On Campus

Vunjak-Novakovic Named University Professor

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Gordana Vunjak-Novakovic (Jeffrey Schifman)

Gordana Vunjak-Novakovic, a Columbia medical researcher who is a pioneer in the field of tissue engineering, has been named a University Professor, Columbia's highest academic honor.

Vunjak-Novakovic is the Mikati Foundation Professor of Biomedical Engineering and Medical Sciences, a joint appointment at the Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science and Columbia University Medical Center. She also directs Columbia's Laboratory for Stem Cells and Tissue Engineering, which is located at the medical center.

An expert on the therapeutic potential of human stem cells, Vunjak-Novakovic has demonstrated through her groundbreaking research how these adaptable cells can be used to grow replacement body parts, to generate tiny pieces of human tissue for use in testing new drugs, and to improve the safety of organ-transplant procedures (see related story "Medical Breakthrough Could Increase Supply of Donor Organs").

“Yet referencing the impact of these discoveries on society and human health, impressive as they are, provides only a partial account of Professor Vunjak-Novakovic’s many contributions to this institution, higher education, and the world beyond,” said President Lee C. Bollinger in announcing her new appointment. “Professor Vunjak-Novakovic is an academic partner to numerous investigators at Columbia and other universities; an adviser sought by government and industry; a mentor deeply admired by junior faculty, clinical fellows, and postdoctoral researchers; and the entrepreneurial founder of three public-spirited biotechnology companies.”

A native of Serbia, Vunjak-Novakovic became the first female Columbia professor elected to the National Academy of Engineering in 2012.



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