Dear GEMS Students, Faculty, and Staff,

Happy New Year to all and welcome back for the Spring Semester! The year has started off with a bang following the coldest winter blast in Chicago in over 100 years. We hope everyone is staying warm. Remember, the lab is always a good place to avoid the biting winds of Chicago. We invite you all to read this second installment of GEMS DIGEST for the latest updates on GEMS. Please forward to Mia any notable achievements or news that you may like to include in future issues.

The Fall semester brought new changes to GEMS including new courses and additional financial support for the GEMS Program from the College of Medicine. In addition, a number of our students were recipients of awards from the University. Finally, a number of GEMS students completed their PhDs and have move on to the next phase of their careers. We’d like to congratulate all of our students, and their mentors, on their accomplishments! Keep up the good work.

Lastly, recruitment for our new class of graduate students will begin in February. We invite you all to participate in the interview and recruitment process. Please be on the lookout for emails from GEMS regarding your participation.

Best wishes for continued success in the New Year!

William Hendrickson and John O’Bryan
GEMS Co-Directors

GEMS STUDENT ASSOCIATION

We are pleased to announce that GEMS Student Association (GEMSSA) has been recognized by UIC as an official student organization. The purpose of GEMSSA is to enhance the personal, academic, and professional experiences of students in the Graduate Education of Medical Sciences in the College of Medicine and promote their continued success in the research community. This group will fosters communication among its members and provides representation across the university to maintain a high academic standard for lifelong experience; and to facilitate a more engaged and interactive relationship amongst each other and faulty members.

During the fall semester, GEMSSA held two successful student meetings where general student concerns, changes to the GEMS program and curriculum were discussed. As a result, students have formed committees on Peer Education, Curriculum Development, and community service through GEMS Gives Back (GGB). The events held by GGB endeavor to help Chicago’s communities while leading to more cohesive interdepartmental relationship including participating in the 2013 Dragon Boat Race for Literacy, volunteering at the Chicago Marathon, and a Lincoln Park soup kitchen.

GEMSSA and the Microbiology and Immunology Department co-hosted a seminar by Dr. Scott Muerhoff, Director of Biologics Discovery & Design at Abbott Diagnostics and ended the year with the first annual GEMS holiday party and gingerbread house building competition. We are looking forward to continue to bring community to the graduate students of GEMS in the coming year.

Regards,
GEMSSA Executive Committee
OFFICE OF GRADUATE EDUCATION IN THE MEDICAL SCIENCES

FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

Even though the Fall 2013 semester is over and our first year students are done with their fall semester final exams, I still would like to take the time to briefly introduce you to the First Year GEMS Students.

Anatomy
Minsu Kang - University of IL Urbana - Champaign

Biochemistry
Rachael Farhat - Iowa State University
Georgina Mancinelli - Central Michigan University
Anupama Puppala - University of IL Urbana - Champaign

Pharmacology
Jugajyoti Baruah - VIT (Vellore Institute of Technology)
Audrey Killarney - University of IL Urbana - Champaign
Matthew Weist - Michigan State University
Lisa Rosenthal - University of Michigan Ann Arbor
Mark Shaaya - Lebanese University

Physiology
Magdalis Gonzalez-Vega - University of Puerto Rico
David Ryba – University of IL at Chicago
Ellen Shamansky Mount Holyoke College

PUBLICATIONS AND AWARDS

2013 Chancellor's Graduate Research Fellowship
Jillian Eskra (Path) Brian Estevez (Pharm) Alicia Rizzo (Pharm)
Russell Smith (Pharm) Leo Serebryannyy (Physio and Biophysics)

UIC Graduate College Fall 2013 Provost Deiss Award Winners
Melissa Geyer (Pharm)

2013 COM Research Forum Award
Honorable Mention: Ryan Lahey (Physiology and Biophysics)
Honorable Mention: Michael Marshall (Anatomy and Cell Biology)
Honorable Mention: Christine Haddad (Microbiology and Immunology)
Honorable Mention: Erick Maravilla (Anatomy and Cell Biology)

UIC Dean’s Scholar Award
Bo Shen
DISSERTATIONS AND THESES

Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics

Joseph Zapater - May 2013
Thesis title: Identification of Polysialyltransferase Sequences Required for Substrate Recognition and Polysialylation

Kristin Ivy - June 2013
Thesis title: The Role of Human Copper Transporter 1, hcTR1, in Copper and Cisplatin Entry in Mammalian cells

Wanni Yu - September 2013
Thesis title: The Effect of Akt Isoforms in Tumorigenesis and Glucose Homeostasis in vivo

Aaron Ambrus - November 2013;
Thesis title: E2F transcription factors are critical regulators of the cell cycle, apoptosis and mitochondrial function

Maoyu Peng - November 2013
Thesis title: Exploring roles of Protein Tyrosine Kinase 6 in the normal mammary gland and in breast cancer

Microbiology

Thessicar Antoine - December 2013
Thesis title: The Development of Therapeutic Targeted against Viral Invasion

Pathology

Emily N. Reinke - February 2013
Thesis title: The Post - Transcriptional Regulation of Antioxidant Enzymes

Abeer Mostafa Mahmoud - March 2013
Thesis title: Androgen Receptor Mutations and Estrogen Receptor - B Modulate Genistein Effects on Prostate Cancer Cells

Stephen W. Jagla - March 2013
Thesis title: Effects on Seed Extracts from Traditional Nigerian Medical Plants on Prostate Cancer Cell Growth

Pharmacology

Jessica Lowry January - 2013
Thesis title: A Novel c-Jun-N-Terminal Kinase Pathway Stimulates High Output eNos-Derived NO in Inflamed Endothelium

Tracy Lynn Schmidt January - 2013
Thesis title: Endothelial Focal Adhesion Kinase and Endothelial Barrier Function

Christina Chow February - 2013

Adam Wieschhaus April - 2013
Thesis title: Dematin Regulates Calcium Mobilization and Signaling in Platelets

Xiaowen Liu - July 2013
Thesis title: The 'Go' and 'Stop' Mechanisms for Neutrophil Migration
DISserTATIONS AND THESES (continued)

Pharmacology

Luiza Rusu - August 2013
Thesis title: Molecular Mechanisms of vWF Secretion

Nazir Okur - September 2013
Thesis title: Intersection (ITSN) regulation of EGFR ubiquitylation

Erin Kohler - November 2013
The Role of Nanog in Wnt Signaling-Mediated Endothelial Cell Dedifferentiation and Neovascularization

Farnaz Bakhshi - November 2013
Mechanism of Caveolin - 1 Degradation

Shalina Taylor - December 2013
Requirement of Myeloperoxidase for Neutrophil Spatial Sensing

PASSED PRELIMS

Juyoung Kim 07/17/13
Alicia Rizzo 07/19/13
Kevin Kruse 07/31/13
Dheeraj Soni 08/02/13
Pascal Yazbeck 08/02/13
Venkateswarn Ramamoorthi 08/05/13
Tina Perkins 08/09/13
Andrew Barazia 08/15/13

IMPORTANT DATES

GEMS Interviews
February 14, and 28, 2014
We will need student representatives for Thursday’s meet and greet at the hotel and Friday’s lunch.
FELLOWSHIP INFORMATION

Below are the upcoming Graduate College Fellowship deadline dates:
http://grad.uic.edu/cms/?pid=1000893

**Abraham Lincoln Fellowship**
Department nominations due to the Graduate College: April 1, 2014
Announcement of awards: April 22, 2014

**Dean’s Scholar Award**
Department nominations due to the Graduate College: March 17, 2014
Announcement of Awards: April 21, 2014
Last day for awardees to inform Graduate College of acceptance: June 2, 2014

**W.C. Deiss Fellowships**
Department nominations due to the Graduate College: February 3, 2014
Announcement of awards: February 24, 2014
Last day for awardees to inform Graduate College of acceptance:
April 15, 2014

**Provost/Deiss Research Award**
Applications/Department nominations due to Graduate College:
March 17, 2013
Announcement of awards: April 21, 2014