New Faces

Lama Alabdi joined the department on May 4. She is in the PULSe graduate program and after rotations during her first year, she joined the Gowher lab. Lama is originally from Saudi Arabia. She graduated from King Saud University, one of the oldest universities in Saudi Arabia, with a degree in Biochemistry. She also earned a Master’s degree in Bioscience from King Abdullah University of Science and Technology. In her free time, Lama enjoys baking and cooking. She is an active table tennis player, and hopes to take up tennis and squash.

Awards and Recognition

Beth Tran is a co-PI of a $30,000 grant from Purdue with Ourania Andrisani, Basic Medical Sciences.

Vikki Weake received a grant in the amount of $1,902,763 from the National Eye Institute for her project “Epigenetic Regulation in the Aging Eye” (4/1/2015—3/31/2020).

Natalia Dudareva received a grant in the amount of $100,000 from the Rural Development Administration of The Republic of Korea for her project “Understanding aromatic amino acid biosynthesis for enhancement of Phenylpropanoid derived metabolites” (3/30/2015-12/31/2016).

Jim Forney received two grants from the National Science Foundation. He received a grant in the amount of $10,000 for the conference: International Ciliate Moleculate Biology Conference, July 10-16, 2015 in Camerino, Italy (6/1/2015-5/31/2016). He is a co-organizer of this meeting. The second grant was in the amount of $260,778 for REU (Research Experience for Undergraduates) Molecular and Biochemical Analysis of Proteins (4/1/2015-3/31/2018).

Xiaoqi Liu received a $30,000 grant from Purdue University’s NIH ROI program for his project “Overcoming Androgen Signaling Inhibitors (ASI) resistance of castration-resistant prostate cancer (6/1/2015-12/31/2016).

Justine Arrington (Tao lab) was accepted for a second year of Indiana CTSI predoctoral funding for 2015-16. This highly competitive process provides Justine with a 12-month stipend as well as an opportunity to travel to a 2016 national translational science meeting to be held in spring 2016.

Beth Tran was elected to The RNA Society Board of Directors for 2016-2018.
The Cluster Hire Community Building Proposal “Chromatin Epigenetics Symposium” to be held at Purdue University in 2016 has been selected for funding. This cluster proposal is a collaborative proposal involving the following Biochemistry faculty: Vikki Weake (lead), Humaira Gowher, Ann Kirchmaier, Joe Ogas, Scott Briggs, Beth Tran, and Jian-Kang Zhu. The symposium should bring outside attention to the world-class activities in epigenetics at Purdue and provide ample opportunity for community interactions to help strengthen the cluster. The tentative date for the symposium is October 11, 2016.

Ji Chen (Golden lab) received an award for his poster “Engineering a ribozyme with tRNA synthetase activity” at the 20th Annual Meeting of the RNA Society. The $200 cash award was sponsored by New England BioLabs and was for “general excellence in RNA research.” Ten posters out of more than 530 were selected for poster awards at the meeting.

Graduate Student News – May Graduates

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<tr>
<th>Photo</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Next Stop</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="" /></td>
<td>Brett Bishop</td>
<td>Postdoc at Purdue University</td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image2" alt="" /></td>
<td>Kelly Sullivan</td>
<td>Postdoc at University of Louisville</td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image3" alt="" /></td>
<td>Amjad Nasir</td>
<td>Seeking a position in industry</td>
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Undergraduate News – May Graduates

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<th>Photo</th>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image4" alt="" /></td>
<td>Dane Anderson</td>
<td>Seeking a position in industry</td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image5" alt="" /></td>
<td>Mitchell Ayers</td>
<td>Seeking a position in industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image6" alt="" /></td>
<td>Puja Banerjee</td>
<td>Seeking a position in industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image7" alt="" /></td>
<td>Zachary Beck</td>
<td>Graduate school at Purdue or Vanderbilt</td>
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Mitchell D’Aloia
Next Stop: applying to medical school

Stephen Dilk
Next Stop: applying to medical school

Emily Erickson
Next Stop: graduate school in pathology at the University of Cambridge

Adam Fessenden
Next Stop: Doctor of Veterinary Medicine at Purdue University

Jessica Gabbard
Next Stop: Associate Campus Minister, Purdue Christian Campus House

Ryan Gandy
Next Stop: applying to medical school

Nyema Harmon
Next Stop: graduate school in chemistry, University of Iowa

Nyemade Harmon
Next Stop: graduate school in biostatistics, University of Illinois, Chicago

Wanyu Huang
Next Stop: applying to graduate school

Ryan Louer
Next Stop: applying to medical school

Peter Mercado-Reyes
Next Stop: seeking a research assistant position

Allison Norvil
Next Stop: graduate school in biochemistry at Purdue University
Courtney Orme
Next Stop: graduate school in biology education at Purdue University

Kyle Robinson
Next Stop: graduate school in biochemistry at the University of Wisconsin, Madison

Samuel Schaffter
Next Stop: graduate school in chemical and biological engineering at Johns Hopkins University

Cody Schnur
Next Stop: Doctor of Veterinary Medicine at Purdue University

MacKenzie Schultz
Next Stop: Doctor of Veterinary Medicine at Purdue University

Yu Xue
Next Stop: applying to graduate school

Ziyan Yuan
Next Stop: applying to graduate school

Purdue Agribusiness and Science Academy
Purdue Agribusiness and Science Academy, (formerly Hoosier Agribusiness and Science Academy), is sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Programs in the College of Agriculture, and its goal is to educate and promote interest in the field of agricultural sciences, including biochemistry, among middle- and high-school students. This year, the middle-school program was held at Ivy Tech’s North Meridian campus in Indianapolis on May 12th, and hosted 130 students from Beech Grove Middle School, Emma Donna Middle School and Charles Tindley Accelerated School. Orla Hart represented the Department of Biochemistry and facilitated an activity that taught students (and their teachers) about DNA and the purpose of manipulating DNA. They isolated their own DNA using Gatorade, dish soap, rubbing alcohol and a coffee-stirrer. The major goal was to demonstrate how simple it can be to do certain “experiments” and demonstrate scientific principles, even with basic household items. The students were very enthusiastic about the hands-on experience and both students and teachers were surprised at how easy the protocol was to perform.
**Going the Extra Mile**


Two groups traveled to Madison, WI to attend the 20th Annual Meeting of the RNA Society from May 26-31:


- Barb Golden and her graduate students (Aamir Mir, Ji Chen, and Samantha Lee). Ji presented a poster entitled “Engineering a ribozyme with tRNA synthetase activity.” Aamir presented a poster entitled “Revisiting the Catalytic Mechanism of the Hammerhead Ribozyme,” and gave an oral presentation with the same title at the “Interface of theory and experiments in functional RNAs” workshop.

**IT Corner by Joe Levell**

This month I would like to provide some quick tips on backing up data.

The accepted rule for backup best practices is the 3-2-1 rule. It can be summarized as: if you’re backing something up, you should have:

- 3 copies
- 2 different formats,
- 1 of those copies off-site.

So my original file on my computer counts as a format and copy right?

*No, it does not. The original file is the original and not a copy. You need 3 copies plus the original.*

What are acceptable formats?

*USB drives, external hard drives, CD’s, DVD’s, the departmental shared storage.*

How do I move a copy off-site?

*Simple! Use the departmental shared storage. Not only is it off-site, it’s also backed up!*

How often should I do all this?

*Get into the habit of doing it at least once a week. You minimize your risk of losing data the more frequently you backup your data.*

**Safety Corner by Karyn Rodkey**

*Liquid Nitrogen Safety Precautions*

Liquid nitrogen has many uses in the laboratory, but it also an extremely dangerous chemical. Therefore, you must follow all liquid nitrogen safety precautions while working with it. One of the uses of nitrogen is safe storage of blood
cells, eggs and sperm. It is also used to shrink weld machine parts, clean computer components, as a coolant in astronomy cameras, cryogenic freezing, and as a way to make ice cream.

Liquid nitrogen can be harmful to humans. It is so cold that it can literally kill skin cells when it comes in contact with them. It is generally around -320 degrees Fahrenheit. That is the number one reason you should abide by all liquid nitrogen safety precautions.

Nitrogen Safety Facts:

- Wear personal protective safety gear anytime you work with liquid nitrogen. Goggles will help prevent injury should liquid nitrogen splash onto your face. A face mask over your goggles may be necessary if you are working with large quantities. Protective cryogenic gloves should be worn when handling nitrogen. They will protect your skin from burns that can instantly kill live tissue. Wear a full length apron to block your torso from spills and splashes.

- Never pour liquid nitrogen into a container that will be sealed. This could cause a buildup of trapped gas which can be extremely dangerous.

- Any room where nitrogen is present should be well-ventilated.

- If a co-worker is overcome by liquid nitrogen, call 911 immediately. It is important for that person to get immediate medical attention.

- Nitrogen is so cold that it can cause burns. Cold burns are just as dangerous as normal burns. They may even be worse since they cause the skin to freeze and die immediately when it comes in contact with it.

- If it is inhaled, asphyxiation can occur. You should wear a safety mask at all times when working with liquid nitrogen.

Strictly Personal

Scott Briggs, Beth Tran, Brett Bishop, Andy Tao and Jian-Kang Zhu ran the Indianapolis Mini Marathon on May 2. Scott finished in 405th place out of more than 26,000 runners with a personal record of 1:31.28.

The Tran, Briggs, Golden, Lohman and Gimble labs celebrated a belated Cinco De Mayo on seis de mayo. They made huevos rancheros outside the Biochemistry building.

Clint Chapple officially became a U.S. citizen on May 15.

Rachel Stegeman (Weake lab) became engaged to her long-time boyfriend, Michael Graham, over the Memorial Day weekend. Michael proposed during a trip to the Smoky Mountains.
Birthdays

Funmilayo Adebesin
Barb Golden
Hana Hall

Orla Hart
Gunter Kohlhaw
Nina Serratore

Bob Stephenson
Peng Wang
Siwen Wang

Upcoming Events

June 15 – June 25               STAR (Summer Transition, Advising and Registration)