Faculty News

Funding Update:

- Congratulations to the following PIs for receiving new NIH grants:
  - Dr. Lau: 1 R01 DK108994 for 4 years
  - Dr. Lau: 1 R01 AR061791 for 5 years

- Congratulations to the following PIs on successful competitive renewals:
  - Dr. Hay: 2R01CA090764-16 for next 5 years
  - Dr. Lau: 2R01AR061791-06 for next 5 years
  - Dr. Segev: RO1 GM45444 for next 4 years

- Congratulations to Dr. Ackerman - he is a co-recipient (with Dr. Glenn Furuta, UCD) of a new grant from the End Allergies Together, Inc.’s (EAT) for 2 years

- Dr. Colley (along with Dr. William Walden) was awarded a R25 Post-baccalaureate Research Education Program (PREP) grant for 5 years for the UIC Portal to Biomedical Research Careers (UIC PBRC). This program is designed for recent baccalaureate science degree recipients who are strongly motivated to pursue a biomedically-related PhD or MD/PhD degree, but who would benefit from a year engaged in cutting-edge research and building their critical thinking and scientific communication skills to become competitive applicants to top PhD and MD/PhD programs.

Other News:

- Congratulations to Dr. Maxim Frolov on his Academic Promotion to Professor effective August 16, 2017

- Dr. Tyner was awarded the prestigious University Scholar award for 2017-2018. The University Scholars Program provides three-year awards to six faculty members who have demonstrated superior performance in scholarly activities in both research and teaching and who show great promise for future achievements

- Drs. Hay and Tyner were appointed Program Co-Leaders for Cancer Biology for UIC Cancer Center

- Karen Colley, as President of the Society for Glycobiology, ran the 2017 Society for Glycobiology Meeting in Portland, OR, November 2017
Dr. Hay attended the following conferences:

- April 2017 - Invited Speaker - Banbury/Cold Spring Harbor meeting on Better Cancer Therapy from Redox Biology
- April 2017 - Invited Speaker - Annual Scientific Meeting, Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center.
- July 2017 - Invited Speaker, Beatson International Cancer Conference 2017: ‘Feeding the Beast – the metabolic landscape of the tumour and its host’
- October 2017 - Invited Speaker - The annual meeting of the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD), Washington, DC

Dr. Ackerman attended the following conferences:

- March 2017 - invited speaker for the annual meeting of the American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI) in Atlanta, GA.
- July 2017 - invited plenary speaker for the 10th International Eosinophil Society Biennial Symposium, Gothenburg, Sweden
- Co-organizer & PI - R13 Conference Grant from the NIH/NIAID

Dr. Simonovic attended the following conferences:

- October 2017 - invited speaker IUBMB Focused Meeting on the Aminoacyl-tRNA Synthetases, Clearwater Beach, FL

Dr. Segev attended the following conferences:

- June 2017 - invited speaker for the 38th Steenbock Symposium on ‘Protein trafficking in the secretory pathway’, the University of Wisconsin-Madison
- September 2017 - invited speaker for the Genetics, genomics and Beyond. Calico Life Sciences, San Francisco, CA

Dr. Lau attended the following conferences:

- 2017 - invited speaker for Gordon Conference on IGF and Insulin System in Physiology and Disease, Venice, CA
- 2017 - invited speaker for the Keystone Symposium on Injury, Inflammation, and Fibrosis, Snowmass, CO
- 2017 - invited speaker and Session Chair, 9th International Workshop on the CCN Family of Genes, Saint Malo, France

The 11th Annual Costa Memorial Lecture took place on May 18, 2017 and was presented by Dr. Michael Karin, Ph.D. from Department of Pharmacology University of California, San Diego

Our Faculty Recruitment Initiative in the fields of Epigenetics and Systems Biology is ongoing with support from COM. In 2017 we interviewed 15 candidates.
Dr. Robert Storti, professor emeritus, died June 10, 2017 following an illness. Dr. Storti joined UIC in 1978 after his post-doctoral fellowship at MIT and retired in 2006. His research focused on the molecular genetics of muscle development and growth in fruit flies. His work was supported by the Muscular Dystrophy Association and the National Institutes of Health for more than 20 years. During his 28 years at UIC, he trained eight Ph.D. students and 10 post-doctoral fellows, and he was recognized as a University Scholar.

Faculty in the news:

- Dr. Ackerman (1/6/17)
  [https://news.uic.edu/why-is-asthma-worse-in-black-patients](https://news.uic.edu/why-is-asthma-worse-in-black-patients)

General News

- Dr. Hazem Abdelkarim (Gaponenko Lab) was selected by Alzheimer’s Drug Discovery Foundation to receive the 2017 Young Investigator award.
- Ying Su (Lavie Lab) competed in UIC Startup Challenge in April 2017. Her concept, Enzyme by Design, was awarded a Finalist prize.
- Dr. Milica Grozdanovic (Ackerman Lab) was awarded a Travel Grant from the American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI) to attend their annual meeting March 4-7, 2017 in Atlanta, GA to present a poster on her work.

New Employees

- Kim Hodges (Vst Rese Asst Prof - Segev)
- Valeriya Gyrkovska (Postdoc - Segev)
- Gopal Ramkrishnan (Vst Rese Asst Prof - Hay)
- Rakhilya Murtazina (Vst Rese Asst Prof - Segev)
- Jonghoon Won (Postdoc - Lau)
- Carlota Rubio-Perez (J-1 Research Collaborator - Benevolenskaya)
- Alexandre Ferro Aissa (Postdoc- Frolov)
- Sarah Zhao (Res spe – Segev )

- University of Bath, UK, Department of Biology and Biochemistry Program Placement Students:
Our department has been participating in this work-study program for ~13 years. For 2017-18, the following student has joined our department:

- Megan Critcher (Frolov Lab)
- Nadia Kellie-Smith (Frolov Lab)
- Phillipa Burns (Tyner Lab)

**BMG Retreat**

The 9th BMG Annual Retreat was held August 25 & 26, 2017, at the Grand Geneva Resort in Lake Geneva, WI.

As in past retreats, the retreat provided a venue for faculty, postdocs and graduate students to present their work in form of seminars and poster presentations. Total of 59 members of the department attended the retreat this year. It was great to see that all our new graduate students were able to join. We also hosted guests, from the UIC Department of Surgery and Department of Medicine, as well as a representative from our recent collaborator on live-cell imaging, Nexcelom Bioscience.

The retreat allowed the department members to get to know each other better, through multiple events - poster competition, recognition dinner and last but not the least, soccer match and trivia game!

Congratulations to the following winners:

- Shuo Huang (Raychaudhuri Lab) on the best poster award “Damaged DNA binding protein 2, a novel partner and regulator of Wnt signaling in colon cancer”,
- Dr. Milica Grozdanovic (Acketman Lab) on the best talk award “A novel biased antagonist of the eotaxin-CCR3 pathway in eosinophils”.

As for the faculty, they once again demonstrated their athletic leadership and won the soccer game!

A big ‘Thank You’ to the retreat organizers, Drs Elizaveta Benevolenskaya, Rakhilya Murtasina, Vaibhav Chand, and graduate students Ryan Clarke and Majd Ariss. Special thanks to our Bath University students who helped during the event, Philippa Burns, Meg Critcher and Nadia Kellie-Smith.

A few highlights…….
BMG Publications

Our faculty, staff and students continue to do great research and publish their work in some of the best journals as well as contribute to book chapters. Make sure to periodically check 'publication record' under faculty profiles at our department website http://bcmg.com.uic.edu/faculty/index.html

Student News

We welcome the following new students:

- Anna Falguera Barque
- Jeremy Bingen
- Alison Ha
- Soeun Kang
- Joseph Leasure
- Hannah Pennington MD/PhD student
- Danny Principe MD/PhD student
- Katarina Vlajic
Awards:

- Avik Banerjee (Gaponenko Lab) received DOD PRCRP Horizon predoctoral fellowship for 2 years.
- Matt Macdougall (Merrill Lab) received NIH Ruth L. Kirschtein NRSA F30 Fellowship for 4 years.
- Anu Puppala (Simonovic Lab) for winning the Chancellor's Graduate Research Award.
- Ryan Clarke (Merrill Lab) received Silver Prize and Daniel Principi (Rana Lab) received Honorable Mention at this year's COM Research Forum.
- Following students won in the poster prize competition in Molecular and Cellular Biology category at the MBRB Research Day:
  - First prize - Matthew MacDougall (Merrill lab)
  - Second prize - Ryan Clarke (Merrill lab)

Presentations:

- Avik Banerjee (Gaponenko Lab) presented a poster at the Frederick National Laboratory of the National Cancer Center (NCI), MD in December 2017.

Thesis Defense:

- Congratulations to the following students who successfully completed their Thesis Defense:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Lab</th>
<th>Thesis Defense</th>
<th>Current position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indira Elangovan</td>
<td>Reddy</td>
<td>March 21, 2017</td>
<td>Postdoc - Dept. of Medicine, UIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akshay Pandey</td>
<td>Raychaudhuri</td>
<td>May 12, 2017</td>
<td>LI-COR Biotechnology, Lincoln, NE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darren Wozniak</td>
<td>Tyner</td>
<td>June 26, 2017</td>
<td>Research Scientist - GlycoBac LLC, Laramie, WY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaurang Bhide</td>
<td>Colley</td>
<td>July 19, 2017</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joshua Bernstein</td>
<td>Shikano</td>
<td>Sept. 8, 2017</td>
<td>3rd year Medical Student, UIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yu(Jenny) Zheng</td>
<td>Merrill</td>
<td>Sept. 15, 2017</td>
<td>Postdoc - Harvard Medical School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shuo Huang</td>
<td>Raychaudhuri</td>
<td>Sept. 19, 2017</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Ebenezer</td>
<td>Natrajan</td>
<td>October 27, 2017</td>
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BMG Alumni News

- Tanmay Chavan (Gaponenko Lab) received a two-year American Heart Association postdoctoral fellowship in August of 2017
- Jacob Choi (Lau Lab, MD-PhD student) is now a Medical Resident at Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland, OH
- Lakxmi Subramanian (Nakamura lab) started her own research group as a lecturer at Queen Mary, University of London in the School of Biological and Chemical Sciences in Spring of 2017. Her website: http://www.sbc.qmul.ac.uk/staff/lakxmisubramanian.html

Congratulations to the proud parents!!!!

Adam Didier (Nakamura Lab) and his wife welcomed baby girl, Talia, on August 24, 2017

Maria Paula Zappia (Frolov Lab) and her husband welcomed baby boy, Marcos Pauni, on September 8, 2017
Just for laughs……………….

“What do you call an alligator in a vest?”

“An investigator.”

“I’m thinking we injected you with the wrong stem cells.”

“Do you have to take sick leave? We have a grant deadline.”

“Hey, my pup is sick. Are you a real doctor or just PhD?”

“Shall I begin in the top-left corner or somewhere in the middle? Mmmmm… So many choices!”

“Molecular biologist: I don’t believe in miracles… I rely on them.”