

Missouri State University™

Biomedical Times

The Newsletter of the Department of Biomedical Sciences

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The *BMS Newsletter* provides information about

- New programs in the Department and College,
- Student and Alumni News,
- Intersession and Fall Course Offerings, and
- Faculty News.

The Biomedical Sciences Department welcomes two new teaching staff for Fall 1999. **Dr. Colette Witkowski** joins the faculty as an assistant professor with major teaching responsibilities in BMS 321, Biomolecular Interactions, and BMS 558, Recombinant DNA. She recently completed a NIH postdoctoral Research Fellowship at Northwestern University Medical School in Chicago. Dr. Witkowski received her BS from Sam Houston State University and her PhD in Genetics and Biochemistry from the University of Arizona. Her areas of expertise are Cell Biology, Genetics, and Developmental Biology. Dr. Witkowski has conducted graduate and postdoctoral research in integrin expression and cell-matrix adhesion during tumor progression and collagen type IV influence on myofilament lattice development during *C. elegans* embryogenesis.

Mr. David Guffey joins the department as a Laboratory Supervisor with major responsibilities for the BMS 105 and 110 Human Biology laboratories and for the Human Anatomy laboratories. Mr. Guffey received his BS (Biology, Chemistry) and MS (Biology) degrees from Western Kentucky University. His master's thesis focused on development of immunocytochemical and histological protocols and identification of the localization of GABA in optic lobe neuropils in the brain of the cockroach, *Leucophaea maderae*.

SPRING 1999 GRADUATES

Dietetics majors: **Kristen Billingsley, Sherry Diel, Julie Kuester, Tracy Luna, Victoria Pestle, Joy Procaccio, Johanna Schuldt, Bridget Thomason, Lisa Wheat, and Laura Wingo.**

Cell and Molecular Biology majors: **Matt Bruner, Paula Buehler, Allyson Conn, Gary Ford II, Amy Garrison, Mark Gerber Jr, Heather Grant, Jeffrey Holiman, Kraig Holtorf, Bryan MacDonald, Gail Preuss, Aaron Rea, Valarie Richmond, Joshua Robertson, Elizabeth (Cally) Stringer, and Jodie Tucker.**

Masters in Nurse Anesthesia: **James Davis, Donald Foust, Richard Hill, Cheri Lenci, and Richard Parnell.**

The **Master of Science in Cell and Molecular Biology** was approved by the Missouri State Board of Governors on Friday, May 14, 1999, and has been submitted to the Coordinating Board of Higher Education for the review and comment period. Although approval by the CBHE is not on the agenda until the October 7 CBHE meeting, the university has been granted permission to admit students to the new graduate degree. **Sheila Hopper** is the first student admitted this fall and is the department's first CMB graduate assistant. Sheila is a May 1997 CMB graduate.

Sarah J. Schrieber, CMB undergraduate student, was awarded an NSF-REU Summer Research Internship for 1999. Sarah worked with Dr. Gary Weisman at the University of Missouri, Columbia. Dr. Weisman's interest is the structure and function of nucleotide receptors. Sarah presented a poster at UM-C at the end of the summer experience entitled "Coupling of P2Y2 receptors to mitogen-activated protein kinases." Other authors of the poster were J. Lui, F. Gonzalez, R.C. Garrad, L. Erb, and G.A. Weisman, of UM-C.

Congratulations to **Tammy Cinkosky** on her acceptance into the Ph.D. program in Cell Biology and Biophysics at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

Graduate student **Carl Groat** has been accepted to the University of Missouri-Columbia's Ph.D. program in the Division of Cell and Molecular Biology, Department of Biology, for fall 1999.

Mark Gerber, CMB undergraduate student, will be attending the Ph.D. program in the Department of Biomedical Sciences, St. Louis University, School of Medicine, in fall 1999.

This fall, **Bryan MacDonald**, CMB graduating senior, will start the Ph.D. program in Biomedical Sciences at the University of Michigan Medical School.

Congratulations to the following students who have been recently accepted into professional programs:

- **Paula Buehler**, Rockhurst/Research College of Nursing's one-year accelerated BSN program. Paula will start the nursing program in January 2000.
- **Ray McKowen**, University of Missouri-Kansas City Dental School
- **Josh Montgomery**, University of Missouri-Kansas City Dental School
- **Ha Tran**, University of Missouri-St. Louis School of Optometry
- **Allyson Conn**, University of Missouri-St. Louis School of Optometry

Three BMS Faculty presented papers in the Biomedicine/Biotechnology Section of the Missouri Academy of Science in Cape Girardeau on April 17, 1999. **Dr. Joanne Gordon's** paper was entitled EFFECT OF INFLAMMATORY CYTOKINES ON CONNEXIN 43 EXPRESSION IN ENDOTHELIAL CELLS. Collaborators on the research were **Stephanie Reid**, Greenwood High School senior, **Richard Bandalan** and **Lisa Creamer**, Nurse Anesthesia master's students, and CMB junior **Ashley Garner**. **Dr. Xiaoming Zhang's** paper was entitled CLONING AND BIOLOGICAL FUNCTION OF LAMININ A CHAIN IN *Hydra vulgaris*. Collaborators on this research were Missouri State MS graduate **D. Brooke Bigler**, and Kenneth Boone and Michael Sarras, Jr., from the University of Kansas. **Dr. Albert Gordon's** paper was entitled TAXIS RESPONSE AS AN INDICATOR OF PHYSIOLOGICAL AGE IN AGING *Drosophila melanogaster*. Collaborators on this research were CMB students and graduates **Maliha Ahmed**, **Scott Butler**, and **Mechelle Sneed**.

Dr. Albert Gordon is chair of the Biomedicine/Biotechnology Section of the Missouri Academy of Science. **Dr. Walt Lilly**, Missouri State graduate of the BS in Life Sciences in 1975, and professor of biology at Southeast Missouri State University, presented the banquet address to the Missouri Academy of Science at the annual meeting in Cape Girardeau. Dr. Lilly recognized Dr. Al Gordon during the presentation for his mentorship and guidance in involving him in undergraduate research while Dr. Lilly was an undergraduate at Missouri State. Dr. Lilly has carried on this tradition at Southeast Missouri State where he has an active research program involving undergraduate students in work with the fungus *Schizophyllum commune*. In addition to receiving grants from the National Research Foundation, Dr. Lilly and his students have published over 18 papers and have made over 40 presentations. Dr. Lilly received his Ph.D. in botany from the University of Minnesota. Describing himself as a biochemist, Dr. Lilly teaches cell and molecular biology at SEMO.

Dr. Harley Mortensen, Professor, Biomedical Sciences, has announced his retirement effective January 2000. A faculty search committee headed by Dr. Christopher Field has been formed to search for a new faculty member for the department. The screening of applicants will take place during the spring semester. Ads have been placed in a number of scientific publications and Web sites. A [position announcement](#) is posted the Department's Web site.

Several faculty members, graduate students, and undergraduate students from the Biomedical Sciences Department attended the annual meeting of the American Society for Cell Biology, held in San Francisco in December. The following individuals presented posters: **Tammy Cinkosky** and **Dr. Michael Hendrix**: "Intracellular Trafficking of Connexin 43 and Gap Junction Formation in Leiomyosarcoma Cells Following Interruption"; **Dr. Xiaoming Zhang**, **Matt Bruner**, **Mark Gerber**, **Carl Groat**, **Harry Tran**, and **Dr. Michael Hendrix**: "Intracellular Distribution of Connexin 32 and Gap Junction Formation in Hydra"; **Dr. Xiaoming Zhang**, **Kenneth Boone**, **Brooke Bigler**, and **Dr. Michael Sarras**: "Cloning and Biological Function of Laminin A Chain in Hydra Vulgaris." Brooke Bigler is a 1998 Missouri State MS graduate; Boone and Sarras are from the KU Medical Center. **Drs. Al Gordon** and **Joanne Gordon**, graduate student **Erika Reiken**, and undergraduates **Bryan MacDonald** and **Aaron Rea** also attended the ASCB meeting.

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