

# THE DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR GENETICS

*News Letter #13 (January 2018 – March 2019)*

## Faculty News

### Funding Update:

- ❖ Congratulations to the following PIs for receiving new NIH grants:
  - Dr. Frolov: R35GM 131707-01 for 5 years
  - Dr. Shikano : R21 AI142060-01 for 2 years
  - Dr. Kim: K22 CA226676-01A1 for 3 years
  
- ❖ Congratulations to the following PIs on successful competitive renewals:
  - Dr. Hay: 2R01AG016927 for next 5 years
  - Dr. Simonovic: 2R01GM097042 for next 4 years
  -
  
- ❖ Drs. Ackerman and Gaponenko received a CBC Accelerator Program Director's Fund grant for their project developing a novel peptide nanoparticle biased antagonist of the GPCR CCR3 to block eosinophil-mediated inflammation and tissue damage in asthma and other eosinophil-associated allergic diseases
  
- ❖ Dr. Simonovic was awarded an administrative (equipment) supplement (2R01GM097042-S1). The supplement was used, in conjunction with Dept. and COM funds, to purchase two microscale thermophoresis instruments
  
- ❖ Dr. Nakamura was awarded an administrative (equipment) supplement (3R01GM078253-12S1). The supplement was used, in conjunction with Dept. funds, to purchase a phosphor-imager instrument from GE Biosciences
  
- ❖ Dr. Segev was awarded an administrative (equipment) supplement (R01GM045444-S1). The Supplement was used with funds from the department to purchase a spinning-disc con-focal microscope

### Other News:

- ❖ We welcome Drs. Shafi Kuchay & Jiyeon Kim! They both joined our faculty in August 2018 as Assistant Professors
  
- ❖ Dr Joanna Groden, UIC's recently appointed Vice Chancellor for Research, will also have an academic appointment as Professor of Biochemistry & Molecular Genetics. She will have a research lab in our department and intends to continue her scholarly activities

- ❖ Dr. Simonovic was selected to participate in Provost's Faculty Administrator Leadership Program (FALP) for 2018
- ❖ Drs. Ackerman and Gaponenko) were one of 12 projects (out of more than 170 submitted) selected to participate and present at the upcoming Science-to-Startup (S2S) mentoring symposium to be held in Cambridge, Mass. on April 23, 2019
- ❖ Dr. Nakamura was an invited speaker at EMBO Workshop: Telomere biology in health and human disease, Troia, Portugal
- ❖ Dr. Ackerman presented an oral abstract talk at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI) on Feb 25, 2019
- ❖ Dr. Gaponenko was invited to give a plenary lecture on "Modulation of Protein-protein Interactions by Post-translational Modifications in K-Ras" at the 2019 FASEB Science Research Conference: Protein Lipidation, Enzymology, Signaling, and Therapeutics in New York City
- ❖ Dr. Simonovic attended the following conferences:
  - Sept. 2018 - was invited to present a seminar at the 27th tRNA Conference in Strasbourg, France
  - Sept. 2018 - held a workshop in X-ray crystallography at the University of Seville, Seville, Spain
- ❖ Dr. Segev attended the following conferences:
  - Organizer, FASEB Research Conference: Small GTPases in Membrane Processes: Trafficking, Autophagy and Disease, Leesburg VA
  - Organizer, IHES Conference: From molecules and cells to human disease, France
  - Invited Speaker: FEBS Special Meeting: The Golgi 2018 Meeting: Membrane trafficking in cell organization and homeostasis, Sorrento, Italy
- ❖ Dr. Segev attended the following conferences
  - ❖ March 2018- Organizing committee member, Session chair, and speaker - "From Molecules and Cells to Human Health" Conference at Institut des Hautes Études Scientifiques, Paris, France
  - ❖ October-November 2018- Invited speaker, CLS-CBIS Joint Life Science Research Workshop—Cell Signaling in Health and Diseases, Hangzhou and Wuhan, China
- ❖ Dr. Grippo gave an oral presentation at the 2018 AACR Annual Meeting in Chicago
- ❖ Our Faculty Recruitment Initiative in the fields of Epigenetics and Systems Biology is ongoing with support from COM. In 2018 we interviewed 9 candidates

## Faculty in the news:

- ❖ Dr. Hay (4/24/18)  
<https://today.uic.edu/do-prostate-cancer-cells-have-an-achilles-heel>
- ❖ Dr. Lavie (5/29/18)  
<https://today.uic.edu/three-researchers-awarded-funding-by-chicago-biomedical-consortium>
- ❖ Dr. Merrill (7/10/18)  
<https://today.uic.edu/biochemists-discover-cause-of-genome-editing-failures-with-hyped-crispr-system>
- ❖ Dr. Frolov (11/28/18)  
<https://today.uic.edu/single-cell-sequencing-sheds-light-on-why-cancers-form-in-specific-cell-types>

## General News

- ❖ Dr. Dragana Kopanja (Raychaudhuri Lab) received Gilead Sciences Research Scholar Award- Program in Liver Disease–The Americas, for 2 years
- ❖ Dr. Hazem Abdelkarim (Gaponenko Lab) was awarded a American Cancer Society Postdoctoral Research Fellowship.
- ❖ Dr. William Putzbach (Hay Lab) was appointed postdoc trainee to Pharmacology T32 Training Grant
- ❖ The following received honorable mentions in Postdocs & Residents category for their poster presentation at the 2018 College of Medicine Research Forum at UIC
  - Dr. Milica Grozdanovic (Ackerman Lab)
  - Dr. Alexander Ferro Aissa (Benevolenskaya Lab)
- ❖ Dr. Dannielle DeWaal (Hay Lab) was a speaker and moderator at/for the American Pathology and Oncology Research Conference held Dec. 3-4, 2018, in Chicago.
- ❖ Dr. Benjamin Ramirez was selected to be part of the first cohort of seven AP employees from UIC to participate in the Academic Professional Leadership Program (APLP) run by the UI System HR Office in August 2018

## New Employees

We welcomed the following new employees:

- ❖ Dr. Amanda Schalk (Res. Asst. Prof., Lavie Lab)
- ❖ Dr. William Putzbach (Postdoc, Hay Lab)
- ❖ Mr. Yves Helou (Vst Res Spe, Benevolenskaya Lab)
- ❖ Dr. Ingeun Ryoo (Postdoc, Kim Lab)
- ❖ Mr. Steve Kolb (Vst Res Spe, Kuchay Lab)
- ❖ Ms. Ashley De Lorea (Res Spe, Lavie Lab)
- ❖ Mr. Wesley Ozarowski (Res Spe, Lavie Lab)

❖ Placement Students:

- Lucia de Castro, University of Bath, UK (Frolov Lab)
- Alice Browne, National University of Ireland, Ireland (Tyner Lab)

## BMG Retreat

The 10th BMG Annual Retreat was held August 24 & 25, 2018, 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. We had total of 55 participants this year, including 8 new graduate students who were interested in the research programs of our department. 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, Nikon.

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

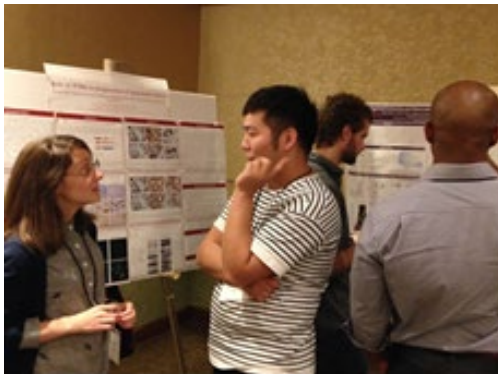
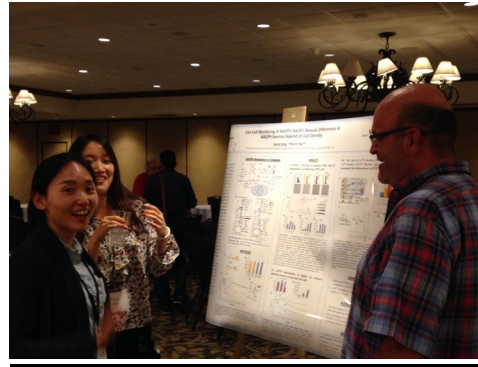
Congratulations to the following winners:

- Daniel Principe (Rana Lab) on the best talk award “TGF $\beta$  Blockade Augments PD-1 Inhibition to Promote T-Cell Mediated Regression of Pancreatic Cancer”
- Majd Ariss (Frolov Lab) on the best poster award “Single cell RNA-sequencing reveals a metabolic aspect of apoptosis in Rbf mutant”
- Soeun Kang (Hay Lab) on the best poster award “Quiescent cells exhibit high pentose phosphate pathway activity”

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 Sojin Shikano, Yukari Okamoto, and Elizaveta Benevolenskaya. Also, special Thanks to the faculties who have contributed to the poster/talk prizes!

A few highlights.....



## Student News

### Awards:

- ❖ Alex Terry (Hay Lab):
  - Received NIH Ruth L. Kirschstein NRSA F30 Fellowship for 5 years
  - Was awarded a Scholar-in-training award at the AACR Metabolism and Cancer meeting
  - Won 1st prize at the GEMS symposium poster contest
- ❖ Casey Blaha (Hay Lab) received NIH Ruth L. Kirschstein NRSA F30 Fellowship for 4 years
- ❖ Daniel Principe (Rana Lab) received NIH Ruth L. Kirschstein NRSA F30 Fellowship for 5 years
- ❖ Anupama Puppala (Simonovic Lab) was awarded Chancellor's Graduate Research Award (CGRA)
- ❖ Ryan Clarke (Merrill Lab) received the Keystone Symposia Future of Science Scholarship for the Keystone Genome Engineering meeting
- ❖ The following received honorable mentions in GAs & MD/PhD category for their poster presentation at the 2018 College of Medicine Research Forum at UIC
  - Alexander Terry (Hay Lab)
  - Ryan Clarke (Merrill Lab)

- ❖ The following undergraduate students were awarded Chancellor's Undergraduate Research Award (CURA):
  - Jennifer Castillo (Simonovic Lab)
  - Shawn Spriuel-Rhyne (Kim Lab)

### Presentations:

- ❖ Ryan Clarke (Merrill Lab) presented a poster the Keystone Genome Engineering meeting

### Thesis Defense:

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

| Name           | Lab       | Thesis Defense  | Current position   |
|----------------|-----------|-----------------|--|
| Stefanie Kall  | Lavie     | March 9, 2018   | Application Specialist, NanoTemper Technologies                  |
| Amanda Mennie  | Nakamura  | July 27, 2018   | 3rd year Medical Student, UIC                                    |
| Xinyu Chen     | Hay       | October 3, 2018 | Postdoctoral fellow, Department of Medicine, Stanford University |
| Matthew Durst  | Lavie     | March 14, 2019  | 3rd year Medical Student, UIC                                    |
| Ben Hitchinson | Gaponenko | March 22, 2019  | Senior Scientist, Abbvie Inc                                     |

### Other Notable News:

- ❖ Ryan Clarke (Merrill Lab) along with Dr. Merrill, Hannah Pennington & Matt MacDougall I are co-inventors on a patent application for CRISPR/Cas9 based genome editing methods and technologies that was submitted to the USPTO by the UIC tech transfer office in Sept. 2018



Congratulations to Wamian(Tyner Lab) who got married to Shuruq Alammam on July 20, 2018!

## BMG Alumni News

- ❖ Ya-Ting Chang (Nakamura Lab) has started a new postdoc. in Feb. 2019 at City of Hope
- ❖ Janai Carr-Ascher (Raychaudhuri Lab) welcomed a baby boy, Ealen, on February 19, 2019.



## BMG Publications

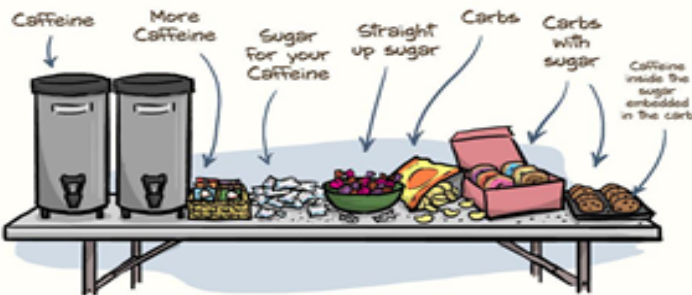
Our faculty, staff and students continue to do great research and publish their work in some of the best journals as well as contribute to book chapters. Make sure to periodically check 'publication record' under faculty profiles at our department website <http://bcmg.com.uic.edu/faculty/index.html>



Just for laughs.....



### SEMINAR REFRESHMENTS!



Nothing says "We are confident this seminar will be intellectually stimulating for you" like a table full of things to help you stay awake.

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