

WINTER 2012/2013 BGS NEWSLETTER

BGS Alumnus Named Chair of the Department of Radiology



Mitchell D. Schnall, MD, PhD, (Biophysics/BMB - 1986), has been named Chair of the Department of Radiology at the Perelman School of Medicine.

Dr. Schnall's background reflects Penn's dedication

to interdisciplinary education. As a University Scholar, he was able to pursue a customized curriculum integrating physics and medicine culminating in an undergraduate degree in physics, a medical degree and a PhD in biophysics from the University of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Schnall completed his medical training as a radiology resident at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, where he was chief resident in 1989. He was appointed Assistant Professor in 1991, Associate Professor in 1994, and Professor in 2002. He was named to his endowed professorship in 2001. For seven years, he was Chief of Magnetic Resonance Imaging and has served as the Department's Vice Chair for Research since 1997. Dr. Schnall is a Penn citizen through and through and his dedication to University, the Health System, and the Perelman School of Medicine will serve him well as department chair.

Source: [Penn Medicine](#)



BGS Graduate Group Holiday Parties!

Cell & Molecular Biology
December 13th - 4:30 pm
BRB II/III Lobby

MINS/Neuroscience
December 19th - 4-6pm
140 John Morgan Building

Pharmacology
December 19th - 5:00 p.m.
Translational Research Lobby



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NIH Awards Penn Scientists \$10M for Single Cells Research

James Eberwine, PhD (PGG, NGG & GCB) and **Junhyong Kim, PhD** (GCB), will be studying the role of how messenger RNA (mRNA) molecules vary in their function in individual cells with a five-year, \$10 million grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Their award is supported by the NIH Common Fund and is part of three initiatives of the Single Cell Analysis Program (SCAP).



The goal of the Penn grant is to characterize the variability in identity and abundances of RNA molecules that are transcribed from the genome of human neurons and heart cells. These are the so-called excitable cells, those that use bioelectricity for communication and everyday functions. Many human nervous system diseases derive from changes in electrical responsiveness of neurons and heart arrhythmias account for many heart-related deaths.

To read the full article on the research, please visit: [Single Cells Research](#)

Parkinson's Disease Protein Causes Disease Spread and Neuron Death in Healthy Animals



After several years of incremental study, researchers at the Perelman School of Medicine, including senior author, **Virginia M.-Y. Lee, PhD**, have been able to piece together important steps in how Parkinson's disease (PD) spreads from cell to cell and leads to nerve cell death. Their line of research also informs the general concept that this type of disease progression is a common pathway for such other neurodegenerative diseases as Alzheimer's, Huntington's, progressive supranuclear palsy, and possibly amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS).

In short, Penn researchers found that, in healthy mice, a single injection of synthetic, misfolded α -Syn fibrils led to a cell-to-cell transmission of pathologic α -Syn proteins and the formation of Parkinson's α -Syn clumps known as Lewy bodies in interconnected regions of the brain.

To read the full article on the study, please visit: [Penn Medicine News](#)

Brian Strom, MD, MPH, Elected to Chair Institute of Medicine (IOM) Committee

Brian L. Strom, MD, MPH (Epidemiology and Biostatistics), has been selected to Chair the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) Committee on the Consequences of Sodium Reduction in Populations.

The Committee will work to evaluate the results, study design and methodologies that have been used to assess the relationship between sodium and health outcomes in literature published since the IOM Dietary Reference Intakes report.

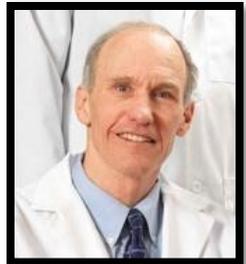




BGS faculty members **Shelley L. Berger, PhD** (CAMB, BMB & GCB), **Nancy M. Bonini, PhD** (NGG), and **Carl H. June, MD** (IMUN & CAMB), have been elected as members of the Institute of Medicine (IOM). Election to the IOM is one of the nation's highest honors in biomedicine.



The new members elected to the IOM bring Penn Medicine's total to 61. The newly-elected members raise the IOM's total active membership to 1,732, and the number of foreign associates to 112. With an additional 84 members holding emeritus status, the IOM's total membership is 1,928.



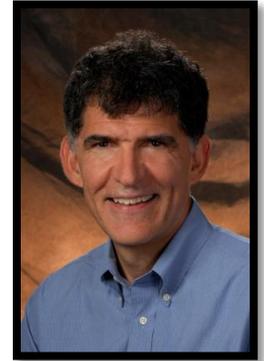
Established in 1970 by the National Academy of Sciences, the IOM has become recognized as a national resource for independent, scientifically-informed analysis and recommendations on health issues. With their election, members make a commitment to volunteer their service on the IOM committees, boards, and other activities.

Photos from top to bottom: Shelley L. Berger, Nancy M. Bonini and Carl H. June.

Source: [Penn Medicine News](#)

Daniel J. Rader, MD

(CAMB and PGG), has been awarded the American Heart Association's (AHA) Clinical Research Prize for developing new methods to identify factors regulating the metabolism of fat particles in the bloodstream and testing their impact on the development of atherosclerosis.



Dr. Rader has spent the last two decades working in the field of lipoprotein biology and atherosclerosis, and is widely recognized international leader in this field.

Source: [Penn Medicine](#)

2012 Recipients of the Awards of Excellence

David Artis, PhD (CAMB & IMUN) was awarded the Stanley N. Cohen Biomedical Research Award.

Michael P. Cancro, PhD (IMUN) was awarded the Lady Barbara Colyton Prize for Autoimmune Research.

James Shorter, PhD (CAMB, NGG, BMB & PGG), was awarded the Michael S. Brown New Investigator Research Award.

Bob Vonderheide, MD, DPhil (CAMB & IMUN) was awarded the William Osler Patient Oriented Research Award.

BGS Student Awards

 **Collin Challis (NGG)** is the recipient of the following awards:
Fine Science Tools Travel Award
Top Poster Award winner at the Society for Biological Psychiatry Annual Meeting

 **Michael Hart (NGG)** is the winner of the MINS Flexner Award for the Best Neuroscience Dissertation for 2012

 **Individual National Research Service Awards (NRSA)**

Irene Chernova (IMUN)
Challis Collin (NGG)
Brian Finkelman (EPID)
Brian Weiser (PGG)

 **Recipients of the 2012 John S. O'Brien Research Award**

Sean Arlauckas (PGG) – Best Poster Presentation
Nyamekye Obeng-Adjei (PGG) – Best Oral Presentation

 **Center for Teaching and Learning Certificates**

Lindsay Morgan (NGG)
Tanya Weerakkody (NGG)
Samantha White (NGG)

 **Dorthea Jameson/Leo Hurvich Behavioral Science Travel Awards**

Laura Felgendreger (NGG)	Amy Price (NGG)
Alexis Gerber (NGG)	Toni Prince (NGG)
Ankit Jain (NGG)	Ashwin Ramayya (NGG)
Marino Pagan (NGG)	Melissa Wang (NGG)



ALUMNI APPOINTMENTS



Congratulations to our BGS alumni who have moved on to promising careers and have been appointed to the following positions:

Cara Bertozzi, PhD (CAMB – 2010) recently started a position as a **Managing Editor** at American Journal Experts in Durham, NC. This company provides a suite of customer-oriented solutions for non-native speakers who wish to publish their scientific and biomedical manuscripts in English-speaking journals.

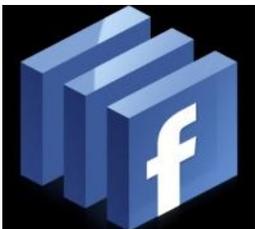


Loraine S. Dieckman, PhD (PGG – 2000) was promoted to **Associate Professor** of Pharmacology in the Graduate Programs of Nurse Anesthesia at Texas Wesleyan University.

Reshma Singh, PhD (IMUN – 2006) recently accepted the position of **Investigator II** at Novartis in Cambridge, MA and will relocate to Boston.

STAY IN TOUCH WITH BGS ALUMNI!

Visit us at the following social networks:





UPCOMING EVENTS



Please join us!

BGS Alumni, Faculty and Students are cordially invited to attend the

❖
BGS Alumni Social
❖

This will be an evening of food, cocktails, and catching up with the UPenn BGS family

More details will be posted on our LinkedIn page and sent via email. If you know of classmates who may not receive the BGS newsletter, please pass on the word.

23rd Annual Behavioral & Cognitive Neuroscience Retreat



Stellar Lecturer: Todd C. Sacktor, MD

Professor of Physiology and Pharmacology
Professor of Neurology
SUNY Downstate Medical Center

Friday
December 14, 2012
Claudia Cohen Hall



FACULTY APPOINTMENTS

Cell and Molecular Biology

- **Stewart Anderson, MD**, Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Perelman School of Medicine
- **Hakon Hakonarson, MD, PhD**, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Perelman School of Medicine
- **Brendan Keating, B.Sc. (Hons) and D. Phil**, Research Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, Perelman School of Medicine
- **Katalin Susztak, MD, PhD**, Associate Professor of Medicine, Perelman School of Medicine
- **Matthew Weitzman, PhD**, Associate Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, Perelman School of Medicine

Genomics and Computational Biology

- **Sharon Diskin, PhD**, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, Perelman School of Medicine
- **Benjamin Garcia, PhD**, Associate Professor of Biochemistry and Biophysics, Perelman School of Medicine
- **Michael Levy, PhD**, Assistant Professor of Biostatistics and Epidemiology, Perelman School of Medicine

Neuroscience

- **Stewart Anderson, MD**, Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Perelman School of Medicine

Pharmacology

- **Aalim Weljie, PhD**, Research Assistant Professor of Pharmacology, Perelman School of Medicine

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

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