Faculty News

**Funding Update:**

- Dr. Nissim Hay was awarded the prestigious University Scholar award for 2009-2010. 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.

- Dr. Ackerman along with Dr. Christman (Medicine) and Dr. Ye (Pharmacology) received one of seven UIC Center for Clinical and Translational Science (CCTS) 2008 Pilot Grant awards. The seven projects were chosen from 75 proposals submitted by Investigators from 17 different departments and four colleges.

- Dr. Caffrey is the Director of the Basic Science Core for the Developmental Center For AIDS Research grant (D-CFAR) that was awarded recently. D-CFAR grant is designed to enhance HIV/AIDS-related research among investigators at UIC, Rush Medical Center and Cook County.

- Dr. Shikano received an American Cancer Society-Illinois Division/ LUNGevity grant.

- The Program Project Grant, Mechanisms of Metal Ion Regulation in Human Cells, that was initiated by Dr Kaplan as PI, prior to joining us, has just been competitively renewed. The program includes investigators at Yale, Johns Hopkins, OHSU and UIC. Dr Kaplan’s project deals with copper regulatory mechanisms in human cells.

- Dr. Benevolenskaya received a 5-year R01 grant from the National Cancer Institute.

- Dr. Merrill, along with Dr. Eddington (Dept. of Bioengineering) received UIC Chancellor’s Discovery Fund multidisciplinary pilot grant for their proposal "Understanding and manipulating forces that control embryonic stems cells" in the amount of $40,000.

- The following PIs received funding under The American Recovery And Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Federal Stimulus Funds):
  - Dr. Karen Colley
  - Dr. Lester Lau
  - Dr. Brad Merrill
Other News:

- Dr. Raychaudhuri was appointed Interim Program Lead for the UIC Cancer Center in Dec. 2008.
- Dr. Nissim Hay was interviewed by the BBC World Service Science in Action about his recent study in Cancer Cell which describes strategies for exploiting a weakness he discovered in an oncoprotein (cancer-promoting protein) that is commonly found in human cancer. The interview, titled "Cancer Cell Achilles Heel Discovered" can be downloaded as a podcast from their website at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/programmes/science_in_action.shtml
- Dr. Margalit Mokyr retired after more than 30 years of service. She has been granted Emeritus status by the university.
- Dr. Elliott Kaufman will be retiring on 12/31/09 after more than 25 years of service. The department will hold a Retirement Reception in January 2010.

General News

- **2nd BMG Retreat**: Our second Departmental Retreat was held at the Illinois Beach Resort Conference Center in Zion, IL, on Oct. 17 – 18, 2009. A big ‘Thank You’ to Dr. Merrill for organizing it again! The retreat was a great success and provided an opportunity to introduce people in the Department to each other and to their research in an informal way. Some highlights:
  - The Faculty beat the Students 2-1 in the soccer match.
  - Congratulations to the following Poster winners!
    - Evan Small (Mesecar Lab)
    - Janai Carr (Raychaudhuri Lab)
    - Battuya Bayarmagnai (Frolov Lab)

  Dr. Merrill would like to thank all of you who help him set up the retreat and those who participated in it.

- We welcome the following New Employees:
  - Alexandra Vilkova (Research Scholar – Benevolenskaya Lab)
  - Noorain Akhtar (Postdoc – Ackerman Lab)
  - Christopher McCullough (Postdoc – Caffrey Lab)

- **University of Bath (UK) Honors Biochemistry Program Placement Students**: Our department has been participating in this work-study program for ~12 years. For 2009, the following students completed their research rotation in our labs:
  - David Baillie (Kaplan Lab)
  - Samuel Hess (Benevolenskaya Lab)
  - Penelope LaBorde (Simonovic Lab)
  - Christian Matheou (Frolov Lab)
Student News

- Vladislava Juric (Lau lab) was awarded an American Society for Cell Biology (ASCB) Predoc Travel Award for the 2008 ASCB meeting.

- Lakxmi Subramanian (Nakamura lab) and Yu Zheng (Tyner lab) have each been awarded the prestigious Dean's Scholar award from the Graduate College for 09-10 academic year.

- Lakxi Subramanian is in the 3rd year of her Predoctoral Fellowship from the American Heart Association. Her project was chosen from a pool of AHA’s Midwest Affiliate Predoctoral fellowships to be co-sponsored by the Henrietta Lange Burk Fund.

- Jennifer Kwan (Hay Lab) was awarded Provost’s & Deiss Award for Graduate Research from the Graduate College.

- The following students are selected for T32 DK007739 Institutional Training grant awarded by NIH for the period July 09 – June 10:
  - Jessica Gierut (Tyner Lab)
  - Jennifer Kwan (Hay Lab)
  - Matthew Thompson (Colley Lab)

- We welcome four new 1st year students:
  - Antoine Flowers
  - Priya Mathur
  - Jennifer Ware
  - Sumeyye Yar

- We also welcome one new MD/PhD student: Jacob Choi (Lau Lab)

- Congratulations to the following students who received awards or honorable mentions for their presentations at this year’s UIC Research Forum:
  - Janai Carr (Raychaudhuri Lab)
  - Jackson Hoffman (Merrill Lab)
  - Laura Periera (Merrill Lab)
  - Thomas Wubben (Mesecar Lab)

- Congratulations to Brandon Nicolay (Frolov Lab)! Brandon got married on 8/22/09.
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>Future Plans</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deepa Sundararajan</td>
<td>Hay</td>
<td>4/10/09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chia-Chen Chen</td>
<td>Hay</td>
<td>5/29/09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vladislava Juric</td>
<td>Lau</td>
<td>6/11/09</td>
<td>Postdoc, University of California at San Francisco</td>
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<td>Adriana Zimnicka</td>
<td>Kaplan</td>
<td>6/12/09</td>
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<td>Carmen Dominguez-Brauer</td>
<td>Raychaudhuri</td>
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<td>Postdoc, UIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ivana Tonic</td>
<td>Hay</td>
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<td>Postdoc, UCLA School of Medicine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tanya Stoyanova</td>
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<td>7/14/09</td>
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<td>Tao Bai</td>
<td>Lau</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joon Il Jun</td>
<td>Lau</td>
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<td>Christine Doyle Ross</td>
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<td>Yi-Ju Chen</td>
<td>Raychaudhuri</td>
<td>10/20/09</td>
<td>Postdoc, UPENN School of Medicine</td>
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Science is built up of facts, as a house is built of stones; but an accumulation of facts is no more a science than a heap of stones is a house. ~Henri Poincaré, *Science and Hypothesis*, 1905

Q: What did one lab rat say to the other?
A: "I've got my scientist so well trained that every time I push the buzzer, he brings me a snack."

Chance favors the prepared mind.
Louis Pasteur (1822-95)

It has been discovered that research causes cancer in laboratory rats.

People are DNA's way of making more DNA. - Edward O. Wilson, 1975

Evolution is a 'theory', just like gravity. If you don't like it, go jump off a bridge.

If it's NOT one thing, it's another

Your protein has NOT denatured, it is simply structurally ambivalent.
Your DNA has NOT degraded, it is entropically exhuberant.
Your enzyme is NOT aggregated, it is monomerically challenged.
Your peptide has NOT precipitated on the column, it is merely elution reticent.
Your column resin is NOT compacting, it is being spatially frugal.
Your BamHI does NOT have star activity, it is simply expressing its individuality.
Your PCR products are NOT all mutant, they are just indulging in unscheduled evolution.
Your tissue culture is NOT contaminated, it is simply sharing living quarters.
Your computer has NOT crashed, it is merely being introspective.
“Professor, wake up! It’s spring. Your grant is over!”

“You are completely free to carry out whatever research you want, so long as you come to these conclusions.”

“Our research is solidified, but our funding has vaporized.”

“I already wrote the paper. That’s why it’s so hard to get the right data.”