



Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine

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Avery August named vice provost for academic affairs

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Avery August, Ph.D. '94, professor of immunology and chair of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology in the College of Veterinary Medicine, will join the Cornell administration as vice provost for academic affairs, Provost Michael Kotlikoff announced Oct. 31.



August will oversee faculty recruitment, development and advancement; department chair training; and selection of academic leadership. He will start his new position Jan. 1, 2018.

“I am extraordinarily excited that Avery has agreed to accept the position of vice provost for academic affairs,” Kotlikoff said. “As department chair, he has demonstrated thoughtful and inclusive strategic leadership and has an unqualified appreciation for the need to engage and support our faculty. Cornell is fortunate to have his creative vision to guide our academic affairs.”

August, who joined the Cornell faculty in 2010, said: “I am extremely honored, and excited, to be moving into this position. Our faculty are the core of the university, and I hope to contribute

to continuing to make Cornell an institution where faculty, particularly faculty who bring their diverse perspectives to our students, want to come and stay for their careers.

“I also believe that the provost’s ‘radical collaboration’ initiative, targeted at bringing the best faculty to Cornell, provides us with a unique opportunity to further enhance Cornell’s standing as one of the best universities in the world.”

This is a new position in the administration, Kotlikoff said. August will dedicate 40 percent of his time to the new role, and will continue his professorial work in the remaining time. August said he intends to step down as department chair in January.

The position will eventually become full time, although the timeline for that transition has not yet been decided, Kotlikoff said.

August’s responsibilities will include overseeing the Provost’s Office of Faculty Development and Diversity. Working in conjunction with Associate Vice Provost Yael Levitte on a wide range of faculty development and diversity

programming, he also will provide support and training for department chairs and associate deans.

In addition, August will oversee faculty recruitment. This will include facilitating recruitment of dual-career faculty by brokering conversations between colleges. He will support the hiring goals of the university and units, and will serve as chair or co-chair of search committees charged with recommending deans and others who report directly to the provost. He will also handle periodic review of academic departments in conjunction with the Faculty Committee on Program Review.

August's scientific achievements include finding new strategies that may be able to treat asthma. He and his team have made discoveries in understanding how key cells in the immune system are activated to spark an allergic response. They also studied the pathways those immune cells use to determine whether they recognize antigens and what the cells do to control the type of immune response that ensues.

His honors including having served on and chaired several National Institutes of Health study section panels. He received the Scientist Development Award from the American Heart Association and an Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America Investigator Award. August was the 2014 recipient of the E.E. Just Lecture Award from the American Society for Cell Biology, given annually to a minority scientist who has demonstrated outstanding scientific achievement. And the Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences honored him with its annual Distinguished Alumnus Award in 2015.

Before coming to Cornell, August was a professor of immunology in the Department of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences and director of the Center for Molecular Immunology and Infectious Disease at Pennsylvania State University, where he started as an assistant professor in 1999.

He received a bachelor's degree in medical technology from California State University, Los Angeles, in 1987. He earned a doctorate in immunology from the Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences in 1994, followed by a postdoctoral fellowship at The Rockefeller University.

by Susan Kelly

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