THE DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR GENETICS

News Letter #2 (Nov. 2008)

Faculty News

- Dr. Ackerman received a number of new research grants including the 2-year 2008 Translational Research Award (in collaboration with a PI from Univ. of Colorado Denver) from the American Gastroenterological Association and an unrestricted research gift from the Campaign Urging Research on Eosinophilic Diseases (CURED), both for clinical and translational studies on Eosinophilic Esophagitis, and a Leukemia and Lymphoma Society Focused Workshop Grant.

- Dr Gaponenko received a 4-year national grant from the American Cancer Society.

- We welcome Dr. Miljan Simonovic! He joined our faculty in August 2008 as an Assistant Professor. His wife, Ivana Simonovic, has also joined our department. Some of you may not know this, but Dr. Simonovic graduated from our dept. in 2002!

General News

- Dr. Yongku Park (Hay lab) received "Penny Severns Breast, Cervical and Ovarian Cancer Research Fund" from the Illinois Department of Public Health for one year.

- **1st BMG Retreat**: We held our first Departmental Retreat at the Illinois Beach Resort Conference Center in Zion, IL, on Nov. 1 & 2, 2008. A big ‘Thank You’ to Dr. Merrill for organizing it. The retreat was a great success and provided an opportunity for people in the department to interact in an informal way as well as learn about each other’s research. There were lab presentations and Poster presentations. Congratulations to the following Poster winners!:
  - **1st Tier winners**:
    - Sherwin Abraham (Gaponenko Lab), Rebecca Clifford (Kaplan Lab) and Mary Truscott (Frolov Lab)
  - **2nd Tier winners**:
    - Aaron Ambrus (Frolov Lab), Saugata Hazra (Lavie Lab) and Jessica Gierut (Tyner Lab)

- Congratulations to Jan Jensen and Christine Schar (both from Gettins lab)! They got married in July 2008.

- Mary Truscott (Frolov lab) has organized the PDF/RAP association to provide a forum within which postdoctoral fellows, research assistant professors, and instructors working in the department could become acquainted with each other and their respective research expertise and interests. They meet monthly at the Center for Structural Biology to discuss different topics and present their work.
Christine Doyle, Graduate Student in the Ackerman lab and Medical Student in the UIC COM, received a 2008 Summer Research Fellowship Medical Student Grant from the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI).

Brandon Nicolay (Frolov Lab) and Janai Carr (Raychaudhuri Lab) received Individual Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award from NIH. This extremely competitive and prestigious award provides full funding for 5-years.

Hyun Jung Park (Costa Lab) and Brandon Nicolay (Frolov Lab) gave talks at The Cell Cycle meeting at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratories in New York in May 2008.

The following students were selected on T32 DK007739 Institutional Training grant awarded by NIH for the period July 08 – June 09:
  o Jennifer Kwan (Hay Lab)
  o Katherine Weaver (Tyner Lab)
  o Adriana Zimnicka (Kaplan Lab)

We welcome 3 new 1st year students:
  o Battuya Bayarmagnai
  o Fan Gao
  o Yuka Shimizu

We also welcome two MD/PhD students: Joseph Zapater (Colley’s lab) and Thomas Wubben (Mesecar’s Lab).

Congratulations to:

  o Ivana Tonic (Hay Lab)! Ivana got married on April 19, 2008.
  o Dragana Kopanja (Raychaudhuri Lab)! Dragana and her husband welcomed a beautiful baby girl, Mila Maksimovic, on October 3, 2008.
  o To the following students who successfully completed their Thesis Defense:
    ▪ Ninh Doan (Gettins Lab) - September 10, 2008
    ▪ Vladimir Petrovic (Costa Lab) - September 16, 2008.
    ▪ Richa Bedi (Ackerman Lab) - October 23, 2008.
    ▪ Irina Voineagu (Mirkin Lab) - October 24, 2008.
    ▪ Marija Kundakovic (Grayson Lab) - November 12, 2008.

"Education is what survives when what has been learned has been forgotten." B.F. Skinner

"I want to know how God thinks, all the rest is just detail" Albert Einstein

"The great tragedy of science -- the slaying of a beautiful hypothesis by an ugly fact." Thomas H. Huxley

"Theories have 4 stages of acceptance:
1) This is worthless nonsense;
2) This is an interesting, but perverse, point of view;
3) This is true, but quite unimportant;
4) I always said so."

J.B.S. Haldane
My friends, as a result of our experimentation, we have just lost a dear and valued colleague.

On the other hand, we have just gained a publication.

Most scientists regarded the new streamlined peer-review process as 'quite an improvement.'

Biggs watched incredulously as Santa's once beautiful sleigh, port stabilizer torn away, flipped gracefully over and entered a terminal dive to destruction.

"Oh just great," thought Biggs, "the night before Christmas and there goes my last chance at getting research funding."