

THE DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR GENETICS

News Letter #11 (January - December 2016)

Faculty News

Funding Update:

- ❖ Congratulations to the following PIs for receiving new NIH grants:
 - Dr. Benevolenskaya – 1R01CA211095-01 for 5 years
 - Dr. Hay - 1R01CA206167-01A1 for 5 years
 - Dr. Segev - 1R21NS099556-01 for 2 years

- ❖ Congratulations to the following PIs on successful competitive renewals:
 - Dr. Frolov – 2R01GM093827-05 for next 4 years
 - Dr. Nakamura - 2R01GM078253-10A1 for next 4 years

- ❖ Congratulations to Dr. Hay for renewing VA Merit Award

Other News:

- ❖ Dr. Ben Ramirez was promoted to Research Associate Professor effective August 16, 2016

- ❖ Dr. Segev was awarded the prestigious University Scholar award for 2016. 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. Merrill was appointed co-director of the College of Medicine's umbrella PhD program, Graduate Education in Medical Sciences (GEMS).

- ❖ Dr. Colley recently accepted the position as President of the Society for Glycobiology and will be chairing the annual society meeting in November 2017, in Portland, Oregon. She also served as co-chair of the NIH ZRG1 CB-L (50) Study Section for New Investigator MIRA grants and as chair of the NIH UO1 Glycoscience Common Fund Study Section.

- ❖ Dr. Kaplan has been invited to join the Biological Chemistry & Macromolecular Biophysics 1RG study section for the new R35 MIR awards for early stage investigators.

- ❖ Dr. Frolov was a co-organizer of the Fourth International RB meeting that took place in Columbus Ohio, September 25-28, 2016.

- ❖ Dr. Hay attended the following conferences:
 - Feb. 2016 - Invited Speaker- Keystone Symposium on Frontiers in Tumor Metabolism.
 - June 2016 - Invited Speaker- Cancer Metabolism Symposium. Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute, La Jolla CA.
 - September 2016- Invited Speaker and session chair, Cold Spring Harbor Asia Conference on Cancer Metabolism Suzhou, China
 - September 2016- Invited keynote speaker Cancer Metabolism Conference, National Cancer Center Seoul Korea.
- ❖ The 10th Annual Costa Memorial Lecture took place on September 21, 2016 and was presented by Dr. Danny Reinberg from Howard Hughes Medical Institute, NYU Langone School of Medicine.
- ❖ Faculty Recruitment Initiative: A faculty recruitment initiative, with support from Dean Azar and COM, was started with the goal of hiring 2 senior and 4 junior faculty during the next 2-3 years in Epigenetics and Systems Biology.

Faculty in the news:

- ❖ Dr. Hay (3/17/16)
<https://news.uic.edu/mouse-study-suggests-drugs-targeting-cancer-pathway-could-promote-liver-cancer>
- ❖ Dr. Simonovic (10/6/16)
<https://news.uic.edu/researchers-discover-how-selenium-is-incorporated-into-proteins>
- ❖ Dr. Segev (10/18/16)
<https://news.uic.edu/2016-university-scholar-nava-segev>

General News

- ❖ Dr. Hazem Abdelkarim (Gaponenko Lab) received Postdoctoral Fellowship from American Parkinson Disease Association
- ❖ Dr. Paula Zappia (Frolov Lab) presented a talk at 2016 Midwest Drosophila Conference, Nov 12-13, 2016.

New Employees

- ❖ 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 2016 -17, the following student has joined our department:
 - Alice Rogers (Frolov Lab)

Cancer Biology Retreat



There was no BMG Retreat in 2016 but we got a chance to be a part of cancer research community in Chicago by participating in the Chicago Cancer Biology Retreat. This event was held between UIC, Northwestern University and University of Chicago, Nov. 18-19, 2016 at the Hyatt Lodge in Oak Brook, IL.

The goal of the retreat was to attain sustainable growth through a combination of reflection and learning from researchers at the three institutions in Chicago. It was a valuable educational event for cancer research trainees - graduate students, MSTP students and postdocs. Researchers from four different colleges at UIC (Medicine, Pharmacy, Dentistry and Engineering) participated. From our department, all cancer research labs as well as some "non-cancer" labs actively participated.

Five of our trainees were selected for talk presentations among 24 presentations from all three universities:

- Xinyu Chen (Hay lab) "The function of Akt isoforms in breast cancer tumorigenesis"
- Dr. Dragana Kopanja (Raychaudhuri lab) "Essential roles of FoxM1 in Ras-induced liver cancer progression and in liver cancer-stem cells"
- Akshay Pandey (Raychaudhuri lab) "FoxM1 epigenetically represses expression of the developmental genes FoxA1/A2 in aggressive hepatocellular carcinoma"
- Darren Wozniak (Tyner lab) "PTEN is a protein phosphatase for PTK6 and inhibits PTK6 oncogenic signaling in prostate cancer"
- Dr. Maria Paula Zappia (Frolov Lab) "The essential function of E2Fs is to control the growth of the skeletal muscles"

A BIG 'Thank you' to Dr. Benevolenskaya for taking the initiative to promote this event at UIC and secure funding to subsidize the event. We also appreciate help of Dr. Dragana Kopanja, Ryan Clarke, Matthew MacDougall, Akshay Pandey and Jenny Zhang with event organization. A special thanks to Dr. Yee-Kin Ho for partially subsidizing the registration fee for the student organizers.

Overall, the retreat was a great opportunity to interact with Cancer Biologists at nearby institutions and forge new collaborations for years to come.

Student News

We welcome the following new students:

- Wanian Alwanian
- Naiyuan Cheng
- James Rand
- Hyunsoo Rho
- Diane Silva
- Alexander Terry (MD/PhD)

Awards:

- ❖ Aleksander Antanasijevic (Caffrey Lab) received Graduate College's Outstanding Thesis and Dissertation Award for 2016
- ❖ Gaurang Bhide (Colley lab)
 - Received the Dean's Scholar Fellowship for 2016-2017.
 - Received a travel award by the Medical School of Hannover for the poster presentation at the 'Frontiers in Sialic Acid Research' conference in Bad Lauterberg, Germany in April 2016.
 - Received a travel award by the Society for Glycobiology for the poster presentation at the Society for Glycobiology Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA in November 2016.
- ❖ The following students were awarded the CCTS PECTS fellowship for 2017-2018:
 - Matthew Durst (Lavie Lab)
 - Matthew MacDougall (Merrill Lab)
 - Georgina Mancinelli (Grippe Lab)
 - Amanda Mennie (Nakamura Lab)
 - Anupama Puppala (Simonovic Lab)

Presentations:

- ❖ Georgina Mancinelli (Grippe Lab) presented a poster at AACR Special Pancreatic Conference 2016 in Orlando, FL.

Thesis Defense:

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

Name	Lab	Thesis Defense	Current position
Kimberly Gao Laffey	Ackerman	February 15, 2016	Postdoc, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN
Aleksandar Antanasijevic	Caffrey	May 4, 2016	Postdoc, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UC San Diego
Jane Kim	Segev	July, 7, 2016	Postdoc – BMG
Malgorzata Dobosz-Bartoszek	Simonovic	July 13, 2016	Postdoc, Dept. of Biological Sciences, UIC
Dannielle DeWaal	Hay	July 15, 2016	Postdoc – BMG

BMG Alumni News

- ❖ Lakxmi Subramanian (Nakamura lab) has completed a postdoc training with Dr. Robin Allshire (University of Edinburgh, Scotland) and will start 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.
- ❖ Kimberly Gao Laffey (Ackerman lab) was awarded a T32 training grant funded postdoctoral research fellowship in the laboratory of Dr. Adam Schrum in the Department of Immunology at the Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN.
- ❖ Kaitlyn Holman (Simonovic Lab) was hired by Abbott Laboratories, Chicago, IL
- ❖ Ya-Ting Chang (Nakamura Lab) has started her 2nd postdoc training in 3D genome research at the Jackson Laboratory in Connecticut.

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>



Congratulations to the proud parents!!!!







❖ Seung Won Shin and Joon-II Jun (both from Lau Lab) welcomed their daughter, Elaine, born on November 29, 2016.



Just for laughs.....

Your Academic Forecast

<p style="text-align: center;">TODAY</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Busy, with a chance of procrastination. Expect chills.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">THE NEAR FUTURE</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Scattered showers and low brainstorm. Strong pressure front from your department. Expect a lot of hot air.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">LONG TERM</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Mostly cloudy hypotheses with dry funding conditions, overnight lows in publication with slippery conditions for graduation or tenure.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">IF YOU STAY IN ACADEMIA TOO LONG</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Low humility and bitter coldness. Expect heavy gusts of productivity and a drop in friends. Remain indoors.</p>
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“The fact that we live at the bottom of a deep gravity well, on the surface of a gas covered planet going around a nuclear fireball 90 million miles away and think this to be normal is obviously some indication of how skewed our perspective tends to be.”
 — Douglas Adam

WHAT YOU BROUGHT TO SEMINAR AND WHAT IT SAYS ABOUT YOU:

<p style="font-size: x-small;">Stuff to take notes: First year. Foolishly thinks he'll ever need notes again.</p>	<p style="font-size: x-small;">Reading material: Third year. Just here for show.</p>	<p style="font-size: x-small;">Didn't bring anything: ABD/Postdoc. Has nothing better to do.</p>	<p style="font-size: x-small;">Laptop: Young Assistant Professor. Working on three proposals at the same time.</p>	<p style="font-size: x-small;">Playing with latest Gadget/Gizmo: Full Professor. Loves new toys.</p>
				

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“Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity; and I'm not sure about the universe.”
 — Albert Einstein