

Graduate Program in Basic Medical Sciences

Administration

Many thanks to Dr. Ronald Balczon for serving as Director of the Basic Medical Sciences Graduate Program for the previous six years. Basic Medical Science Graduate Faculty elected Dr. Joseph Brewer to serve as the next Director. He assumed duties of the directorship on July 1, 2012.

Admissions

The Graduate Program Office processes applications and hosts interviews for prospective students to the program.

Interviews for Basic Medical Sciences Graduate Program Fall 2012 Class applicants were held in February, March, April, and June. A total of 16 students were interviewed (US=13; International=3). A summary of Admissions activity is provided below.

Admissions - BMS Graduate Program

		2012
Inquiries	US	102
	International	89
Applicants	US	27
	International	18
Acceptances	US	14
	International	3
Matriculants	US	12
	International	1
	Average GRE	1214
	Average GPA	3.60

Recruitment Activities

1. Graduate Program faculty presented information at regional high school science conferences and fairs.
2. Dr. Balczon met with faculty colleagues at regional colleges and universities during Fall, 2011. Dr. Balczon and Ms. Flagge participated in the Alabama Connection Graduate School Recruitment Expo in October, 2011. Ms. Flagge represented the program at the Louisiana Private College Graduate Program Expo in North Louisiana in September, 2011 and participated in the ARK-LA-TEX-MS Career Fair in April, 2012.
3. Presentations were made to USA's Premedical Honors Society and Freshman Biomedical Sciences students.

4. Students and faculty from William Carey University attended the Basic Medical Sciences Graduate Forum in December, 2011.

Curriculum Instructional format for IDL 581 Fundamentals of Biomedical Sciences course was altered.

New Programs/Policies/Requirements

Recommendations from the 2011 self-study review under current development include:

- a. establishing criteria for track leaders
- b. establishing additional tracks
- c. revising track curricula

BMSSO-Basic Medical Sciences Student Organization

BMSSO hosted meetings in which personnel from academic, governmental, and industry sites addressed students on topics including developing CV's and employment opportunities with agencies such as NIH, CDC, etc. The organization also hosted the annual Charles Baugh "Dawg Day" during the 2011 Fall Semester and a Faculty Appreciation Shrimp Boil in July, 2012. They sponsored a coat drive in February, 2012 to benefit residents at St. Mary's Home and hosted a "welcome" reception at Dr. Gerthoffer's home for the 2012 Class during Orientation Week in August, 2012.

Extramural Support for Graduate Training

1. Six students continue to receive stipend support via the NIH Predoctoral Institutional Training Grant on "Cell Signaling and Lung Pathobiology."
2. BMS Graduate Program students received extramural grant awards through American Heart Association and EPSCOR. Travel awards to national conferences and annual meetings in the disciplines were also received.

Graduates

One hundred eighty-two students have received a Ph.D. in Basic Medical Sciences. Students completing all requirements during the academic year (September 2011-August 2012) are:

Amanda Mae Beaster

DISSERTATION TITLE: "Characterization of Autophagy-Related Phenotypes of the Obligate Intracellular Pathogen *Rickettsia prowazekii*"

MAJOR PROFESSOR: David Wood, Ph.D.

DEPARTMENT/TRACK: Microbiology and Immunology

CURRENT POSITION: Medical Writer, MMS Holdings, Inc., Canton, MI

Daniel John Devine

DISSERTATION TITLE: "Elucidating the Role of N-Myc Interactor on Epithelial-Mesenchymal Transitions and Tumor Progression"
MAJOR PROFESSOR: Rajeeve S. Samant, Ph.D.
DEPARTMENT/TRACK: Cancer Biology
CURRENT POSITION: Postdoctoral Fellow; St. Jude Children's Hospital, Memphis, TN

Tracy Yvette Dodd

DISSERTATION TITLE: "Regulation of MMPs During Coronary Collateral Growth"
MAJOR PROFESSOR: Petra Rocic, Ph.D.
DEPARTMENT/TRACK: Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
CURRENT POSITION: Postdoctoral Fellow; LSU Health Sciences College of Medicine, Department of Physiology, New Orleans, LA

Wei Pan Feinstein

DISSERTATION TITLE: "Cellular Mechanisms Contributing to Cyclic AMP Compartmentalization"
MAJOR PROFESSOR: Thomas Rich, Ph.D.
DEPARTMENT/TRACK: Pharmacology
CURRENT POSITION: Postdoctoral Fellow; Louisiana State University Department of Biology, Baton Rouge, LA

Lillianne Gracelynn Harris

DISSERTATION TITLE: "The Role of Mechanisms of Hedgehog Signaling in Promoting Tumor Vascularization and Malignancy"
MAJOR PROFESSOR: Lalita Samant, Ph.D.
DEPARTMENT/TRACK: Cancer Biology
CURRENT POSITION: Postdoctoral Fellow; The Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston, SC

Mitchell Esmeralda Menezes

DISSERTATION TITLE: "Elucidating the Role of Heat Shock Protein MRJ(L) in Tumor Growth and Metastasis"
MAJOR PROFESSOR: Rajeeve S. Samant, Ph.D.
DEPARTMENT/TRACK: Cancer Biology
CURRENT POSITION: Postdoctoral Fellow; Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA

Kyle Adam Morrow

DISSERTATION TITLE: "Elucidating the Role of the Tumor Suppressor Protein Merlin in Breast Cancer"
MAJOR PROFESSOR: Lalita Samant, Ph.D.
DEPARTMENT/TRACK: Cancer Biology
CURRENT POSITION: Postdoctoral Fellow; Center for Lung Biology, University of South Alabama, Mobile, AL

Aimee Marie Tucker

DISSERTATION TITLE: “Functional Analysis of Rickettsial RalF: A Secreted Effector of *Rickettsia prowazekii*”

MAJOR PROFESSOR: David Wood, Ph.D.

DEPARTMENT/TRACK: Microbiology and Immunology

CURRENT POSITION: Postdoctoral Fellow; Department of Microbiology and Immunology, University of South Alabama, Mobile, AL