

# upstategrad update

transforming students from consumers of knowledge into producers of knowledge

october 2016

## THE SIXTH-YEAR ANGST

Last month I discussed the three-year itch. This month I thought I would bring up the sixth-year angst. Somewhere near the end of their fifth year or the start of their sixth, many graduate students start to feel a clear anxiety. There are many factors that go into this, but probably the biggest is the unknown. They usually know its time to graduate and look for a job, but still need to convince their advisor of this. They need to reach that activation level of trying to decide where to apply for a postdoc. They are unsure of whether anyone would want to hire them or give them a job. They worry that most of their data isn't published yet though they have a lot of it. Sometimes they are really comfortable with where they are in life, and fear the idea of moving. The advisor on the other hand has this really productive student in their lab. They are generating lots of data and complete experiments with their eyes closed and one hand tied behind their back. The last thing they want is for this student to leave. There are at least 10 more experiments they think are really important to get done, and this is the only person to do them. In addition, they want everything written-up and ready to be submitted for publication.

This is also the point where lines of communication start to breakdown. The student feels they now know more than the advisor about their topic and they dislike most of the advisor's suggestions and the advisor gets frustrated with the student since they aren't listening. But this is the point where the student and the advisor need to communicate, put aside their differences and treat each other like the colleagues they have become. They need to set timelines and specific goals for completion of the student's work, submission of manuscripts and writing of the thesis. Most of all, everyone needs to stick to those deadlines and goals.

Though we are training students to become independent research scientists, this is also a team enterprise where everyone needs to contribute.

Students still finish if this doesn't happen, but it can lead to long-term animosity and delays for everyone. Personally, it took me a full year after I graduated until I could talk to my PhD advisor again. So for all of those senior students and their advisors, keep communicating. You will graduate and find a job, you will get those papers published and those experiments done, and your research will be that much more productive.

– Mark E. Schmitt, PhD  
Dean, College of Graduate Studies  
schmittm@upstate.edu

# publications

## **PTH(1-34) and zoledronic acid have differing longitudinal effects on juvenile mouse femur strength and morphology.**

**BARTLOW CM**, Oest ME, Mann KA, Zimmerman ND, Butt BB, **DAMRON TA**.

*Journal of Orthopaedic Research*. 2016 Sep 21;. [Epub ahead of print]

## **Changes in cardiac NaV1.5 expression, function, and acetylation by pan-histone deacetylase inhibitors.**

**XU Q, PATEL D, ZHANG X, VEENSTRA RD**.

*American Journal Physiology - Heart & Circulatory Physiology*. 2016 Sep 16;;ajpheart.00156.2016. [Epub ahead of print]

## **Activation of hypothalamic astrocytes suppresses feeding without altering emotional states.**

**SWEENEY P**, Qi Y, Xu Z, **YANG Y**.

*Glia*. 2016 Sep 23. [Epub ahead of print]

# presentations

**SARAH BARGER**, a PhD Student in Anatomy & Cell Biology, presented at the Cell Symposium: 100 Years of Phagocytes in Giardini Naxos, Sicily, Italy September 19th through 22nd. Her presentation title was: "Long-tailed class I myosins coordinate actin remodeling at the membrane during Fc receptor-mediated phagocytosis."



**PICTURED ABOVE:** Students and Postdocs presented at the **BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES RETREAT** on Thursday, September 15th at the Lodge at Welch Allyn in Skaneateles, NY. **Not Pictured:** **SERGIO COUOH-CARDEL** and **RYAN PALUMBO**. Scroll down to Page 7 for more on the Biomedical Sciences Retreat.

# from our students



**KELLY-ANN GESUELLI** an MS student in Physiology, successfully defended her thesis last month. Kelly's thesis advisor is Dr. William Brunken.  
**Congratulations, Kelly!**



**JOSHUA KARCHIN**, a PhD student in Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, successfully defended his dissertation last month. Josh's dissertation advisor is Dr. Stewart Loh. Josh has accepted a position as a Senior Development Scientist at GlaxoSmithKline in Pennsylvania. **Congratulations, Josh!**

**DANA DESANTIS**, a PhD Student in Anatomy & Cell Biology, successfully passed her qualifying exam last month. Dana's dissertation advisor is Dr. Francesca Pignoni. **Congratulations, Dana!**



Two of our faculty were honored at the Fall Faculty Convocation, held on September 14, 2016. Pictured above is **DR. GARY CHAN**, Assistant Professor, Microbiology & Immunology, along with **OLESEA COJOHARI**, a PhD Student in his lab. Dr. Chan was presented with the President's Award for Excellence in Basic Science Research by a Young Investigator. Dr. Chan was nominated by Oleseah. Also pictured above is **DR. PATTY KANE**, Professor & Chair, Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, along with **SWETHA DEVI VELIVELA**, **SUBHRAJIT BANERJEE**, and **MICHAEL JASKOLKA** - all PhD students in her lab. Dr. Kane received the SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professorship, the highest SUNY Academic Rank. Dr. Kane was nominated by Subhrajit, while both Swetha and Michael supported the nomination. **Congratulations Dr. Chan & Dr. Kane!**

# from our alumni

**PICTURED AT LEFT: DANA MIHAILA, PHD**, with **DR. JOSEPH SANGER**, Chair of Cell & Developmental Biology at Upstate Medical University, during Fall Convocation, where she was a recipient of the President's Award for Excellence in Teaching on September 14, 2016. Dana is an Assistant Professor of Cell & Developmental Biology here at Upstate, where she also serves as Director of the Anatomy Laboratory and the Anatomical Gift Program in the Department of Cell & Developmental Biology. In her current roles, she teaches in both the College of Graduate Studies and the College of Medicine – where she is also a student advisor for first and second-year medical students.

Outside of work, Dana is mother to two boys: Tiberiu, a sophomore in the Vagelos Scholars Program in Life Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania; and Alexandru, a sophomore at Fayetteville-Manlius High School, who also competes in Science Olympiads and is a member of the varsity swimming team. Dana's husband, Dragos Mihaila, MD, is a movement disorders specialist in the Neurology Department here at Upstate and at the neighboring VA Hospital.

Dana earned her PhD from the Neuroscience Program in 2012. **Congrats, Dana!**



**PICTURED ABOVE: DIANA MITREA, PHD** and **BOGDAN MITREA, PHD** with their daughter, Maya, on top of the Gateway Arch in St. Louis.

Both Diana and Bogdan are working as Staff Scientists at St. Jude's in Memphis, TN. Diana works in the Kriwacki lab in the Department of Structural Biology, studying the biophysics of membrane-less organelles, where she manages inter- and intra-institutional collaborative efforts while doing bench research. She was recently interviewed by the Postdoctoral Leadership Council for a podcast "Sounds Bites" – an educational initiative to introduce children to various aspects of applied science and the scientific research process. Her interview and other episodes of the podcast can be found here: <https://www.cure4kids.org/ums/sites/teachers/plugins/page.php?id=19>

Bogdan is working as a Medical Imaging Research Scientist in the Diagnostic Imaging Department. He is developing algorithms for extracting quantitative information from medical images, in particular MRIs, and integrate them into image analysis pipelines.

Maya just started the first grade this August – and loves it! She has also been competitively swimming for about a year now.

Diana earned her PhD from the Biochemistry & Molecular Biology Program in 2010 and Bogdan earned his PhD from the Pharmacology program in 2011.

**We love hearing from you ... DROP BY OUR WEBSITE & let us know how you're doing!**

**IS THERE SOMETHING WE MISSED??**

**Email Jennifer Brennan at [brennanj@upstate.edu](mailto:brennanj@upstate.edu) to get it included in the next issue!**

# around campus & in the community



**MEGAN LLOYD**, a PhD Student in Microbiology & Immunology, represented the College of Graduate Studies at the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the New Academic Building last month. Megan serves as the President of the Graduate Student Association.



**HEATHER NELSON**, a PhD Student in Anatomy & Cell Biology, was selected as a President's Student Ambassador. The program is designed to support the President and Upstate Leadership in promotion of the university in the community. Heather also serves as Vice President of the Graduate Student Association.



Over 100 students from Upstate Medical University participated in the September 11th Day of Service and Remembrance hosted by Upstate's Center for Civic Engagement on Sunday, September 11th. First year graduate student, Kamal Naphri, was one of the participants. "As long as I'm serving, it doesn't matter where," Kamal said. "I want to get involved. This is a way to get to know the community. Kamal spent part of the day meeting other Upstate students and various social outreach organizations. Kamal spent the remainder of the day cleaning up Schiller Park. He reiterates, "The idea was to give back to the community through selfless service."

Kamal is used to spending Sundays in service to the community with the Sant Nirankari Mission, whose tenets include promoting universal brotherhood. He has been part of many Sunday community service programs, including some in New York City.

Kamal moved from India to New Jersey when he was 17, finished high school and graduated from Rutgers University with a degree in biotechnology. As a first-year biomedical sciences graduate student at Upstate, he'll spend 10 weeks in three different labs before choosing a research advisor. Kamal is especially interested in virology and pharmacology. "Viruses are always evolving," he said, "and there's an ongoing need for knowledge and discoveries to treat and potentially eliminate them."

Looking for volunteer opportunities? Want to serve your community? Meet new people? Check out [Upstate's Center for Civic Engagement](#) - it's a great resource for students who want to get involved!!

# biomedical sciences retreat

The College of Graduate Studies held its 16th Annual Biomedical Sciences Retreat last month at the Lodge at Welch Allyn in Skaneateles. The day-long event is free to attend and features: presentations by faculty, alumni and guest speakers; as well as the formal introduction of the incoming class of graduate students; and a poster session.

This year's guest speakers included: John Scott, FRS, Professor of Cell Signaling and Cancer Biology in the Department of Pharmacology at the University of Washington School of Medicine; and Charles Gilbert, MD PhD, Arthur and Janet Ross Professor, Laboratory of Neurobiology at Rockefeller University. The alumni speaker was Dr. Margaret "Maggie" Pearce, Assistant Professor, Biological Sciences at University of the Sciences in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Anushree Gulvady, a PhD Student in Anatomy & Cell Biology, won the award for best poster presentation. There was also a three-way tie for second place among Ashley Canning, a PhD Student in Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, Ronald Miller an MD/PhD student in Neuroscience, and Hannah Phillips, a PhD Student in Neuroscience. All four winners are pictured below.

"This year's retreat was a great success," said Mark Schmitt, PhD, Dean of the College of Graduate Studies. "It provided an outstanding opportunity for faculty, students and staff from across the university to share research ideas, start new collaboration, get research advice and provide their own. It is an event that many researchers look forward to every year."



## in other news



**MAMUN RASHID**, a PhD Student in Neuroscience, and his wife, Liza, welcomed their first child: a son, Nabhan Rashid, on September 10th. Nabhan weighed 7 pounds and 6 ounces.

**ASHLEY CANNING**, a PhD Student in Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, ran in the Capital Region Cure Spinal Muscular Atrophy 5K on 9/17/16. Spinal muscular atrophy, or SMA, is the number one genetic cause of death for infants, and approximately one in 50 individuals is a genetic carrier for SMA. The run raised money for vital research and family support; it also provided hope to the entire SMA community.



# upcoming events & save the dates

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Wednesday, November 16, 2016 | 11:00 - 1:30 PM | Weiskotten 3109

### INTERNATIONAL PROFESSIONALS IN SCIENCE: NAVIGATING OPT, J1, H1 & MORE!

Jennifer Abbott (International Student Advisor, Student Affairs, Upstate)

Patty Brecht (Human Resources, Upstate)

Mary Jo Dinuzzo (Graduate Medical Education Upstate)

Sue Henderson-Kendrick (Graduate Medical Education Upstate)

Ramon Rivera (Attorney at Law, Mackenzie Hughes, LLP)

Our panel of experts will walk you through the application process for OPT, transitioning to an H1 or J1 visa and explain the differences of each. Then, we'll open up the discussion to you, where our panel and a local attorney who specializes in international law will answer your questions.



**SAVE THE DATE**

college of graduate studies  
holiday party

Wednesday, November 30th • 6:00 PM  
Dinosaur Bar-B-Que • 246 W Willow St



### AFTERNOON TEA:

Every Wednesday at 3:00

First Wednesday of the month, tea is at the  
NRB 3708 (call 6-7753), all others in WH 3120.

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Email Jennifer Brennan at [brennanj@upstate.edu](mailto:brennanj@upstate.edu) to get it included in the next issue!