Faculty News

Funding Update:

- Congratulations to the following PIs for receiving new NIH grants:
  - Dr. Merrill – R01HD081534-01 for 5 years
  - Dr. Raychaudhuri received two new 5-yr R01 grants: R01CA177655 and R01CA175380
  - Dr. Frolov - 1 R01 GM 110018-01A1 for 4 years
  - Dr.s Gaponenko & Tyner 1R01CA188427-01A1 for 3 years
  - Dr. Gaponenko was a Co-I on a 5 yr 1UH2HL123610-01 grant (PI: Dr. Petukhov/MCP) which is a subcontract with Univ. of Chicago

- Dr. Merrill received CBC Catalyst award along with Dr. Gounari from Univ. of Chicago
- Dr. Caffrey & Dr. Lavie also received CBC Catalyst award along with Dr. Manicassamy from Univ. of Chicago

Other News:

- Dr. Kaplan was elected a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He was cited for his contributions to understanding fundamental mechanisms in the biochemistry, biophysics and physiology of ion transport.
- Congratulations to Dr. Miljan Simonovic on his Academic Promotion.
- Dr. Lau was Session Chair and Invited Speaker at the Biennial meeting of the American Society for Matrix Biology, Cleveland OH, held in Oct. 2014.
- Dr. Kaplan was invited to the following meetings:
  - Invited Speaker, International Meeting on FXYD proteins, UC, Davis, February, 2014
  - Plenary Speaker & Session Chair 14th International ATPase Meeting, Lunteren, Netherlands, July, 2014
  - Keynote Speaker, Membrane Protein Workshop, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, Lubbock, TX, November, 2014
- Dr. Friedenson presented his work at the recent Cancer Science 2014 Conference in Chicago. He presented his recent work published in the Journal of Genomes and Exomes entitled “Many breast cancer mutations parallel mutations in known viral cancers.”
Dr. Hay was invited to the following meetings:

- Invited Speaker- Banbury meeting on ROS in Biology and Cancer, Banbury, Cold Spring Harbor, October 26-29 2014.

UIC genome editing core: Dr. Merrill and Brian Shy (MD/PhD student in Merrill lab) started a UIC genome editing core in July 2014. The core will assist labs at UIC in modifying genomic DNA using the CRISPR/Cas9 system. In addition, the core will assist labs at UIC in performing forward genetic screens using CRISPR based lentiviral libraries.

The 9th Annual Costa Memorial Lecture took place on September 9, 2014 and was presented by Dr. Leonidas C. Platanias of Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University.

**General News**

Dr. Maria Zappia (Frolov Lab):

- Received a 2 year American Heart Association postdoctoral fellowship
- Received an award for Poster presentation at the 2nd Annual Cancer Center Research Forum at UIC.

Dr. Jana Ognjenovic (Simonovic lab):

- Presented a seminar at the "25th tRNA Conference”, held in Kyllini, Greece from Sept 21-25, 2014.
- Was selected to attend the 7th Annual CCP4 USA Crystallography School, held at the Advanced Photon Source (GM/CA@APS), Chicago, IL, June 24-July 2, 2014.

**New Employees**

We welcome the following new employees:

- Volodymyr Nazarko- Postdoctoral Research Associate (Segev Lab)
- Adelaide Hain - Postdoctoral Research Associate (Segev Lab)
- Carolyn Kingsley - Postdoctoral Research Associate (Caffrey Lab)
- Nishit Mukhopadhyay- Research Assistant Professor (Raychaudhuri Lab)
- Hazem Abdelkarim - Postdoctoral Research Associate (Gaponenko Lab)
- Maureen Regan – Sr. Research Specialist (Merrill Lab)
- Milica Grozdanovic- Postdoctoral Research Associate (Simonovic Lab)
- Vaibhav Chand- Research Specialist (Raychaudhuri Lab)
- Ashley Priddey – Research Associate II (Gaponenko Lab)
- Ling Jin – Research Associate I (Hay Lab)
The 7th BMG Annual Retreat was held September 27–28, 2014, at The Abbey Resort in Lake Geneva, WI.

The retreat highlighted the advances made in our department and also provided opportunities for scientists at different levels of training & from different fields; to network, gain new insights and forge intradepartmental collaborations. Total 67 members of the department (faculty members, postdocs, graduate students and research assistants) attended the retreat. 13 seminars & 23 posters were presented, fostering an atmosphere for collaborative thinking in basic biomedical research. Guests from Department of Medicine and Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology as well as a speaker from Integrated DNA technologies, ‘the oligo’ company, were also invited.

The poster competition was held between students, research assistants and postdocs. Each presentation included demonstration of the poster as well as a short talk regarding the poster.

Congratulations to the following poster winners:
1st place - Jane Kim (Segev Lab)
2nd place - Maria Zappia (Frolov Lab)
3rd place - Darren Wozniak (Tyner lab)

The retreat was not all about science……of course there was the soccer competition between faculty (with significant others) and graduate students. Finally……the faculty won (after losing at last few retreats)!!!

There was also a first time ever departmental dance party! It was a blast!!!

A big ‘Thank You’ to Dr. Benevolenskaya for organizing it! She would like to thank everyone that helped set up the retreat and those who participated.

A few highlights……
Student News

We welcome the following new students:

- Ryan Clarke
- Matthew Durst (MD/PhD)
- James Hyun
- Matthew MacDougall (MD/PhD)
- Victoria Mastej
- Amanda Mennie (MD/PhD)
- Ian Rochford
- Colleen Scheitrum

Awards:

- Aleksandar Antanasijevic (Caffrey lab) received the Graduate College Fellowship.
- Malgorzata Dobosz-Bartoszek (Simonovic Lab):
  - Received a travel grant from the RNA Institute, University of Albany to attend the '25th tRNA Conference'.
  - Received a travel grant from the Graduate Student Council to attend the “Quo Vadis Structural Biology 2014? SBGrid/NE-CAT Computing School”, held at Harvard University, Boston, MA, June 5-7, 2014.

Presentations:

- Priya Mathur (Tyner Lab) gave a talk at the Digestive Disease Week conference, McCormick Place, Chicago, May 3, 2014.
- Malgorzata Dobosz-Bartoszek (Simonovic Lab) presented a seminar at the "25th tRNA Conference", held in Kyllini, Greece from Sept 21-25, 2014.

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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mike Beshiri</td>
<td>Banevolenskaya</td>
<td>April 8, 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob Choi</td>
<td>Lau</td>
<td>August 1, 2014</td>
<td>3rd year medical student at UIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tanmay Chavan</td>
<td>Gaponenko</td>
<td>August 29, 2014</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yuka Shimizu</td>
<td>Garcia (Univ. of Arizona)</td>
<td>October 10, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Chastkofsky</td>
<td>Tyner</td>
<td>October 13, 2014</td>
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Student Coffee Hour:

In Jan. 2014, Battuya Bayarmagnai (Frolov Lab), Kim Laffey (Ackerman Lab) & Priya Mathur (Tyner Lab) came up with an idea of holding a ‘Monthly Coffee Hour’ just for students. The purpose was to increase scientific communication and interaction among students in the department. It has turned out to be a great success and a wonderful resource for all students, especially the new students. Some of the things they focus on are:

- New Students Welcome
- Preliminary Exam Preparation
- Arrange Rides for the Annual BMG Retreat
- Invite Seminar Speakers
- Thanksgiving Potluck

The group just celebrated their 1 year anniversary! Many students have stepped up to volunteer and they continue to add new items to their agenda. We wish the group much success!

News about past graduates

- Chun-I Wu, (2014, Merrill Lab) is a postdoctoral fellow at Northwestern University.
- Maoyu Peng (2013, Tyner Lab) is a postdoctoral fellow at UCLA.

Congratulations to the following proud parents!!!!

- Dannielle DeWaal (Hay Lab) and her husband welcomed their daughter, Miranda Grace DeWaal, born on Sep. 17, 2014.
- Veronique Nogueira (Hay Lab) and her husband welcomed their son, Ali, born on Nov. 20, 2014.
New chemical Element Discovered by William DeBuvitz

This bit of humor was written in April 1988 and appeared in the January 1989 issue of The Physics Teacher. William DeBuvitz is a physics professor at Middlesex County College in Edison, New Jersey (USA). He retired in June of 2000.

The heaviest element known to science was recently discovered by investigators at a major U.S. research university. The element, tentatively named administratium, has no protons or electrons and thus has an atomic number of 0. However, it does have one neutron, 125 assistant neutrons, 75 vice neutrons and 111 assistant vice neutrons, which gives it an atomic mass of 312. These 312 particles are held together by a force that involves the continuous exchange of meson-like particles called morons.

Since it has no electrons, administratium is inert. However, it can be detected chemically as it impedes every reaction it comes in contact with. According to the discoverers, a minute amount of administratium causes one reaction to take over four days to complete when it would have normally occurred in less than a second.

Administratium has a normal half-life of approximately three years, at which time it does not decay, but instead undergoes a reorganization in which assistant neutrons, vice neutrons and assistant vice neutrons exchange places. Some studies have shown that the atomic mass actually increases after each reorganization.

Research at other laboratories indicates that administratium occurs naturally in the atmosphere. It tends to concentrate at certain points such as government agencies, large corporations, and universities. It can usually be found in the newest, best appointed, and best maintained buildings.

Scientists point out that administratium is known to be toxic at any level of concentration and can easily destroy any productive reaction where it is allowed to accumulate. Attempts are being made to determine how administratium can be controlled to prevent irreversible damage, but results to date are not promising.