prevention, treatment or eradication of all diseases that threaten vision.

### Girkin Awarded Renewal of ADAGES Study from National Eye Institute

The National Eye Institute/NIH has recently announced a renewal of the African Descent and Glaucoma Evaluation Study (ADAGES). Dr. Christopher Girkin, Professor of Ophthalmology and Director of the UAB Glaucoma Service, is the Principal Investigator of the ADAGES clinical center at UAB, one of three national centers for the study. NEI will provide approximately \$1 million over two years to UAB Ophthalmology to continue following participants in this unique cohort. ADAGES is the first prospectively designed multi-center, longitudinal study to follow a well-characterized cohort of glaucoma patients of African Descent on a variety of measures of visual function, optic nerve structure, risk assessment, and clinical results. The study's purpose is to identify what factors account for the differences in glaucoma onset and rate of progression found between individuals of African descent and those of European descent and to determine whether accounting for these differences can be used to optimize algorithms for detection of glaucoma and monitoring progression. Glaucoma is 5 times more likely to occur in persons of African descent than in those of European descent and is the leading cause of blindness in persons of African descent.

