

Chair's Column

Dear BMB colleagues,

By popular demand we are reviving the BMB newsletter, which we will distribute monthly via email and the BMB website. Let me start this first newsletter of 2015 by highlighting that we have an exciting year ahead in BMB: we will recruit outstanding new faculty (a process that had a great start this week with Mike Harris from CWRU), we will launch the Research Progress series later this month, we will have our scientific retreat in April, and most importantly we will make sure that we are driven by the pursuit of remarkable science.

I want to thank the members of the Internal Advisory Committee for raising the issue of communications - the importance of knowing what is going on at BMB. As a response we decided to revamp the website (work in progress) and to restart the BMB newsletter.

The final months of 2014 were very successful for the department -and although I had nothing to do with this, I will take full credit J

Many publications list BMB members as co-authors – to name a few: “Effects of geometry and chemistry on hydrophobic solvation” by Harris and Pettitt in *PNAS*, “Direct estradiol and diethylstilbestrol actions on early- versus late-stage prostate cancer cells” by Koong and Watson in *The Prostate*, and “Small-molecule Box agonists for cancer therapy” by Xin et al in collaboration with Mark White published in *Nature Communications*. Congratulations to all authors and co-authors.

In the area of extramural funding the department did very well in the closing months of last year. I mention a few here: Junji Iwahara and Magi Ruziicka obtained new NIH RO1 grants, I was lucky to get a Translational Faculty Science and Technology Acquisition and Retention (STARs) Program Award (I am grateful to Shelton Bradrick, Alex Ward and Brandt Levitt for the work that served as the basis for this award), Muge Martinez received an American Heart Association Grant in Aid Grant (Muge wants to recognize the terrific effort of Dr. Sunil Verma in obtaining this grant), Kay Choi received a USDA-NIFA AFRI award, and Mark Emmet received a grant from NASA. I congratulate these individuals and all others who received extramural and institutional grants.

Several of BMB colleagues were recognized in special ways - for example Mark Emmett was plenary speaker at the International Workshop on the Application of “Omics” to Radiation Effects which was held at the Radiation Effects Research Foundation in Hiroshima, Japan (Dec. 2-3, 2014). Many students received scholarships and awards and I highlight Curtis Nutter, student with Muge, who was awarded the Arthur V. Simmang Scholarship, the BSCO Award for his contribution to graduate student organization, and the Levin Presidential Scholar Award. A complete list of student awards is included below. Well done!

I thank Lisa Pipper for her in preparing the newsletter and all of you who sent items to be included.

Finally, I want to say again that I am delighted to be part of BMB, UTMB and the Galveston community, and I am deeply thankful for your warm welcome.

-Mariano



Dr. Mariano Garcia-Blanco

Spotlights

Maga Ruziicka, Ph.D. received an NIH grant "Decoding Genome Instability by Combining Accurate Mapping and Predictive Modeling"



Dr. Thomas Smith joins BMB and UTMB

Muge Martinez, Ph.D. received the AHA Grant in Aid Grant and a Institute of Infections and Immunity Mini Center Grant with key player Dr. Sunil Verma.

Mark Emmett, Ph.D. received a 1.78M NASA grant entitled "Induction of Hepatocellular Carcinoma by Space Radiation: A Systems Biology Study of Causative Mechanisms"

Kay Choi, Ph.D. was awarded a USDA-NIFA AFRI award entitled "Innate immune subversion by bovine viral diarrhoea virus and classical swine fever virus"

Mariano Garcia-Blanco has been awarded a \$1 million Translational STAR grant. The funding will be used to help renovate laboratory space in MRB and to procure state-of-the-art instrumentation needed to perform high throughput identification and analysis of host factor requirements for RNA virus replication, as well as screening of potential antiviral compounds.

Congratulations to the outstanding BMB graduate program students and postdoctoral fellows that received the following GSBS awards and scholarships! They were recognized at the annual GSBS Awards Luncheon.

Student	Award	Faculty Mentor
Jordan Speidel	Ann & John Hamilton Scholarship	Sherif Abdel-Rahman
Curtis Nutter	Arthur V. Simmang Award Biochemistry Student Organization Award William C. Levin Scholarship Award for Academic Excellence	Muge Martinez
Arijit Dutta	Barbara Bowman Scholarship Shirley Patricia Parker	Sankar Mitra
Pawel Bujalowski	Barbara Bowman Scholarship	Andres Oberhauser
Samantha Sheller	Bohdan Nechey Endowment	BBSC
Barbara Rolls	Bohdan Nechey Tuition Kay & Cary Cooper Scholarship GSBS Associates	Bill Ameredes
Catherine Kemme	Bohdan Nechey Tuition	Junji Iwahara
Carla Kantara, PhD	GSBS Postdoctoral Scientist Outstanding Service Award	Darrell Carney
Michaela Huynh	GSO Graduate Student Award	Larry Sowers
Oluwarotimi Folorunso	Irma Mendoza Robert Bennett Scholarship	Anson Pierce
Alexandre Esadze	Jeane B. Kempner Scholars	Junji Iwahara
Dan Nguyen	Marianne Blum, Ph.D. Endowed Scholarship Sealy Center on Aging	Junji Iwahara
Justin Drake	Robert A. Welch Award	Monte Pettitt
Fanping Kong	Robert Bennett Scholarship	Bruce Luxon

Publications

Koong LY, **Watson CS**. Direct estradiol and diethylstilbestrol actions on early- versus late-stage prostate cancer cells. *The Prostate*. 2014. doi: 10.1002/pros.22875. PubMed PMID: 25213831.

Chuanying Ding, Lily Wang, Haiku Chen, Christopher Wild, Na Ye, Ye Ding, Tania Wang, **Mark A White**, Qian Shen, and Jia Zhou, Ent-Kaurna-Based Region- and Stereo selective Inverse Electron Demand Hetero-Diels-Alder Reactions: Synthesis of Dihydropyran-Fused Diterpenoids *Org. Biomol. Chem.*, 2014. Epub Sept 3. [\[PDF\]](#)

Meiguo Xin, Rui Li, Maohua Xie, Dongkyoo Park, Taofeek K. Owonikoko, Gabriel L. Sica, Patrick E. Corsino, Jia Zhou, Chunyong Ding, **Mark A. White**, Andrew T. Magis, Suresh S. Ramalingam, Walter J. Curran, Fadlo R. Khuri & Xingming Deng, Small-molecule Bax agonists for cancer therapy *Nature Communications* 5, 2014. Epub Sept 17. [\[PDF\]](#)

January Research Seminars

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
5 Jan	6	7	8	9
	12:00pm - 1:00pm Infectious Disease Colloquium Nahed Ismail "Type I Interferon and Inflammasome"		4:00pm - 5:00pm Biochemistry Seminar Michael Harris "High Throughput RNA Enzymology Using Next Generation Sequencing"	12:00pm - 1:00pm PHTOX Seminar Sailesh Surapureddi "Genetic and Epigenetic Regulation of CYP2Cs Identification of Med25 as the Key Regulator in Drug Metabolism"
12 Jan	13	14	15	16
12:00pm - 1:00pm Mitchell Center Seminar Rakez Kayed "TBA"	12:00pm - 1:00pm Infectious Disease Colloquium Charles O. Elson "Host Immunity and The Microbiota: A tightly regulated dialogue"		4:00pm - 5:00pm Biochemistry Seminar John Lazo "Targeting Tyrosine Phosphatases for Cancer Treatment"	
4:00pm - 5:00pm Biochemistry Seminar Zachary Campbel "Global Analysis of RNA-Protein Interactions"				
19 Jan	20	21	22	23
All Day Holiday Martin Luther King Day	12:00pm - 1:00pm Infectious Disease Colloquium A.Desiree LaBeaud "Interepidemic and epidemic disease burden of arboviruses in Kenya"		4:00pm - 5:00pm Biochemistry Seminar Eric Wagner RNA 3' End Formation: From Glioblastoma to Neurodevelopmental Disorder"	4:00pm - 5:00pm Keck Seminar Donald Hamelberg Georgia State University
26 Jan	27	28	29	30
2:30pm - 3:30pm Biochemistry Seminar Heather Painter "Exploiting Pyrimidine Synthesis: Understanding mRNA Dynamics and Malarial Development"	12:00pm - 1:00pm Infectious Disease Colloquium Laura C. Harrington "Mosquito mating biology and behavior: new targets for vector control"	12:00pm - 1:00pm NCB Seminar Theodore Price	4:00pm - 5:00pm Biochemistry Seminar Andreas Matzschek "TBA"	4:00pm - 5:00pm Keck Seminar Cheryl Walker Texas A&M IBT