

BIOCHEMISTRY & MOLECULAR BIOLOGY TODAY



Chair's Message

We are starting the year with a number of important events that will impact all of us. Dr. Callender is preparing a ten-year plan for translational research that will focus on the development and growth of translational research at UTMB over the next decade. Four translational research areas suggested by the President all involve chronic diseases and bear relationships to aging issues:

1. Diabetes / metabolic diseases
2. Degenerative neurological diseases / neuroscience
3. Cardiovascular disease, especially advanced states of cardiac failure; hypertension diseases
4. Cancer, especially solid tumor cancer

This does not mean that present areas of strength will be ignored, but rather that a focused approach will be applied to these four areas. This will be an opportunity to develop new collaborative programs both within and outside of UTMB.

The Provost has agreed to fund a new Presidential Scholar Program aimed at attracting outstanding graduate students to all the graduate programs. If you are a member of the graduate faculty you will soon receive details. One feature of this program is that all faculty members are eligible to nominate applicants. Successful awardees will receive relocation funds and enhanced stipends. For details contact Debora Botting.

Graduation is of great significance to all of

JANUARY 2010 NO. 252



our students, both our graduate and medical students. Because of the importance of the occasion, the department will defray the cost of renting the academic regalia to be worn. This year I expect all faculty members to attend at least one of the two graduations. It is a component of service to our students, if you will. Please contact Margie Wronski to arrange for the rental of the robes.

There are curriculum and other administrative changes going on in the graduate school. This is an opportunity to offer that specialized course you have been wanting to teach. Graduate school teaching is a component of our overall education mission. Please consider developing a new course with the help of the curriculum committee.

The Biological Chemistry Student Organization – our students – are raising funds for their activities by selling very handsome “polo” (no relation) shirts to staff, students and faculty. The Department will provide a partial subsidy for student purchases, and we are asking that all faculty members purchase one of these very handsome polo shirts with the BMB logo.

This spring should see an active recruitment effort for new faculty with expertise in the areas of NMR, X-ray crystallography, cryoEM, and mouse genetics. When recruits visit us, please make an effort to attend their seminars, and if particularly interested let Margie Wronski know so that she can include you in the “chalk talks” or social

events associated with the recruitment effort. This is a chance to help select who your colleagues will be for years to come.

As David Konkel has explained, there are new NIH forms for grant submission reflecting NEW EMPHASIS IN GRANT EVALUATIONS. We would like to provide some help in the preparation of grants; in order to do a good job of this, we must have front pages submitted one week prior to deadlines. We have also asked that you submit your version of the biosketch to David so that he may provide some input into the new components that are now so important. Along these lines, we have provided our tenure-track assistant professors with the opportunity to present a “chalk talk” to a small group of senior colleagues with their plans for submission of a grant PRIOR TO WRITING THE GRANT. This is so helpful that we would like to extend this opportunity to any tenure-track member of our faculty. Please contact me directly if you would like to schedule such a presentation.

At long last renovations for the 5th and 6th floor are reaching a critical state. While there will be temporary inconveniences to faculty members now occupying this space, the results will warrant the wait and bother. As events unfold we will keep all informed.

As spring arrives, I wish all good weather in the months ahead.

regino

Inside this issue:

MGC	3
Awards and Announcements	2
Faculty Travels	3
Publications	3

Special Items of Interest

- ✦ [Molecular Genomics Core Launches new website and LIMS](#)

Awards and Announcements

Marlene Starr, a student in Dr. Hiroshi Saito's lab was recently awarded the American Foundation for Aging Research Graduate Fellowship.

Anil K. Mantha (Postdoctoral Associate in Dr. Sankar Mitra's Lab) received the Young Investigator Scholarship from Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation (ADDF), December 2009, to attend the 4th Drug Discovery for Neurodegeneration Conference on February 1-2, 2010 to be held in Houston, Texas'

Andy Kudlicki received a March of Dimes grant entitled "Modeling the Spatiotemporal Pattern of Gene Expression During Somitogenesis with Maximum Entropy Deconvolution"



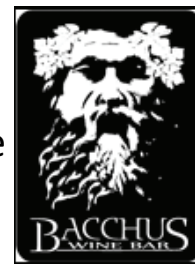
The BCSO has started a fundraising effort for the Lillian Chan Endowment Fund. The Lillian Chan Endowment Fund was created in 2009 in honor of the former director of the BMB Graduate Program, Professor Lillian Chan. The fund serves the purpose of BMB student training and will support student-selected seminar speakers, travel awards to scientific meetings, and other activities to promote networking and develop interpersonal skills.

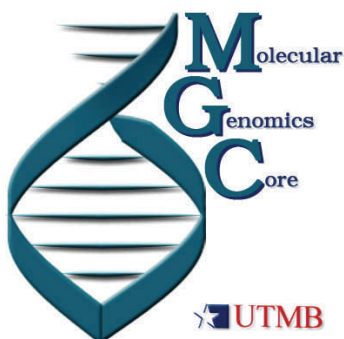
As part of the fundraiser, we are taking orders for short sleeved polo shirts with the BMB logo embroidered on it. Examples of embroidered shirts can be viewed in Debora Botting's office (BSB 1st Floor room 107). Shirts are available in many colors and will sell for \$32.50. All profits generated from the shirt sales will flow into the Lillian Chan Endowment Fund. We have created an order form which, if you are interested in purchasing a shirt(s), [the order form](#) should be returned to Debora Botting at your earliest convenience. **We will send out an email to the department with the order form attached.**

For more information on the Lillian Chan Endowment Fund or on this current fundraising effort, please contact any of the BCSO Officers (Christof Straub, Michal Szymanski, Sarah Hemauer, Paige Spencer) or Debora Botting.



The BCSO would also like to announce our monthly social mixer at Bacchus Wine Bar on Friday, January 29 from 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM. We hope many of you will join us.





The Molecular Genomics (MG) Core is pleased to announce the launch of both their new website www.scomm.utmb.edu/genomics/ and [Laboratory Information Management System \(LIMS\)](#) which will provide an easy-to-use secure interface for sample submission and data retrieval. We hope that you will find valuable information with regards to our services and instructions for new sample submission. Once at the site, you will find a hotlink to LabLink which will guide you through the submission process. You can use a supported Web browser and any Internet or Intranet connection to securely access LabLink, submit information, and view real-time data

and results related to your

analyzed samples.

GenoLogics LabLink

Starting on February 1, 2010, all requests to the MG Core for gene expression analysis, SNP analysis and DNA sequencing must go through this web portal. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact the MG Core.

Faculty on the Road



Sankar Mitra traveled to Gainesville, FL to give a seminar at the University of Florida on January 14.

Werner Braun gave an invited talk "Allergen Structures in a Genomics Age" at the Keystone Symposium on "Structural Genomics: Expanding the Horizon of Structural Biology" in Breckenridge, CO, on January 10, 2010.

Publications



O. Nestic; J. D. Guest; D. Zivadinovic; P. A. Narayana; J. J. Herrera; R. J. Grill; V. U.L. Mokkaapati; B. B. Gelman; J. Lee: Aquaporins in Spinal Cord Injury: The Janus Face of AQP4. Review. Neuroscience. Accepted.

Michal R. Szymanski, Maria J. Jezewska, and Wlodzimierz M. Bujalowski. The E. coli PriA helicase specifically recognizes gapped DNA substrates. Effect of the two nucleotide-binding sites of the enzyme on the recognition process. J Biol Chem. 2010 Jan 19. [Epub ahead of print]