

# Medical Scientist

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## Calendar

Thursday, September 10, 5:30 pm  
Dinner Seminar

Thursday, October 8, 5:30 pm  
Dinner Seminar

Monday, October 26  
1st Interview Session

Tuesday, November 12, MSTP  
Research Day Oral Presentations

Friday, November 13,  
COM Research Day

Monday, November 16  
2nd Interview Session

Monday, January 18  
3rd Interview Session

Monday, February 15  
4th Interview Session

Tuesday, February 17, 5:30 pm  
Dinner Seminar

## 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Retreat at Illinois Beach Resort a Joy for All

The Illinois Beach Resort and Conference Center in Zion, Illinois was again the beautiful venue for the 4<sup>th</sup> year in a row of the MSTP Annual Retreat. The familiarity with the comfy facility on its own private Lake Michigan beach in the midst of a dense forest increased the feeling of relaxation and escape from the city that contributed greatly to the good time everyone had. Despite unusually high heat and humidity in the early part of the day, followed by a short but heavy thunderstorm during recreation time and a drop in temperatures and soaked patio during dinner, we managed to enjoy the outdoor ambience for discussions, walks on the beach, dips in the frigid lake water, and rain-soaked jogs.



New this year were some innovations in the programming:

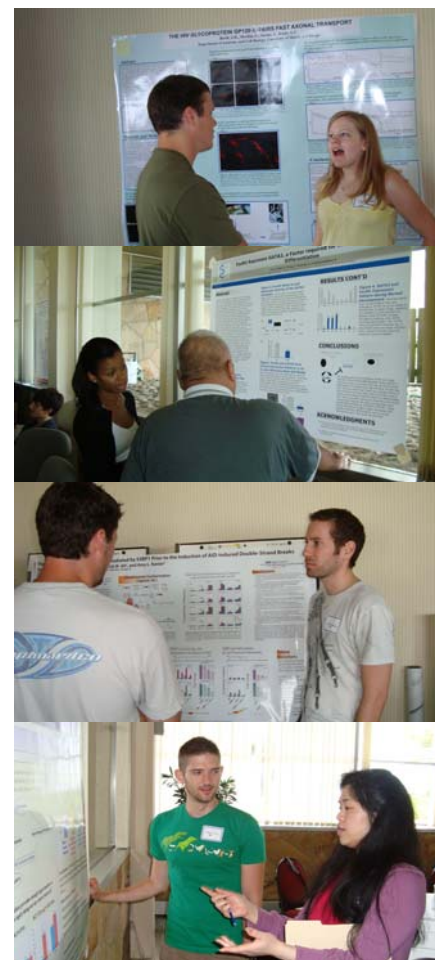
- 1) A student poster session
- 2) Two faculty talks --one on research and one of MD/PhD career experiences
- 3) One of the two break-out sessions devoted to practical advising topics.

The poster session took place during lunch and following Dr. Tobacman's welcome remarks.

Nine students displayed posters of recent presentations at various conferences around the perimeter of the meeting room as follows:

1. **Benjamin Avner**, G5, Physiology & Biophysics, Lab of Dr. John Solaro: "Reactive Oxygen Species Modify Cardiac Sarcomeric Proteins and Myofilament Function."
2. **Sarah Hatch Berth**, G3, Neuroscience Program, Lab of Dr. Scott Brody: "The HIV glycoprotein gp120 impairs fast axonal transport."
3. **Janai Carr**, G3, Biochemistry & Molecular Genetics, Lab of Dr. Pradip Raychaudhuri: "FoxM1 represses GATA3, a factor required for mammary differentiation."
4. **Scott Feldman**, G4, Microbiology & Immunology, lab of Dr. Amy Kenter: "The Igh Intrachromosomal Loop is Mediated by 53BP1 Prior to the Induction of AID-induced Double-Strand Breaks," Scott Feldman and Amy L. Kenter
5. **Senta Furman**, Neuroscience Program, lab of Dr. Stephen Porges: "Autonomic Reactivity in Mother-Infant Dyads during Social Challenge"
6. **Jennifer Kwan**, Biochemistry & Molecular Genetics, lab of Dr. Nissim Hay: "The UIC College of Medicine Mentors Program: A Novel Program for Introducing First-Year Medical Students to Clinical Correlations with Basic Science Courses." and NP Rats"
7. **Sachin Moonat**, G2, Neuroscience Program, lab of Dr. Subash Pandey: "Effects of Acute Ethanol Exposure on Amygdaloid Dendritic Morphology and Anxiety-Like Behaviors in P and NP Rats"

(Continued on P. 8)





## Awards, Honors, Presentations

**Yalda Afshar, G3**, served an internship at the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva, Switzerland in the Department of Gender, Women and Health (<http://www.who.int/gender/en/>) for 8-weeks (Jan-Feb '09). Her work focused on developing a "Gender and Public Health" Technical Briefing Kit (TBK) as a strategy for integrating gender analysis and actions into the work of WHO.

In August, she was honored to attend the General Assembly of the International Federation of Medical Students Association in Ohrid, Macedonia as a US delegate/ambassador and the theme of the meeting was "Investing in Health of Children and Youth." Following the assembly, she traveled through the Balkans and facilitated one-day harm-reduction workshops/sessions on Gender and Public Health in Serbia and Kosovo.

**Sheila Barry, M4**, was elected into the Gold Humanism Honor Society, as announced Sept. 1 by Dr. Sean Blitzstein, Clinical Assoc. Professor of Psychiatry. "All the nominees were excellent this year, and we are very proud of those who were chosen for GHHS. We know that the inductees will continue to demonstrate the dedication, caring, sacrifice, and humanistic qualities they have shown so far in their medical career. Please congratulate the inductees!"

**Sarah Hatch Berth, G3**, was accepted to attend the "Combining Clinical and Research Careers in Neuroscience Symposium" in Washington, DC, last May 29-30, 2009. This is an annual course sponsored by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS), the Association of University Professors of Neurology (AUPN) and the American Neurological Association (ANA).

**Janai Carr, G3**, won a scholarship to attend the 2009 Days of Molecular Medicine Symposium on the topic "Human Genetics, Stem Cells and Physiology: the Future of Individualized Medicine" held at Harvard Medical School in Boston, MA, May 7-9, 2009.

**Ananda Fine, M3** gave a presentation entitled "Calculating Instantaneous Synchrony of Nonlinear Nonstationary Oscillators in the Brain" at the IEEE EMBS Conference on Neural Engineering in Antalya, Turkey in Spring 2009.

**Pete Flevaris, M4**, learned on Sept. 1 that he has been accepted in the AOA honor society of the College of Medicine.

**Christine Haddad, M1** - For her 1<sup>st</sup> summer rotation, Christine was awarded a 10-week NIH summer fellowship (May 9th-July 18) of the Minority Health and Health Disparities International Research Training (MHIRT) program in which she conducted research at the University of Zurich Hospital, department of Endocrinology in Dr. Marc Donath's lab. The lab's main focus is to determine the role of cytokines (mainly IL-1B) in the development of Diabetes. Her project focused specifically on the involvement of other cell types (non-endocrine cells) in hyperglycemia-induced impaired beta-cell function, particularly endothelial cells.

**Jennifer Kwan, G3**, received the Spring 2009 Molecular Genetics Provost Deiss Award from UIC. Her abstract for the COM Mentors Program was accepted for presentation at the 2009 AAMC CGEA Meeting at the Mayo Clinic.

**Farah Shareef, M1** - During her first MSTP lab rotation in summer 2008, Farah learned that she has won a Fulbright Fellowship for a year's study at the Imperial College in London, England.

## Wedding Bells & Baby Booties



Congratulations to **Tammy Tamayo, G1** husband, Chris, and big brother Torin, on the birth of their daughter and sister Tula on Tuesday, August 11, 2009. Anyone who saw Tammy in the last weeks before delivery knew that Tula would be big and sure enough she tipped the scales at 8 lbs, 13 oz (20" long). Tammy is a G1 student who is balancing her new joy with the excitement of starting her research in her PhD lab. But Tula is precocious and already is an able assistant at pipetting (note the strong grip).

Congratulations to M2 **Brian Shy** on his recent engagement (announced at the Retreat) to Kim Skinner, an accountant at Price Waterhouse Coopers in Chicago. Wedding plans are pending.

### Recent Thesis Defenses - Congratulations!

August 13, 2009 - **Christina Floreani** defended her thesis in the Department of Anatomy & Cell Biology on the topic, "A Study of Canonical Transient Receptor Potential Channel Activation: Gaining a Sense for How Cells Sense." Her thesis advisor is Yasuko Nakajima, MD, PhD.

August 28, 2009 - **Ananda Fine** defended her thesis in the Department of Bioengineering on the topic, "Analysis of Nonlinear Non-stationary Spatiotemporal Synchronization In Experimentally Induced Seizures." Her thesis advisor is David Mogul, PhD

She deferred her entry in the COM and MSTP to 2009, packed her bags and took off for an exciting year of study, culminating in earning an MSc in Biomedical Engineering from Imperial college.

**Evan Small, G3**, was accepted as a student to the National School on Neutron and X-ray Scattering for Sept. 26 through Oct. 11 of 2008. Half of this advanced school was held at the Advanced Photon Source (APS) at Argonne National Laboratory, while the other half was split between two unique facilities at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, the High Flux Isotope Reactor (HFIR) and the state-of-the-art Spallation Neutron Source (SNS), the most brilliant neutron source ever built! This exciting program gave a comprehensive look at a wide range of scattering experiments from many areas of science. Of the 60 students enrolled in the program, the large majority were from hard condensed matter physical sciences. Biological application of scattering techniques, an emerging area of research, was represented by Evan and only one other student. Didactic courses were taught by leaders in their respective fields and experiments were supervised by beamline instrument scientists. The experiments included measuring lattice excitations in iron-gallium alloys using a triple-axis neutron spectrometer, observing pressure-induced atomic rearrangements in materials from Earth's mantle using diamond anvil pressure cells, and watching proteins unfold by biological small angle neutron scattering. Since returning from the school Evan has had scattering proposals accepted and has gone on to perform his own experiments at the APS related to the chemopreventive properties of broccoli and other food-based natural products.

## Alumni News

### ***New MSTP Alumni Association Launched by David Ramsey; Award Presented***

In June 2009, upon completing his internship year in ophthalmology at UIC before taking off for Johns Hopkins to begin his full residency, David Ramsey, MD, PhD (2008), with the same fire in his belly that he exhibited throughout his student days, conceived, planned and executed the creation of the UIC MSTP Alumni Association. With the help of the MSTP office in updating its alumni contact list, Dr. Ramsey wrote a formal letter to all the found alumni informing them that they were hereby "automatically lifetime members of the UIC MSTP Alumni Association" and explained its goals as follows:

The purpose of the UIC MSTP Alumni Association is to encourage networking among alumni and to support current medical scientist trainees at UIC. This inaugural email invites you to join the organization for free and in doing so help to support the current students in the program through the "Dr. Edward P. Cohen Medical Scientist Training Award", presented on behalf of all of the UIC MD-PhD alumni to an outstanding student who has completed his or her PhD and is returning to the 3rd year of medical school. This idea was suggested by Dr. Andrea Birnbaum (2005) and is a fitting tribute to our former director and friend, Dr. Cohen. In order to jumpstart the project, I have contributed the first award, a \$100 gift certificate to Barnes and Noble.

The affairs of the UIC MSTP Alumni Association will be conducted on a secure Google Group, UIC MSTP Alumni Association, which will provide a means of staying in touch and provide a forum for reviewing candidates for the "Dr. Edward P. Cohen Medical Scientist Training Award". We need your help to choose our first award recipient, given the number of outstanding candidates. Here are the essentials for the official alumni association for the UIC MD-PhD Medical Scientist Training Program

- \* Group name: UIC MSTP Alumni Association
- \* Group home page: <http://groups.google.com/group/UIC-MSTP-AA>
- \* Group email address UIC-MSTP-AA@googlegroups.com

Following the transmission of the letter, a notice was sent to the then rising M3s in the program to invite them to apply for the initial Dr. Edward P. Cohen Medical Scientist Training Award. We are pleased to announce that the winner is Ananda Fine who defended her thesis August 28, 2009 in the Department of Bioengineering on the topic: "Analysis of Nonlinear Non-stationary Spatiotemporal Synchronization In Experimentally Induced Seizures" Under the mentorship of David Mogul, PhD, Ananda began her pursuit of science and medicine rather



unconventionally. While pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography (she is also an accomplished violinist), she undertook a project documenting mentally ill individuals living and working in a community-sponsored halfway house. This experience of observing and interacting with individuals suffering debilitating illnesses who yet were capable of living full and often joyful lives with the support of their community inspired her to pursue an academic career with more direct involvement in the care of other people. Undergraduate degrees in both biology and psychology lead her to become involved in significant research experiences in immunology, psychology and neuroscience. This early exposure to the challenges, rigors and unique gratification of scientific inquiry motivated her to pursue a combined medical and graduate degree program.

During her tenure as an MSTP student at UIC, she ultimately choose the Neural Engineering group in Bioengineering as her graduate program in order to examine neurological disorders from a more quantitative perspective. As her studies progressed, she desired an even deeper understanding of the mathematical principles underlying many of the algorithms and techniques applied in bioengineering, and so she completed a Masters in Applied Mathematics under the guidance of David Nicholls, PhD, during her Ph.D. studies. She has recently completed her thesis work under the advisement of David Mogul, PhD, at the Illinois Institute of Technology in examining the spatiotemporal structure of pathologically synchronized oscillators in the brain during epileptic seizures. This work was initially performed in experimental animal models. However, during her experiences working with Marvin Rossi, MD, PhD, in the epilepsy center at Rush Medical Center, she was privileged to meet and work with patients suffering the debilitating neurological and psychosocial consequences of intractable epilepsy. This motivated her to begin collaboration with physicians and professors at the University of Chicago to apply her newly developed analytical techniques to human data.

To date she has one publication (Larson, J, Jessen, RE, Kim, D, Fine, A-KS, du Hoffman, J. Age-dependent and selective impairment of LTP in anterior piriform cortex of mice lacking the fragile X mental retardation protein. *J. Neurosci.*, 25(41): 9460-9469) and three papers currently submitted and awaiting review. In Spring 2009, she gave a presentation entitled "Calculating Instantaneous Synchrony of Nonlinear Nonstationary Oscillators in the Brain" at the IEEE EMBS Conference on Neural Engineering in Antalya, Turkey. Two poster presentations at national conferences are scheduled for this autumn:

Fine, AS, Nicholls, D, and Mogul, DJ. Analysis of Instantaneous Synchrony in the Brain. Invited Abstract for IEEE EMBS Conference on Engineering in Medicine and Biology. September 2009.

Fine, AS, Nicholls, DP, and Mogul, DJ. Analysis and stimulation-based modulation of spatiotemporal synchrony during epileptic seizures. Abstract for Society for Neuroscience Conference, October 2009.

At the end of September she will enter the final phase of her medical scientist training, the M3-M4 clerkships of the medical curriculum. Her career aspirations include a wish to continue to work with a multi-institutional, multi-departmental, cross-disciplinary philosophy. It is her belief that no one person, institution or department is capable of solving the serious problems in medical science and that collaborative teams of highly creative scientists and physicians will be the most fulfilling and successful approach to apply to her career as it develops.

The award was presented by Dr. Cohen at the September dinner seminar, 9/10/09. Thanks to Dr. Ramsey for making the award possible, to Dr. Cohen for lending his name and support to it, and to Ananda for winning it. (Alumni News continues on page 7 )

## Welcome New Students

### **Sarah Baumgarten**



**Degree:** BA, Molecular and Cellular Biology, Vanderbilt University, 2009

**Research Interests:** Structural biology; Reproductive endocrinology; Women's Health Studies, including breast cancer, hormone research.

**Summer 2009 Rotation:** Lab of Jonna Frasor, PhD, Dept. of Physiology & Biophysics

**Talents & Hobbies:** Active participant in at Vanderbilt in Vanderbilt Student Volunteers for Science in which groups of students travel to middle schools in low socioeconomic areas throughout Nashville to teach hands-on science lessons to promote science interest and literacy.

**Cool vibes:** Sarah worked as a model at an Abercrombie & Fitch store during college, but her duties went beyond showcasing the clothing; she also worked in management, auditing, stocking --every aspect of the business, for which she garnered an award called the "You Rock" raise. She is also into recycling bit time, having participated in a major recycling-fundraising event at Vanderbilt call Rites of Spring Recycling.

### **Jason Buhrman**

**Degree:** BS, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Boston University, 2008;

**Research Interests:** Cancer, particularly studies on chemotherapeutics and viral therapy; the combination of oncolytic viral vectors with gene therapy.

**Summer 2009 Rotation:** Andy Mesecar, PhD, Dept. of Medicinal Chemistry & Pharmacognosy

**Talents & Hobbies:** National Intercollegiate Ballroom Ten Dancing; Motorcycling

**Cool vibes:** Jason uses his motorcycle for sight-seeing and meeting interesting people. For his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, he took his first major trip, from St. Louis to Boston, stopping along the way to explore different communities, start conversations with people who told him their personal stories. He has subsequently cycled al over the Northeast United States.



### **Christine Haddad**



**Degree:** BS, Integrative Physiology/Pre-medicine, University of Iowa, 2009

**Research Interests:** Cardiovascular physiology; underlying mechanisms responsible for cardiovascular dysfunction

**Summer 2009 Rotation:** Zurich, Switzerland

**Talents & Hobbies:** At U Iowa, founder and secretary of the Arab Students Association; Step Aerobics Instructor

**Cool vibes:** While completing her research fellowship in Switzerland this summer, Christine took advantage of time off on weekends to travel to a different European city every weekend.

### **Cody Rutledge**

**Degree:** BS/BA, Biology/Chemistry, Cases Western Reserve University, 2009

**Research Interests:** Cardiology: exploring the molecular mechanisms involved in the metabolic pathways of a failing heart; particular interest in the mechanisms surrounding tissue repair and re-growth involved in recovering from heart disease.

**Summer 2009 Rotation:** Lab of John Solaro, PhD, Head, Dept. of Physiology & Biophysics

**Talents & Hobbies:** Sports, especially football

**Cool vibes:** In junior year at Case, he spent spring semester in Argentina doing a course on "Stem Cell and Genomic Research"



### **Lindsay Rutter**



**Degree:** BS, Biomedical Engineering, Penn State University, 2007

**Research Interests:** Neuroscience research with potential for clinical applications

**Summer 2009 Rotation:** Lab of Angela Tyner, PhD, Dept. of Biochemistry & Molecular Genetics

**Talents & Hobbies:** Marathon running, Habitat for Humanity Volunteer, Alternative Spring Break, Science-Health reporting for campus newspaper.

**Cool vibes:** Lindsay combines her dual passions of running and research by participating in marathons and other runs for medically related charities: In April 2007 she ran the Boston Marathon on behalf of the Centre Volunteers in Medicine, and from July to November 2007, she did 5K runs in Best Buddies Pennsylvania, to support issues ranging from suicide awareness to cancer research.

### **Farah Shareef**

**Degree:** BS, Bioengineering, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2008.

**Research Interests:** Cell and tissue engineering, specifically the factors affecting cell proliferation in engineering replacement for damaged tissues and organs.

**Summer 2008 Rotation:** Lab of Brenda Russell, PhD, Dept. of Physiology & Biophysics

**Talents & Hobbies:** As an undergrad, Farah enjoyed involvement with campus activities at UIC including serving as Editor of the Invited Opinions Section of the Journal of Pre-Health Affiliated Students and Activities Committee Chair of the GPPA Student Executive Board.

**Cool vibes:** Farah was admitted to the COM and MSTP in 2008 and spent the summer doing her first rotation, during which she received word that she won a Fulbright Fellowship for a full year of research at the Imperial College in London, and off she went. She returned just in time for COM orientation with not only great experiences but a master's degree as well.



## WELCOME NEW STUDENTS, (cont from P.4)



### Ryan Carr

**Degree:** BA, Molecular Biology/Psychology, UIUC, 2008

**Research Interests:** Molecular biology, in particular immunology, with a concentration on cancer.

**Summer 2009 Rotation:** Lab of Bellur Prabhakar, PhD, Dept. of Microbiology & Immunology

**Talents & Hobbies:** Writer/Podcaster for "Opening Bands," an online magazine featuring promotional materials for local and lesser-known bands, 2004-2007; Vice President of Information Systems for the LAS Council at UIUC; Member of the LAS Committee of Admissions and Academic Standards; President and Founder of Prospective Students in Medicine, a student organization for pre-medicine students.

**Cool vibes:** As an M1 at UIC in 2008-09, Ryan won a prestigious Craig Fellowship, fell in love with biomedical research, applied to the MSTP, and is now joining the M2 group of MSTP students.

## Mentors Program Thriving

Jennifer Kwan, who founded the UIC Mentors Program in Autumn 2007 under the guidance of Deans Sandlow and Mayer, presented the following abstract explaining the success of the program at the 2009 AAMC CGEA Meeting at the Mayo Clinic. "The UIC COM Mentors Program: A Novel Program for Introducing First-Year Medical Students to Clinical Correlations with Basic Science Courses"

*Jennifer M. Kwan, BA, University of Illinois-Chicago College of Medicine*

*David Mayer, MD, University of Illinois-Chicago*

*Janet M. Riddle, MD, University of Illinois-Chicago*

*Leslie J. Sandlow, MD, University of Illinois-Chicago*

**Objective:** Medical students value early exposure to patients, yet typically lack structured opportunities for integrating classroom learning with clinical problems. The Mentors Program was designed to: (1) Increase opportunities for first-year medical students to use classroom knowledge in clinical problem solving, (2) Expose students to specialties early in medical school, and (3) Allow residents and fellows to serve as mentors and teachers. **Methods:** Three to four first-year students were matched with a mentor based upon students' career interests. Students attended clinic or rounds with their mentor at least once. Each group selected one patient to study and present to their class. Presentations included the patient case description, relevant information from basic science coursework, and a summary of students' discussion with their mentor. During the presentations, mentors commented on case presentations and discussed their specialties. **Results:** During 2007-8, 60 first-year medical students and 18 residents or fellows from ten medical specialties participated in the program. Program evaluation included on-line surveys and feedback sessions.



## Dinner Seminars

**Wednesday, August 26, 5:30 pm**

**Anand Kumar, MD  
Professor and Head,  
Department of Psychiatry**

**"The depression-dementia conundrum in the elderly:**

**Do neuroimaging and neuropsychology have a role?"**



**Thursday, September 10, 5:30 pm**

**Nissim Hay, PhD, Professor, Department of  
Biochemistry & Molecular Genetics**

**"Energy metabolism and genesis of cancer:  
the role of the serine/threonine kinase Akt"**

**Thursday, October 8, 5:30 pm**

**Richard C. Meagher, PhD, Associate Research  
Professor of Medicine,**

**Division of Hematology/Oncology, Feinberg  
School of Medicine, Northwestern University**

**"Cell Therapy: A Look at the Future"**



**Wednesday, February 17, 5:30 pm**

**Ron Hershov, MD, Associate Professor.  
Department of Medicine, Section of Infectious  
Diseases, and Department of Epidemiology,  
SPH**

**"Promoting retroviral therapy in injection  
drug users in Indonesia: a pilot study"**

Most students found the program beneficial to course learning and integration. Clinical sessions and discussions with mentors were rated most useful by students. Write-ups and case presentations received mixed reviews. Mentors thought the program was useful and did not find the time commitment problematic. **Conclusions:** The Mentors Program has been successful in providing students opportunities for clinical exposure under the guidance of residents and fellows. Student and mentor suggestions for improving both mentor and student preparation and scheduling of case presentations have been incorporated into the program.

MSTP 2005 Alumna, Dr. Andrea Birnbaum, now in her final year of residency in the Dept. of Ophthalmology at UIC, was one of the mentors in 2008-09 in ophthalmology. Jennifer said that "her students learned a lot from the experience and are grateful for her guidance and insights, particularly on their presentation on a case of Macular Degeneration (see photo)."

## Souvenirs of Graduation Banquet

On May 7, we feted the 2009 MSTP graduates at our annual closing banquet and seminar, held for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row at the Parthenon Restaurant in Halsted Street in Greektown. The five graduates --Terry Chiganos, Irene Klein, Evan Osmundson, Mark Pilkinton and Roy Smetana --were joined by many relatives and friends, along with their MSTP colleagues and many faculty members: Dr. Larry Tobacman (MSTP Director) and wife Dr. Joanne Tobacman, Dr. Karen Colley (MSTP Associate Director), Dr. Edward Cohen (Former MD/PhD Director), Seminar Speaker Dr. Samuel Dudley, Thesis Advisors: Dr. Patrick Rousche (Chiganos), Dr. Asrar Malik (Klein) and Dr. Oscar Colamonici (Pilkinton), and Program supporters, Dr. Yee-Kin Ho, Dr. Miodrag Radulovacki, and Dr. Jean Lantz. The photos below reveal the good time and good food enjoyed by all.



## In the Alumni Mailbag (Cont from P. 3)

From **Samuel Blackman, MD, PhD 2001:**

October 28, 2008

I hope that this note finds you well. I wanted to just send you an update (and updated contact information) on things while I had a free moment, and also to extend an offer to the UIC MSTP program.

I wrapped up my combined pediatric hematology/oncology and pediatric neuro-oncology program at the Dana-Farber in December 2007 (as an aside, one of the last things that I did was to meet with Brenton Mar who successfully matched to the program and will be starting in July of 2009). The highlight of 2007, however, was not just finishing my training just 8 months shy of turning 40, but becoming a father via Kostanai, Kazakhstan, where my wife and I traveled to adopt our daughter (<http://justkaz.samblackman.org> for the full story). We lived in Kazakhstan for a little over 6 weeks and got to tour a number of hospitals and research institutes. It was quite the adventure. With the new baby, of course, came a new perspective on work/life balance and after a great deal of consideration, including, I think, some well-founded concerns about the ability of the federal budget to fund the NIH to an adequate level and concerns about junior faculty being able to be sufficiently 'protected', etc. etc., I decided to accept an offer to join the Experimental Medicine/Oncology group at Merck Research Labs. Believe me, industry was not where I thought that I'd end up, but I'm extremely pleased with my decision. I'm playing a truly translational role in the oncology drug development process and have the ability to do studies of far greater size and scientific impact than I would've been able to do at the junior faculty level. My new position harnesses not just the individual MD and PhD skills, but also the skills that dual-degree holders are imbued with, in being able to more easily apply a basic science perspective to clinical trials and bring clinical perspectives into the pre-clinical arena.

That being said, one of the things I've come to realize is how opaque industry can seem to those who are in academia, and how many myths and misconceptions there are about the kind of work that takes place in companies like Merck. Towards that I end, if you and Dr. Tobacman are interested, I'd be more than happy to speak to the MSTP program about translational research in industry, drug development, or just give a perspective on a different type of career path for MD/PhDs.

Anyhow, my new contact info is below. Hope all else is well, and again, congratulations to you, Dr. Tobacman, and UIC on achieving MSTP status.

Best, Sam

Samuel C. Blackman, MD, PhD  
Associate Director - Experimental Medicine  
Merck Research Laboratories  
351 North Sumneytown Pike (UG4D-34)  
North Wales, PA 19454  
Phone (267) 305-1682 ; Fax (267) 305-1255  
Cell (617) 312-8626

From **Sapan Desai, MD, PhD, 2006:**

April 14, 2009

Hello, I am presently a PGY-3 general surgery resident at Duke University. I've been asked by a publisher to put together a review textbook for surgery residents preparing for their general

I surgery ABSITE and surgery board exams.

Sapan S. Desai MD, Ph.D., J.D.

Surgery Resident

Duke University Medical Center,

id@SapanDesai.com

From **Ronald (Jake) Jackups, MD, PhD 2008:**

June 7, 2009

Roberta:

It's been a while since I talked to you, so I thought I'd just check in and give you a status update. I love my job here and I love being back in St. Louis. My career is progressing quickly, and I'll have two jobs next year: chief resident of clinical pathology and transfusion medicine fellow.

How are things on your end? I saw the match results, and I'm glad they all did well. See if you can send some to St. Louis in the future.

For that matter, one of my roles as chief is to coordinate the clinical pathology med student rotation. I did this my 4th year and it's certainly what brought me here. If you know of any students with an interest in clinical pathology/laboratory medicine, I highly recommend they do an away rotation here; Wash U is definitely top 3 in that field, and I'd argue #1. Good talking to you, Jake

From **Nathan Stitzel, MD, PhD 2006:**

June 12, 2009

Thanks for the email; it's great to hear from you and I hope you are doing well. It's hard to believe that it's already been 3 years since graduating from UIC.

After completing the research-pathway internal medicine residency at the University of Chicago, my wife and I moved to Boston where I'm currently finishing the first year of my cardiology fellowship at Brigham and Women's Hospital. Janis is finishing her first year as a gastroenterology fellow at Children's Hospital. I'll include my contact information below. In other, non work-related news, we are expecting our first child in July of 2009; needless to say it will make the second year of fellowship interesting!

I'm thrilled to hear that there will be an award named for Dr. Cohen - I have many fond memories of him and am happy that he will be receiving some ongoing recognition of the impact he had on the MSTP program there. Looking forward to hearing more about the details of the alumni association!

Please give my best to everyone there,

-Nate

Cardiovascular Division, PBB-1  
Brigham and Women's Hospital  
75 Francis Street  
Boston MA 02115

## CONGRATULATIONS NEW SAC BOARD

**Exec.Board:** Evan Small(President), Scott Feldman, Andy Crys, Senta Furman, Ryan Lahey

**At Large:** Ina Han, Jessica Wilson, Sarah Hatch, Vanesa Reese, Jason Buhman, Yalda Afshar



College of Medicine  
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Research & Education

Jorge Girotti, PhD  
Assoc. Dean for Admissions and  
Urban Health Program

Kathleen Kashima, PhD  
Senior Assoc. Dean of Student

8. **Evan Small**, G3, Biochemistry & Molecular Genetics, lab of Dr. Andy Mesecar "Shining Light on Cancer Chemo Prevention"

9. **Thomas Wubben**, G2, Biochemistry & Molecular Genetics, lab of Dr. Andy Mesecar "Analysis of the Potential Phosphatetheine Adenylyltransferase as a Novel, Broad Spectrum, Antibacterial Drug."

Our first speaker, immediately after lunch, was our own Associate Director, Karen Colley, PhD, the Associate Dean for Graduate Research and Education and Professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics. She gave an animated research talk entitled "The Biosynthesis of Polysialic Acid: A Developmentally Regulated, Anti-Adhesive Glycan" illustrated not only with Power Point slides but with expert pantomime in which she used her own body to re-create the cell structures she was describing in words.

At the end of the afternoon, following the two breakout sessions, our second speaker, Suma Jacob, MD, PhD, Visiting Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychiatry, gave an informative and inspirational talk entitled "The MD/PhD



journey: thinking broadly, deeply & critically." Skillfully weaving descriptions of her research work on autism and her clinical treatment of autistic children into her narrative of her career path to date, she defined moments of critical decisions the typical MD/PhD student and practitioner has to make and gave advice on how to make them in the most beneficial way.

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The first breakout session offered a choice of three discussion topics: A. Medical Ethics, B. Patient Activism, C. Future Endeavors and MD/PhDs. The second breakout session offered topics geared to specific cohort groups within the training process:

A. M1 & M2 Students: How to Survive M1 (facilitated by Dr. Tobacman); B. G1 & G2 Students: Switching Gears to PhD Study --Everything You Need to Know (facilitated by Dr. Colley); C. G3-5 & M3-4 Students: Planning and Scheduling Grand Rounds for 09-10 (led by Dr. Lipton and Roberta)

Although a storm gathered and poured buckets for a short time during the recreation period, everyone still managed to get in some exercise and/or relaxation, either outdoors or in. Though the rain had stopped by dinner time, the patio was so wet that the food was laid out indoors and most chose to eat in the meeting room.

But nothing marred the high spirits of the evening party in the hospitality room, where abundant refreshments of all kinds including a variety of libations lasted well into the night. Yet most made it to the hearty full breakfast on Monday morning, during which the annual student meeting took place. (See report of programming suggesting that were made and are now being implemented by the directory staff.)

The fun and learning that the students enjoyed were enhanced by the presence and participation of the following additional faculty, whom we thank for coming: Andrei Gartel, PHD, Yee-Kin HO, PHD, Howard Lipton, MD, Neil Smalheiser, PhD, Joanne Tobacman, MD

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