Hauptman-Woodward Institute Senior Research Scientist Dr. Robert H. Blessing will be teaching in a course at the University of Zaragoza from May 31- June 6, 2009. Young Spanish crystallographers will learn how to conduct experimental studies of electron density distributions in molecules and crystals. The Spanish scientists who will be participating in the course have experience in crystal determination and now want to undertake more detailed and advanced studies of chemical bonding and atomic and molecular interactions. The city of Zaragoza is located approximately halfway between Barcelona and Madrid.

This educational opportunity occurs as a result of a 30-year collaborative scientific relationship between HWI’s Dr. Blessing and French scientist Dr. Claude Lecomte of the Université Henri Poincaré, Nancy, France (UHP). Several UHP scientists also will be lecturers at the weeklong Zaragoza seminar.

“In spring 2008, I was a visiting professor in Nancy and Professor Fernanado Lahoz of the University of Zaragoza was on sabbatical leave doing research in Nancy. Fernando told me of his plans for an advanced crystallography course in Zaragoza in spring 2009, and asked if I might come to be one of the instructors,” Blessing, professor of Structural Biology in the School of Medicine at the University at Buffalo, said. “I gladly accepted the invitation and I am looking forward eagerly to the interactions with the Spanish students and my fellow instructors. ”

Last year, HWI, UB and UHP signed a Memorandum of Understanding to begin an international student-faculty exchange program between the United States and France. The program of international faculty collaboration and student educational program is expected to begin in 2010.

About Dr. Blessing
Blessing received his bachelor’s degree in Chemistry from King’s College, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania in 1962 and his doctorate in Inorganic and Physical Chemistry from Ohio University in Athens, Ohio in 1971. He is interested in biomolecular electrostatic structure and energetics from atomic resolution biocrystallography, as well as in phasing methods for low-resolution biocrystallography. A long-time collaborator with UHP, Blessing was a driving force behind the creation of the UHP-UB-HWO international exchange program. He resides in Kenmore, NY with his wife, Barbara.

About HWI
With more than 50 years of exceptional scientific research, the Hauptman-Woodward Institute is an internationally-renowned independent, non-profit facility specializing in life-altering research. Our team of more than 75 members is committed to improving human health through the study of the causes of diseases, as well as potential therapies, at their fundamental molecular level. HWI is located in the heart of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus in Downtown Buffalo, New York, in a state-of-the-art structural biology research center at 700 Ellicott Street. For more information, visit HWI’s website at www.hwi.buffalo.edu or call 716-898-8600.

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