

MPB GSA NEWSLETTER

Fall 2010

The purpose of this newsletter is to serve as a resource for MBP students to get to know the department better.



Congratulations to the new Officers!

Co-Presidents: Liz Meredith and Rachel Lippert

Secretary: Liz Conrad

Treasurer: Brandon Panaro

Webmaster: Dave Cappel

Retreat Chair: Tammy Lundblad

Seminar Chair: Emily Anderson

Communications Chair: Marquicia Pierce

Molecular Physiology & Biophysics Graduate Student Association

LETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Dear MPB students,

I am very pleased to learn that you are reinitiating a graduate student organization, and am happy to provide support for this activity. It has been a few years since I finished my graduate work (o.k., a quarter century), and to this day I interact with members of my graduate class. I also have great memories both of the discoveries that were made by my friends, as well as of activities we participated in together outside the lab. It is my hope that you will use the graduate student organization to share some of the joys and challenges of graduate work, to form some important professional connections, and simply to share some good times.

Best Wishes,

Roger Cone



UPCOMING EVENTS

October 29th: Departmental Halloween Party. A prize will be given to the best graduate student costume!

November 6th: Vanderbilt vs. Florida Football tailgate at Liz Meredith and Liz Conrad's house. Food and drink will be provided by the MPB GSA.

December 18th: Holiday Party and Secret Santa Gift Exchange



Student Spotlight: Katie Colbert Coate

By Marquicia Pierce

Katie Colbert Coate

Currently working in Alan Cherrington's lab.



“

Never forget that science is a lot of fun. Although discouragements along the way are inevitable, do not allow the setbacks to define your success

”

What influenced you to pursue a scientific career?

As an undergrad at Auburn University, I was awarded a summer research scholarship through their Cellular and Molecular Biosciences Program. I spent the summer of my junior year learning basic molecular biology tools, conducting experiments, and attending a weekly obesity and diabetes journal club. From that point on I was hooked; not only did the science fascinate me, but I also realized that pursuing a career as an academic scientist would afford me the opportunity to investigate on a daily basis the complex questions I had about the pathogenesis of human disease – particularly diabetes.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I love watching Auburn football, shopping, and spending time with my husband and family (I have 4 sisters)...although not necessarily in that order!

What are a few of your hobbies?

I enjoy reading, jogging (particularly in the cool fall weather) and cooking. One of my favorite chefs is Paula Deen, so jogging is really more of a necessity when I'm following her recipes.

What was the most interesting trip you have taken?

Just last month I had the opportunity to travel to Stockholm, Sweden to present a poster at the annual EASD (European Association for the Study of Diabetes) meeting. Stockholm was a beautiful and friendly city with charming cobblestone roads, buildings and cafes. That was my first trip to Europe, so I'd have to say that it topped the charts for me!

What advice would you give to new graduate students?

On a practical level, I would encourage all graduate students to sign up for monthly e-alerts from the top 4 or 5 journals in their field. This will enable them to keep up with the literature on a frequent basis and will prove to be an invaluable asset for the qualifying exam, committee meetings and seminars. On a personal level, I would tell them to never forget that science is a lot of fun. Although discouragements along the way are inevitable, do not allow the setbacks to define your success – rather, embrace the challenges and the sky's the limit! «»

Coming Soon: Vicarious Living

A Column by Dave Wasserman

From the mind that brings MPB Jeopardy questions to a whole new level...

In each article Dave will share thoughts and observations as he lives vicariously through another scientist or colleague.

Look for it in our next issue!

Faculty Spotlight: John Exton, M.D., Ph.D.

By Marquicia Pierce

John Exton

Born Auckland, New Zealand.

Received M.D from University of New Zealand and Ph.D. in Biochemistry from the University of Otago, New Zealand.

Did postdoctoral research in Department of Physiology, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine under Charles Park and Earl Sutherland (Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine, 1971) and has remained on the faculty.



What do you like to do in your free time?

I exercise as best I can. I like to travel. I enjoy stamp collecting and photography. I am also a fan of classical music. Another serious occupation of mine is reading, both fiction (recent and the classics) also non-fiction, which includes history, travel, and biographies. I also am writing a book.

What is your book about?

A famous laboratory at Washington University in St. Louis: the Cori Laboratory. It was a husband a wife team running the lab and a lot of great science was done there. It produced 8 Nobel laureates, a lot of departmental chairs and great professors. Earl Sutherland trained there.

Is there a title yet?

The Crucible of Science

“
Most people don't realize their potential and they don't shoot for the highest goal. Aim high, don't aim low!
 ”

That is interesting and it seems like it would share insight on 'scientific heritage'.

Yes. In fact, Vanderbilt has a rich heritage with basic science connections with Washington University and clinical connections with John Hopkins.

What was the most interesting trip you have taken?

Tibet. (In 1998) It was very exotic and unique -- unlike anywhere else.

[There are some great pictures of the trip on the Exton lab website!]

What influenced you to pursue a scientific career and stay within academics?

I love it. I never want to do anything else. Technically, I'm retired and I come in to work because I love the work.

What advice would you give to graduate students and/or post-docs?

Well, it's very simple and for everyone, no matter what level: most people don't realize their potential and they don't shoot for the highest goal. Aim high, don't aim low! You'd be amazed at what you can accomplish with that mindset. «»

We want to hear from you!

MBP students know how to get things done! Let us know of recent grants, awards and publications so we can feature it in the newsletter!

Comments and suggestions are encouraged as well!

Letters to the Editor:

If you would like to contribute to the newsletter just let us know. You can submit articles to mbpgsa@gmail.com. It's a great way to improve your writing skills and would look great on your CV.

