



Biomedical Graduate Studies

Spring 2011 Newsletter

Letter from the BGS Dean and Director:

Dear BGS students, alumni, faculty and staff,



This spring newsletter celebrates both endings and beginnings for BGS students. Including August, December and May graduates, 115 BGS students will have received their PhDs from the different BGS graduate groups this year. Many of you will be participating in our graduation ceremony on May 16. This year, thesis mentors will for the first time in the history of BGS be “hooding” all graduates taking part in the ceremony. We expect to hear of the great accomplishments of our graduates long into the future.

At the same time we will be wishing our graduates well in their future plans, we want to welcome our class of 2011, which numbers 112 students BGS-wide. The incoming class is exceptionally strong and many students will be starting their rotations in June to get a head start on the coming year. Please welcome them to campus and into the BGS community as they arrive both in June and in September.

This month’s newsletter also highlights two major outreach activities that current BGS graduate students are carrying out to bring science to the community. Students, faculty and staff from the Neuroscience, Genomics and Computational Biology graduate group and the Genetics and Gene Regulation program had booths at the Philadelphia Science Festival, organized by the Franklin Institute (www.philasciencefestival.org). Members of the EE Just Society spend their Saturdays running a Science Education Academy for elementary school children and they work with the Upward Bound Math and Science program at University City High School to promote science education and careers to older students. These activities are certain to inspire young scientists to pursue a career in biomedical research.

BGS trainees play a vital role in our research endeavors and we know that they go on to make significant contributions to science after receiving their degrees. Please help us use this newsletter to keep current and past students as part of the same community by letting us know what’s new in your careers.

Best regards,

Susan Ross, Ph.D.

Associate Dean of Biomedical Graduate Studies



BGS 2011 Graduation Ceremony

Monday, May 16, 2011

Reception

Miller Plaza

12:30 – 1:30 p.m.

Hooping Ceremony and Awarding of Diplomas

Dunlop Auditorium

1:30 p.m.

Commencement Speaker:

Arthur H. Rubenstein, MBCh
Dean, School of Medicine

University of Pennsylvania Health System

(Champagne toast to follow in Miller Plaza)

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To include information in the next newsletter, please write to Jamie Lipford at jlipford.upenn@gmail.com

Faculty & Student News

Dr. J. Larry Jameson to Begin New Position as Dean of Penn Medicine July 1, 2011



As Dean Arthur Rubenstein prepares to retire as the executive vice president of the Penn Health System and Dean of Penn Medicine, he will be succeeded by **J. Larry Jameson, M.D., Ph.D.** Dr. Jameson will join the Penn family after serving as the vice president for medical affairs and the Lewis Landsberg Dean of the Feinberg School of Medicine. In his new position at Penn Medicine, Dr. Jameson will oversee and manage the academic programs, clinical services and research activities. To read more about Dr. Jameson and the experience he will bring to Penn Medicine, please visit:

http://www.uphs.upenn.edu/news/News_Releases/2010/09/dr-j-larry-jameson-to-lead-penn-medicine/

Research Led by Penn Scientist Identifies Four New Alzheimer's Genes

A consortium of 44 universities, led by **Gerard D. Schellenberg, Ph.D., Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania**, has identified four new genes linked to Alzheimer's disease. Identification of the genes is a result of studying more than 54,000 participants over several years in order to target the underlying cause of Alzheimer's disease. Findings of the study have been published in the April 3, 2011 issue of *Nature Genetics*. For the full article on this study, please visit: http://www.uphs.upenn.edu/news/News_Releases/2011/04/alzheimers-disease-gene-discovery/



Soros Fellowships for New Americans Awarded to Two University of Pennsylvania Students



Yoonhee Patricia Ha (EPID) and Yin Li (Neuroscience), two University of Pennsylvania graduate students enrolled in M.D./Ph.D. programs, have been awarded the 2011 Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowships for New Americans. Both students have impressive academic backgrounds in the sciences and have demonstrated the "extraordinary promise, diversity, drive and determination," that characterize Soros Fellows. Each student will therefore be awarded with tuition, living expenses and approximately \$90,000 over two academic years. To read more about Ha and Li, please visit:

<http://www.upenn.edu/pennnews/news/two-university-pennsylvania-students-awarded-soros-fellowships-new-americans>

CCEB Receives \$2 Million from CDC for Research on Infectious Disease Reduction

The Center for Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics (CCEB) at Penn's School of Medicine will receive \$2 million over a 5-year period for new research on reducing the risk of infectious diseases in health care settings. **Associate Professor of Epidemiology, Ebbing Lautenbach, M.D., MPH, MSCE**, will lead the research which "will focus on the use of biomarkers, such as C-reactive protein, to improve antibiotic use in intensive care unit settings." To read the full article on this study, please visit:

http://www.uphs.upenn.edu/news/News_Releases/2011/03/cceb-infection-control-research-program/



Academic Spotlight

In this issue of our newsletter, we would like to spotlight the ***Ernest E. Just Biomedical Society (EE Just), of the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine***. EE Just is a student organization that recruits and assists underrepresented minorities (URMs) studying in the field of biomedical sciences. The organization was founded in 1997 and offers peer mentorship in everything from course selection, thesis committee meeting guidance to preparing for exams for Ph.D. candidates.



In an effort to encourage young URMs within the Philadelphia community to pursue higher education and careers in the biomedical sciences, EE Just developed outreach programs during the 2010-2011 academic school year, which have been very successful.

Science Education Academy (SEA)

In one of the outreach programs, EE Just collaborated with the White Rock Baptist Church in Philadelphia to develop the ***Science Education Academy (SEA) program*** to introduce students in grades 2-5 to the field of science. In this program, students gain hands-on experience working on science experiments, while also strengthening their skills in logic, observation and communication.



SEA students at 2011 Carver Science Fair

Upward Bound

Another EE Just outreach effort to note is working with the ***Philadelphia Upward Bound program*** in which EE Just recently participated in two panel discussions with high school students. During these discussions, EE Just members gave Upward Bound students tips on getting into grad, vet and/or medical schools, as well as planning for careers in these fields.

To read more about the Ernest E. Just Biomedical Society, please visit:

<http://www.med.upenn.edu/eejust/>



Christa Y. Heyward (CAMB) will receive the President and Provost's Citation for Exceptional Commitment to Graduate and Professional Student Life on May 12, 2011.

Christa has been an outstanding student leader since she began her studies at Penn. Some of Christa's leadership roles have included serving as a founding member of the Penn Graduate Women in Science and Engineering program (PGWISE), the first Pluralism Chair of the Black Graduate and Professional Student Association (BGAPSA 2007-2008) and the 2009 Women of Color Graduate Student honoree.

We would like to congratulate Christa on her award and thank her for her tireless commitment to serving as an exceptional graduate student leader.

Congratulations to Todd Macfarlan, Ph.D. (CAMB 2005)



Todd's paper, "Endogenous retroviruses and neighboring genes are coordinately repressed by LSD1/KDM1A", was published in the March 15, 2011 issue of *Genes and Development* magazine, and was also highlighted on the front cover.

2011 Saul Winegrad Award for Outstanding Dissertation Recipients

Adam Ewing, Ph.D. (GCB)

Jason Hall, Ph.D. (IGG)

Joshua Hawk, Ph.D. (NGG)

Katarina Moravcevic, Ph.D. (BMB)

Christopher Rowan, Ph.D. (EPID)

Leah Sabin, Ph.D. (CAMB)

Alec Schmaier, M.D., Ph.D. (PHARM)

Niraj Shanbhag, M.D., Ph.D. (CAMB)

Rongmei Zhang, Ph.D. (BIOSTAT)

Congratulations to all of this year's recipients!

Faculty Awards

♦ **Casim Sarkar, Ph.D. (BMB)** received a NSF Career Award for his proposal "Engineering Biomolecules and Cells for Oral Protein Delivery."

♦ **Gideon Dreyfuss, Ph.D. (BMB) and Jim Alwine, Ph.D. (CAMB)**, were named Fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

♦ **Joel S. Bennett, M.D. (BMB)** won the 2010 Beutler Prize which is given to a basic scientist or clinical researcher whose work has changed the field of medicine.

BGS STUDENT AWARDS



Recipients of the 2011 NSF Research Fellowship Awards

Laura Castellano (PHARM)

Hannah Dueck (GCB)

Peter Huwe (BMB)



Recipient of the Rose Meadow Levinson Memorial Prize

Scott Bresler (BMB)



Recipient of the 2011 CHOP Distinguished Research Trainee Award

Brenna Brady (IGG)



Recipient of the 2011 Cranefield Graduate Student Award

Juan Ramon Martinez Francois (NGG)



Poster Board Winners of the 27th Annual Mahoney Institute of Neurological Sciences Retreat

Rebecca Chance (NGG)

Anuradha Dhingra (NGG)

Greg Dunn (NGG)

Nina Hsu (NGG)

Kristy Simmons (NGG)

Jason Wester (NGG)

Natalie Wolkow (NGG)

Matt Young (NGG)

BGS STUDENT AWARDS (cont.)



Graduate Group in Neuroscience NRSA Recipients

- David Combs
- Dan Denman
- Meng-meng Fu
- Michael Hart
- Matt Nassar
- Ryan Tsou
- Samantha White
- Coby Zyskind

BGS ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENTS

Michelle Kinder, Ph.D. (I88 - 2010) successfully authored a competitive research proposal in tumor immunology on determining the importance of dendritic cells and type I interferon, and was subsequently awarded the prestigious Irvington Institute Fellowship from the Cancer Research Institute.

Linda A. Lieberman, Ph.D. (I88 - 2004) was chosen to participate in the inaugural year of the Public Policy Fellowship Program sponsored by the American Association of Immunologists. The program will begin in May 2011 and will last for one year. Only 10 junior scientists were chosen across the U.S. for this program.

Kimberly Noble, M.D., Ph.D. (V88 - 2005) was named a 2011 Association for Psychological Science “Rising Star”. This award is given to those in the early stages of their career, but who are already making significant contributions to the field of psychological science.

David Stachura, Ph.D. (CAMB - 2006) was recently awarded a K01 award (5-year mentored grant) for his work on zebrafish blood development.

Alumni & Faculty Appointments

~~~ ALUMNI APPOINTMENTS ~~~



Feng Guo, Ph.D.

Starting July 1, 2011, **Feng Guo, Ph.D., (BMB - 2000)** will be promoted to Associate Professor at UCLA, after holding a position as an assistant professor for the last six years.

Latasha K. Crawford, VMD, Ph.D., (INSC - 2010) will complete her Post-doctoral Fellowship in Comparative Pathology at Johns Hopkins University. Beginning July 11, 2011, Dr. Crawford will be pursuing a residency in veterinary pathology.

~~~ BGS FACULTY APPOINTMENTS ~~~

Biochemistry and Molecular Biophysics

- Sara Cherry, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Microbiology, School of Medicine
- Xiaolu Yang, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Cancer Biology, School of Medicine

Cell and Molecular Biology

- Eric Witze, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Cancer Biology, School of Medicine
- Neal Sondheimer, M.D., Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, School of Medicine

Genomics and Computational Biology

- Andy Minn, M.D., Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Radiation Oncology, School of Medicine

Immunology

- Igor Brodsky, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Pathobiology, School of Veterinary Medicine
- Sunny Shin, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Microbiology, School of Medicine

Neuroscience

- Wenqin Luo, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Neuroscience, School of Medicine
- Gerard Schellenberg, Ph.D., Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, School of Medicine

2011 Residency Matches

Congratulations to this year's MD-PhD graduates who will be moving on to begin their residencies at the following institutions:

Defne Amado (NGG) Neurology – University of Pennsylvania (HUP)

Larry Bish (CAMB) Medicine – University of Pennsylvania (HUP)

Alex Chavez (CAMB) Pathology – Harvard (MGH)

Priya Dedhia (IMUN) Surgery – University of Michigan

Kristine Fortin McWilliams (CAMB) Neurology – University of Michigan

Josh Gruber (CAMB) Medicine – Stanford

Martina Lefterova (CAMB) Pathology – Stanford

Brett McCray (NGG) Neurology – Harvard (MGH & Brigham & Women's)

Eric Mellon (BMB) Radiation Oncology – U. South Florida (Moffitt Cancer Center)

Ksenia Orlova (NGG) Radiology – University of Pennsylvania (HUP)

Anil Panigrahi (CAMB) Anesthesiology – Stanford

Kunal Patel (CAMB) Medicine – Harvard (Brigham & Women's)

Shetal Patel (CAMB) Medicine – Harvard (Brigham & Women's)

Alexei Polishchuk (BMB) Radiation Oncology – UCSF

Uma Sachdeva (CAMB) Ophthalmology – Johns Hopkins (Wilmer)

Anup Sharma (NGG) Psychiatry – University of Pennsylvania (HUP)

Amy Tsou (CAMB) Pediatrics – Harvard (Boston Children's)

David Wise (CAMB) Medicine – Cornell (New York Presbyterian)

The Philadelphia Science Festival



GCB Students at Exhibit

The Philadelphia Science Festival was held April 15-28th, along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. BGS students set up multiple booths to exhibit “Genomes and Inheritance”, “The Human Microbiome”, describing the types of micro-organisms in the human microbiome, and “Mind Your Brain”.

Even with uncooperative weather at the start of the festival, as seen in the photos, BGS students and others are still able to brag about a successful event!



"Genomes and Inheritance" Exhibit



Natural selection and dog genetics exhibit



Exploring types of bugs in the human microbiome



"Mind Your Brain" Exhibit

Special thanks to **Jessica Bryant, Amy Campbell, Chris Campbell, Julie Crudele, Hannah Dueck, Brittany Gregory** and **Kathleen Sprouffske** for organizing this event to represent The University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine!



The University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, in cooperation with the AstraZeneca Nobel Medicine Initiative



— presents —

Michael S. Brown, M.D.

1985 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine

— Lecture and Audience Q&A —

Partnerships, Puzzles and Paradigms
A collaborative approach to cholesterol

Thursday May 12, 2011, 1:00pm – 3:00pm
Dunlop Auditorium
Stemmler Hall

All are welcome to attend

