

Rutgers-Newark Minority Biomedical Research Support Program MBRS

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Fall 2007

Rutgers Newark MBRS Program Highlights

It has been an exciting year for the Rutgers-Newark MBRS Program.

We had quite a few of our students graduate this past May and one of our graduates is now working on her post-doc in Harvard.

In November, many of our students attended the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS) held in Anaheim, CA. The conference, Nov. 8-11, was a big hit with our students. For a few of our students it was their first chance to travel across the country.

This year, the conference will be held in Austin, TX. We are expecting many of our students to attend.

As part of our commitment to prepare our students for life beyond these academic halls, we encouraged each of them to present their lab work to their peers in preparation for future group presentations. This allows the student to receive feedback and helpful advice in a friendly environment. The students presented their work using a

PowerPoint presentation. Then we had a "rap" session where fellow students critiqued what was a highlight for them and what they feel needed work.

We have found that this back and forth interaction with the students has produced some positive results. Not only are the students who are watching the



Current students from left to right; Program Director Dr. Ann Cali, Deptina Valree, Giselles Acevedo, Alex Clavijo, (back row) Maritanita Santiana and Eleni Frangos at the ABRMS meeting held in Anaheim, CA Nov 8-11 2006.

presentation learning what other labs are working on, but they also develop a "style guide" to follow. Some of the suggestions that have been offered to presenters is to talk slower, present the theory upfront of

what they are hoping to prove/disprove and how to keep the audience's attention by providing what will be on the next slide before the slide is shown.

One of our students, Alex Clavijo, who practiced his presentation with us last year is scheduled to present a poster at this year's ABRCMS meeting. We will all be cheering him on whether at the conference or from back here in Newark.

This year we will be hosting speakers from Pennsylvania State University and we have scheduled a speaker, Dr. Eduardo Rosa-Molinar, from the University of Puerto Rico.

We are always looking for new speakers to join us in discussing their work and presenting new techniques to our students. If you are interested in coming by please send Wendy Birbano an email at wbirbano@newark.rutgers.edu or call her at 973-353-5772.

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"..the MBRS Program enabled me to attend the annual Society for Neuroscience conference for yearly exposure to the leading edge of research in psychiatric illness, to present my own work, and to interact with and receive feedback from my fellow colleagues."
-Kiersten Smith

Our Current Students

This year we are lucky to have students in a variety of different backgrounds and cultures. Their lab work is fascinating and pertinent for future medical usage. Listed below are the names of our current students, the lab's they are working in and the research in which they are involved in:

Giselles Acevedo-a graduate biology student is working in Dr. Mill JonaKait's lab and is researching cholinergic-specific transcription factors during basal forebrain development.

Peter Amua-Quarshie- is in Dr. Mark Gluck's lab. Peter is working towards an Ph.D. in Neuroscience. He is working with Dr. Gluck's Rutgers Memory Disorders Project.

Tiffany Butts- a graduate psychology student, is concentrating her research efforts into hoping to identify the cognitive process of mediators in regards to their conscious and unconscious schema choices. She is working in Dr. Kenneth Kressel's lab.

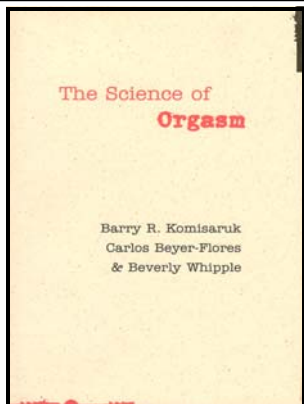
Alex Clavijo- an undergraduate psychology student is collaborating with Dr. Mei-Fang Cheng's lab on how the brain of adult male ring-doves recovers after a lesion to the hypothalamus.

Marianita Santiana-is a graduate biology student, and is working in Dr. Ann Cali's lab studying a human infecting microsporidium found in some mosquitoes and the drug that works against it.

Continued.....

Rutgers-Newark #1

Once again we ranked #1 in the United States in student ethnic diversity by U.S. News and World Report, (that's ten years in a row)!!



Recent book published by one of our mentors Dr. Barry Komisaruk.

Eleni Frangos— an undergraduate biology student working with Dr. Barry Komisaruk researching genital sensitivity after a hysterectomy. **Diana Martinez** — a graduate biology student working in Dr. Farzan Nadim's lab studying the Effect of Endogenous Modulatory Neuropeptides on the Short-Term Plasticity of Synapses in a Small Rhythmic Neuronal Network.

Our Current Students...(continued from page 1)

Kraig Knibb — a graduate student in psychology working with Dr. Harold Siegel in researching young adult attachment styles (parent-child bonding patterns), and how these patterns might shape and/or influence a person's ideas and thoughts of him/herself and the extent to which these ideas affect subsequent involvement in romantic/sexual relation.

New Students

Oscar Escobar and **Stephen Ivory**— are both undergraduate students working in Dr. Alan Gilchrist lab researching how the visual system perceives different shades of lightness.

Christina Joseph—is an undergraduate working with Dr. Maggie Shirffar studying the visual perception of apparent motion by observers with and without Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Kayla Kelly— is an undergraduate student working with Dr. Mauricio Delgado's lab.

Graduates

We had eight students graduate from the program this year:

Kiersten Smith— Received her Ph.D. and is currently working in Harvard University in their Genetic Neuropharmacology laboratory. (see story below) .

Audrita Crawford— Graduated with a MS in Biology and is currently working full time position at UMDNJ-Newark in the Neurosurgery department

as a Principal Lab Technician.

Kaydoe Balogun— is currently attending gradate school at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health.

Vanessa Flores— Received her BA In Biology and is currently

enrolled in a MS/MD program at the University of Pennsylvania in Pittsburg.

Arnaldo Serrano— Is attending Pennsylvania State University majoring in Biochemistry, Statistical Mechanics and Quantum Chemistry. He was awarded a Fontain Fellowship, which is given to students from under-represented groups,

Deptina Valree— Graduated with her BA in Psychology and is currently undecided on her future.

We had two student graduate and continue on in their education here at Rutgers:

Peter Amua-Quarshie— Received his MS in Neuroscience and is working in Mark Gluck's laboratory for his Ph.D. (see story below).

Tiffany Butts— Received her Masters in Psychology and is working in Dr. Kenneth Kressel's lab to achieve her Ph.D.

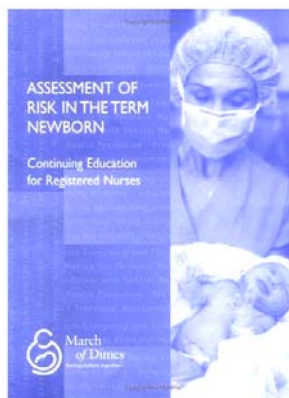
Some Shining Stars....

We are happy to hear from all our alumni and we are proud of each of them...here are a few who have had some exciting developments :

Kiersten Smith: Following graduation in May, Kiersten Smith moved to Boston where she is now a postdoctoral fellow in the lab of Dr. Uwe Rudolph at Harvard Medical School and McLean Hospital. She is using her behavioral neuroscience training in combination with molecular biology and genetics techniques that she is now learning in her new lab to examine the role of GABA_A receptor subunits in transgenic mouse models of anxiety disorders. An active participant in the Rutgers-Newark MBRS Program, Kiersten attributes much of her success and ability to attain her professional goals to the resources, guidance, and support that she received throughout her time in the doctoral program.

"The financial resources provided by the MBRS Program enabled me to attend the annual Society for Neuroscience conference for yearly exposure to the leading edge of research in psychiatric illness, to present my own work, and to interact with and receive feedback from my fellow colleagues. This was critical for me to see how my work fit into the larger field and helped shape my scholarly thinking for the design of future experiments and professional goals," she said.

Valerie D. Shaw: Obtaining a BS and a MS in Nursing, Ms. Shaw graduated from Rutgers in 1986 and is currently a Clinical Nurse Specialist in New Jersey. She authored a book: "Assessment of Risk in the Term Newborn" (March of Dimes Nursing Modules) in June 1997.



1986 MS Nursing Graduate Valerie Shaw authored this book for the March of Dimes (photo courtesy of Amazon.com)

Peter Amua-Quesrschie: Was just recently interviewed by a reporter for a story in the Star Ledger. The article "Program at Rutgers-Newark tackles Alzheimer's questions" discussed a community education program held on the campus for a national outreach program. The event was hosted for African American seniors, who research has shown, are more susceptible to the disease. The program generated hope as seniors were told that they could perform mental exercises to help keep their brain healthier.

Contact Us

Alumni, please let us know where you are working now, what are you researching and how the MBRS Program has helped you. You can email us at: wbirbano@newark.rutgers.edu or anncali@andromeda.rutgers.edu or call us at 973-353-5772.

If you would like to write to us our address is:

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