May 2016 News

Publications

Awards & Recognition

Congratulations to Xiaoqi Liu who was promoted to Professor of Biochemistry. Dean Jay Akridge and Andy Mesecar surprised him with his letter of promotion on April 8, 2016.

John Morgan was selected as a 2016 University Faculty Scholar. The University Faculty Scholar program sponsored by the Office of the Provost recognizes outstanding faculty members across the university who are on an accelerated path for academic distinction. Faculty Scholars are appointed for a nonrenewable five-year term and receive an annual $10,000 discretionary allocation. John joins Xiaoqi Liu, Barb Golden, Ann Kirchmaier and Andy Tao who are also Faculty Scholars.

New Faces

Bo Wang has joined the Dudareva lab as a postdoc. Originally from China, Bo received her Master’s degree from China Agricultural University in 2011. She recently completed her PhD at Wageningen University (Netherlands). Her PhD study was on metabolic engineering of artemisinin biosynthesis and sequestration. When she is not working in the lab, she enjoys traveling and spending time with her family.
Benoit Boachon also recently joined the Dudareva lab as a postdoc. He is originally from Bellegarde sur valserine, a small town in France close to Geneva, Switzerland. He earned a Master's Degree in Molecular Biology of Plants from Strasbourg (France) and a PhD in Molecular Plant Pathology from the University of Neuchâtel (Switzerland). He most recently was a post-doc at the Institute of Plant Molecular Biology (Strasbourg) where he studied P450s involved in the biosynthesis of mono- and sesquiterpenoids in Arabidopsis flowers. In his spare time he enjoys skiing and snowboarding. His new hobby is surfing.

Department News

On April 13, Clint Chapple presented his Distinguished Professor Renewal Seminar entitled “Our foray into biochemical genetics: trying to make sense out of twenty years of mutants.” This seminar marked the renewal of Clint’s distinguished professorship. University policy requires that Named and Distinguished Professors be reviewed every five years.

Brian Dilkes helped Co-PI a paper that was chosen as the cover of the April 2016 edition of Plant Physiology. It is part of a longstanding collaboration on mineral homeostasis in plants (done in sorghum). To see the full cover and read the description of the photo, click the link. http://www.plantphysiol.org/content/170/4.cover-expansion

Andy Mesecar made a cameo appearance on WLFI News 18 at noon on April 8, 2016 to discuss The Challenge 5K Run/Walk to discuss The Challenge and the benefits of the event. To see the full interview click on the link: http://wlfi.com/2016/04/08/purdue-cancer-prof-talks-the-challenge/

Graduate Student News

Jesse Murphy (Kappock lab) successfully passed his Ph.D. defense on April 11, 2016.

Li Pan (PULSe, Tao lab) successfully passed his Ph.D. defense on April 28, 2016.

Laura Henry (Dudareva lab) was selected as the 2016 Biochemistry Purdue Graduate Student Senator.

Undergraduate Student News

2016 G.A. Ross Award, Purdue’s Outstanding Senior Male

Congratulations to Biochemistry undergrad Quinton Nannet on his selection as the 2016 G. A. Ross Award for Purdue's Outstanding Senior Male. Recipients of this award are selected by the Office of the Dean of Students, and are chosen based on letters of support submitted by faculty, staff, and others within the community. The award is presented annually to Purdue's outstanding graduating senior man. The recipient receives a $500 award, medallion and his name inscribed on the award marker on Purdue Mall.

G.A. Ross, a 1916 graduate, stipulated that the award go to a graduating senior man demonstrating high standards of academic achievement, outstanding leadership, strength of character and contribution to Purdue.
Biochemistry Club Bake Sale

John Whitney and Elizabeth Amundson staff the baked goods table during their shift on April 5, 2016 during the Biochemistry Club bake sale. All proceeds went to support a science education project for a school in need.

2016 American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBMB) Meeting

Kaelan Brennan attended the 2016 American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBMB) meeting in San Diego, CA from April 2–6, 2016. While at ASBMB Kaelan participated in two poster sessions, presenting undergraduate research he completed in Vikki Weake’s lab.

Biochemistry Club Bake Sale

Pictured left to right: Clint Chapple, Sherry Pogranichniy, Dean Jay Akridge, Quinton Nannet, Tracy Egger, Joe Ogas, Andy Tao and Marcos Fernandez.
Biochemistry Students Inducted Into Mortar Board Honor Society

Three Biochemistry juniors were among the 40 students campus-wide who were recently selected for membership in the Purdue Chapter of Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society. Mortar Board members are selected for their superior scholarship, dedicated service to the university community, and outstanding leadership. Congratulations to Kaelan Brennan and Peyton Spreacker, undergraduate researchers in the Weake Lab, and Charles Hawthorne, who is studying abroad in Singapore.

Honor Society of the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

The ASBMB Biochemistry & Molecular Biology Honor Society (ΧΩΛ) recognizes exceptional undergraduate juniors and seniors pursuing a degree in the molecular life sciences at a college or university that is a member of the ASBMB Student Chapters. Nominees must be: members of the ASBMB Student Chapters, of junior or senior standing with a minimum GPA of 3.4, and must demonstrate exceptional achievement in academics, undergraduate research, and science outreach. Congratulations to Biochemistry senior Christina Smith and junior Peyton Spreacker on their induction this year!

BCHM 490 Poster Session

24 undergraduates presented their research to faculty and students during year’s BCHM 490 Senior Poster Session on April 25. This is part of their capstone project, required for graduation from the College of Agriculture, which consists of three credits of BCHM 498 or 499 undergraduate research plus the semester-long BCHM 490 senior seminar, in which they learn how research is presented.

Biochemistry Spring Awards Convocation

Chris Petell (Gowher lab) received a Henry Weiner Biochemistry Travel Award. The award provides $1,000 to help defray the costs to attend a scientific meeting. He will use his award for an upcoming meeting of experts in the fields of DNA methylation, epigenetics, transcription, and regulation of cell identity.
Jeong Im Kim (Chapple lab) received two awards. She received a **Henry Weiner Biochemistry Travel Award** which she will use to attend the International Conference on Arabidopsis Research (ICAR) in June. Jeon Im also received the **Don Carlson Award**. Established in 2011, this award is given annually to a postdoctoral fellow, research associate or staff scientist to recognize their contributions as full-time research personnel to the scientific goals of the Department of Biochemistry. Jeong Im is an associate research scientist in the Chapple lab and was recognized for her impeccable quality of work and important scientific discoveries.

Chen Shao (Liu lab) received a **Beach Travel Award**. This award was first given in 2006 through the Beach Family Lectureship in Biochemistry endowment. The $1,000 award is given twice per year to help defray the costs of a graduate student to attend a scientific meeting. Chen will use his award to attend the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Conference in New Orleans, LA.

Nina Serratore (Briggs lab) was named the **2016 Outstanding TA in Biochemistry** (formerly the Hickory Stick Award). Established in 1970, the award is given annually to commend an outstanding teaching assistant in the Department of Biochemistry. Nina was recognized for her work in BCHM 465. Nina also received a **Beach Travel Award**. She plans to present a poster and talk at the 2016 Yeast Genetics Meeting in July that will take place at The Allied Genetics Conference (TAGS) in Orlando, FL.

Siwen Wang (Tran lab) was named as the 2016 recipient of a one-year **Purdue Research Foundation** (PRF) Research Grant. This grant is provided by the College of Agriculture in conjunction with the Office of the Vice President for Research. Siwen’s research project is titled: Investigating the role of IncRNAs and RNA Helicase Dbp2 in transcriptional regulation of gene expression.
We are fortunate to have many generous alumni who donate funds to make our departmental scholarships possible. We continue to add scholarships, with one new this year.

**The Bernard Axelrod Memorial Scholarship** was established thanks to a gift from Dr. David Schroeder (BS 1962, PhD 1968) to honor Dr. Axelrod, who served as Head of the Department of Biochemistry for 11 years from 1964 to 1975, and retired in 1985. Dr. Axelrod passed away in 2011 at the age of 97.

The inaugural recipient is: Peyton Spreacker, a junior from Indianapolis. Peyton has been involved in research in Vikki Weake’s lab since her first semester at Purdue. Her extracurricular activities include Tomahawk Service and Leadership Honorary, Relay for Life, Purdue Volleyball Block Party and Ignite Faith Sharing.
The Donald and Rita Weeks Scholarship was established by the Weeks in 2014. Dr. Weeks earned his B.S. from Purdue University in 1963, and his Ph.D. from University of Illinois in 1967, and is currently a professor at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. This year’s recipient is Kaelan Brennan, a junior from Seymour, IN. He has been working in Vikki Weake’s lab since 2014. He is involved in Purdue Wind Ensemble, College of Agriculture Ambassadors, Tomahawk Service and Leadership Honorary, and Biochemistry Club.

The Dr. Stephen P. and Charlotte A. Coburn Scholarship was established by the Coburns in 2014. Dr. Coburn earned his M.S. in 1961, and his Ph.D. in Biochemistry from Purdue University in 1963. Dr. Coburn is a Professor Emeritus of Chemistry and past director of the Biochemistry Department and Clinical Laboratory at the Fort Wayne State Developmental Center at Indiana University-Purdue University at Fort Wayne.

This year’s recipients are Sarah Gutman and Kirsten Westerhouse (photo). Sarah (photo not available) is a junior from Moores Hill, IN, and has been working in the virology section of the Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory. She is involved with Purdue Goat Club and Helping Paws. Kirsten is a junior from Wheatfield, IN, and has been working in Scott Briggs’ lab for four semesters. Kirsten is a member for the Ross-Ade Brigade and Paint Crew and works part-time at Scotty’s Brewhouse and the Whistle Stop restaurant.

The Zhao-Herrmann Scholarship in Biochemistry was established by Dr. Jian-Min Zhao in 2012 to honor retired Purdue Biochemistry professor Klauss Herrmann. Dr. Zhao received his PhD in biochemistry from Purdue in 1992 and works for Monsanto in St. Louis, MO.

This year’s recipient is: Daniel Wesenberg, a freshman from Zionsville, IN. Daniel began working this spring in Mark Hall’s lab. He is involved in the Biochemistry Club, Purdue Electric Formula SAE Team and is a floor senator for McCutcheon Hall.
**Kwok Yip Tso Scholarship** — Dr. J. Yun Tso received his Ph.D. degree in Biochemistry from Purdue University, and was a co-founder and managing partner of JN Biosciences. Dr. Tso established the scholarship in honor of his father.

This year’s recipient is: Lisa Miller, a junior from Lawrenceburg, IN. Lisa is currently working in Jim Forney’s lab. She is active in Alpha Zeta, Helping Paws, Pre-veterinary Medical Association, Block and Bridle. Lisa enjoys study abroad experiences and has been to Romania and Columbia and will travel to Tanzania this summer.

**David and Mary Scheible Scholarship in Biochemistry** — David Scheible received his bachelor’s degree in biochemistry and master’s in industrial administration from Purdue. He is President and CEO of Graphic Packaging Corporation in Marietta, Georgia.

This year’s recipients are Jacob Crosser and John Whitney. Jacob is a junior from West Lafayette, IN, and has been working in the Kirchmaier lab since the summer of 2014. He is a member of the Biochemistry Club, serving as Outreach Co-Chair this year and was just selected to serve as President for next year. John is a junior from Portage, IN, and his extracurricular activities include the Biochemistry Club, Lifeguard Club, Triathlon Club and working at the Recreational Sports Center. He has been working in Mark Hall’s lab this year.

**Ray W. Fuller Memorial Scholarship** — Ray W. Fuller received his PhD from the Department of Biochemistry at Purdue in 1961. In 2007, Dr. David Schroeder established this scholarship to honor Dr. Fuller for his contributions to science and education.

This year’s recipient is Benjamin Anderson, a freshman from Dillsburg, PA. Ben is getting an early look at research by participating in Vikki Weake’s BCHM 49S laboratory this semester. Some of his extracurricular activities have included Running Club, Biochemistry Club, Botany Club, Winterization and two NICHES service projects.

**Edwin T. Mertz Memorial Scholarship** — Edwin T. Mertz was a professor of Biochemistry at Purdue from 1946-1976. In 2001, Ronald (BS 1956, PhD 1962) and Carolyn Chance provided a substantial gift to launch a campaign to establish this scholarship.

This year’s recipients are:
Amy Cox, a sophomore from Lexington, OH. Amy started research this semester in Andy Mesecar’s lab. She is a Supplemental Instruction leader for general chemistry, a member of the Society of Women Engineers executive board and volunteers for the Purdue Equine Assisted Program.
Shelby Cummings, a junior from Lafayette, IN. Shelby has been working in Karen Plaut’s lab since January 2015. Shelby is a member of Raising Awareness in International Medicine and will participate in a mission trip to Nicaragua this summer.

Kevin Lin, a sophomore from Zionsville, IN. Kevin does research with Tamara Kinzer-Ursem in the Department of Biomedical Engineering. Kevin volunteers with IU Health, Imagination Station and Winterization, and participates in Purdue Dance Marathon and the American Medical Student Association.

Jordan Page, a sophomore from Bloomington, IL. He has been working in Ann Kirchmaier’s lab since last fall. He is involved in Unite and Campus House ministries.

Logan Richards, a junior from Plymouth, IN. Logan participates in the Biochemistry Club and works part-time off-campus.

Obadiah Rodriguez, a sophomore from Greeley, CO. Obadiah has been working in the Chapple lab for three semesters. He is involved in the Biochemistry Club as outreach co-chair and Timmy Global Health with several committees and has participated in mission trips to Georgia and Ecuador.

Julia Weeder, a sophomore from Doylestown, PA. Julia has begun undergraduate research in Andy Mesecar’s lab, and has received funding from the Purdue Center for Cancer Research to continue over the summer. She is an Admissions Ambassador, member of the Pet-a-Puppy, Pre-vet and Biochemistry Clubs and has served as a BGR Team Leader and Team Supervisor.

Mary Witucki, a sophomore from West Lafayette. Mary has been working in the Ogas lab since May 2014. She is active in the Biochemistry Club was a Boiler Gold Rush team leader.

Zygmunt Family Scholarship in Biochemistry, was endowed by Dr. Deb Zygmunt and her mother in memory of Deb’s father, Walter A. Zygmunt. Deb Zygmunt received her B.S. in biochemistry from Purdue in 1977 and her M.D. from Indiana University.

This year’s recipients are:
Elizabeth Amundson, a sophomore from Floyds Knobs, IN. Elizabeth started undergraduate research last fall in Fred Gimble’s lab. She is a member of Caduceus Club, American Medical Students Association and the Biochemistry Club, serving as treasurer this year and was just selected as vice president for next year.
Luke Garner, a sophomore from Spiceland, IN. Luke has been working in Dr. Bryan Young’s weed science lab. He is active in FarmHouse Fraternity, Ag Council, Winterization and Hammer Down Hunger.

Arryn Harris, a junior from Fishers, IN. Arryn has been working in the lab of Dr. Vikki Weake for three semesters. She has participated in Helping Paws, Boiler Blast, Winterization, Higher Ground Dance Company, and was a Boiler Gold Rush team leader.

Kate Harris, a sophomore from Indianapolis. Kate participates in Biochemistry Club, the American Medical Student Association, several Purdue bands and volunteers at Therapeion Riding Center in Brookston.

Adam Hoehn (HONE), a sophomore from Mount Vernon, IN. Adam has begun research in Jim Forney’s lab this semester. He is active in College Mentors for Kids, the Caduceus Club, and is a pre-professional ambassador.

Hailey Lloyd, a sophomore from Fishers, IN. Hailey has worked in the Chapple lab for three semesters. She is active in Alpha Xi Delta sorority as programs vice president and volunteers as a swim instructor for children with disabilities at the YWCA.

Matthew Nordland, a sophomore from Lafayette, IN. Matt is a member of Pi Kappa Phi fraternity, Best Buddies, Caduceus Pre-Med Club, and Purdue Filipino Association. He works in Jody Banks’ lab in Botany.

Jacqueline Phipps, a sophomore from Fort Wayne, IN. Jackie has been working in the Ogas Lab since her first semester. She is a member of the Biochemistry Club and the American Medical Student Association.

Stephanie Price, a freshman from New Albany, IN. Stephanie has started research this semester in Jeremy Lohman’s lab. She is active in Shreve Club executive board, Cultural Companions and Biochemistry Club.

Jay Qiu, a sophomore from Fishers, IN. Jay has been working in Barbara Stefanska’s nutrition lab this year. He is a peer success coach with the Academic Success Center and president of the Asian Pacific American Caucus at Purdue.

Madison Smith, a freshman from Salem, IN. Madison is getting some early research experience in Vikki Weake’s new lab course this semester. She is involved in the Biochemistry Club, Alpha Lambda Delta-Phi Eta Sigma, Campus House and Cru.
Going the Extra Mile

Andy Mesecar attended the 30th DSSG Anniversary Symposium in Washington, DC, (March 29-31) and the ASBMB 2016 Annual Meeting in San Diego (April 2-6).

Norman Best (Dilkes lab) gave a talk at the Maize Genetics Conference in Jackson, FL, on his work on a nuclear pore complex component in maize that is an ortholog of the human disease gene ALADIN. His talk was entitled "Forward genetics identifies the nuclear pore complex component, aladin1, as necessary for tassel architecture and asymmetric cell division in maize."

Strictly Personal

Starting April 29, Vic & Meredith Rodwell will cruise the Mediterranean from Barcelona to Venice.

On Saturday, April 16, Biochemistry had a strong presence at The Challenge, the 5K race put on by Purdue University Center for Cancer Research, with several runners/walkers participating including Beth Tran, Andy Tao, Ryan Benke, Chuan-Chi Hsu, Li Pan, Andy Mesecar, and Anton Illiuk.

Beth Tran finished 2nd in her division. Congratulations to all!

May Birthdays

Funmilayo Adebisin
Gunter Kohlhaw
Peng Wang
Barb Golden
Nina Serratore
Siwen Wang
Hana Hall
Bob Stephenson
Orla Hart

Scott Briggs competed in the 2016 Boston Marathon on April 18.