



The GSChronicles

January 2008

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Announcements

▪ GSC Meeting:

The next GSC meeting will be held on Monday, February 4 at 5PM in the Grad Student Lounge, Building 10 Rm 6S235.

▪ Interviews:

Throughout the month of February, the GPP formal partnerships will be hosting interviews on campus. Representatives for each program have been chosen and they will be contacting other students to participate in various activities with the people visiting the area for these interviews, including dinners and possible social outings. Please mark your calendars for the following dates according to your program:

Feb 13 and 15	Oxford/Cambridge
Feb 20	Boston University Brown University Karolinska Johns Hopkins NYU
Feb 27	Georgetown George Washington Maryland-Biophysics Maryland-NIDCD UNC

▪ Graduate Student Council Retreat:

The first annual GSC Retreat will be held on the afternoon of **January 25th from 12-4PM** in the Natcher Building. The retreat will be used primarily to set goals for the future of the GSC and its council offices, but also to build a network of students interested in participating in the various functions of the GSC. All current officers of the GSC are required to attend, but **the meeting is open to all interested graduate students** who would like to have a voice in the direction the GSC takes for the future. Please mark the date and look for emails regarding this year's council retreat.

- GPP Deputy Director:

Dr. Betsey Wade will be starting at her new post as the Deputy Director of the GPP in March. Be looking for emails for opportunities to interact with her once she's on campus.

- New GSC Officers:

At the January GSC meeting, several new officers were chosen for various positions. Kim Baxter started as the new GSC Secretary and Stephanie Guzik as the Treasurer. Many committees also have new leadership: Phil Wang and Kate Callahan for the symposium committee; Nick McBride as the new Pathways organizer; and new OITE Training Advisory committee representatives Marieke Mur for International Agreements chair, Kate Callahan for US Institutional Agreement chair and Christina Saikus for US Individual Agreement Chair. Christina Saikus will also be taking over the website maintenance and Julien Debbache will be taking of GSX maintenance.

The GSC is still looking for a new Felcom Representative. Please contact Phil Wang (wangph@nidcd.nih.gov) for more information regarding this position. SNIG is also looking for new leadership, contact Kai at muellerkm@mail.nih.gov

- OITE Career Center:

It is never too soon to begin thinking about your long-term goals and future career plans. The OITE houses a Career Counseling Center and Career Library to help you plan for a satisfying career once you complete your training at NIH. Our goal is to ensure that NIH trainees are aware of the many jobs available to scientists - both at and away from the bench. Our career counselors run workshops, lead small group discussions, and schedule individual appointments, open to all, to assist trainees in self-assessment, career exploration, and goal setting. For more information or to schedule an appointment, visit <http://www.training.nih.gov/nihonly/trainees/advising.asp>.

- GSC "Activity Pass"

The GSC has begun planning the details of a student activity pass to help pay for some of our activities in advance and to help ultimately save students some money. Typically, each event the GSC hosts (including the Halloween Party, Holiday Party, retreat activities...) costs participating students between \$5 and \$15 at the event. As an alternative, the GSC will be offering an "activity pass" for interested students to pay a nominal fee around \$20 to attend all of these events throughout the year. The pass will not be required to attend events, but will save you money ultimately. Students who opt not to buy the pass will pay at the door as was done before. The pass will begin in February and can be purchased at the GSC meeting. Contact a co-chair or Stephanie Guzik (guziks@nhlbi.nih.gov) for info.

- Pathways:

On Tuesday Feb. 5th, the Pathways committee will be hosting a career development lunch themed around clinical research careers and clinical careers for PhDs. So far we have one great speaker lined up: Irwin Arias, the man behind the *Demystifying Medicine* lecture series, which focuses on translating science research to the bedside. RSVPs for this event will be required, so keep an eye on your inbox for the official invitation!

Another event is tentatively scheduled for March and we are working with Felcom to include both a seminar-style talk by the speaker and an intimate Q&A session for graduate students. In the future we will be working more closely with the Felcom career development subcommittee to bring events that appeal to graduate students and post-docs alike.

- GS3:

The **Graduate Student Seminar Series (GS3) needs new speakers for 2008**. If you would like to volunteer to present your research to your fellow grad students and get feedback on your presentation, please email Roseanne Zhao (zhaof@mail.nih.gov)

to schedule a date. These meetings are great practice for talks, conferences, retreats, etc. Students meet on the third Thursday of the month at lunchtime with two speakers, each giving 20-minute talks. The **next meeting will be on Thursday, Feb 21st with Gayani Weerasinghe and Michael Gates speaking.**

▪ Biophysics and Structural Biology Group: **The Biophysics and Structural Biology Graduate Student Interest Group** has been meeting bimonthly. The first meeting of the month focuses on learning a new laboratory technique, whereas the second meeting of the month is used to discuss a paper that uses the technique. If you are interested in attending or have any questions, contact Matt Berberich at berberichm@mail.nih.gov. The next topic to be discussed will be NMR and the first meeting will be held on January 31st.

▪ SNIG: **The Systems Neuroscience Interest Group for Graduate Students** is a group of students interested in systems/cognitive/clinical neuroscience. The group meets once a month to discuss the latest topics of systems neuroscience and listen to a talk from a member of the group. Often these talks are rehearsals of thesis proposals, defenses, conference posters, etc. Sometimes they have someone give a tutorial. Once a week there is an information email sent out. From time to time there will be lunches with renowned outside speakers from the NIH Neuroscience series. If you are interested in joining this group, please contact Kai at muellerkm@mail.nih.gov.

▪ Tax Season: While your 4th quarter taxes for 2007 were due to be paid on January 15th, the official tax season for refunds and starting quarterly payments for 2008 is coming up soon. You should receive your 1099G from NIH by **February 15th**. If you don't have it by that date, contact the NIH Office of Financial Management at 301-496-5635. OFM also

sends a copy of your Form 1099G to the Internal Revenue Service. For your information, the IRS now has the 2008 Estimated Tax for Individuals, Form 1040-ES, on its website: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f1040es.pdf>

Please **send your publications, awards, graduation and birthday announcements** to Stephanie Guzik guziks@nhlbi.nih.gov or Cynthia Chang changcy@mail.nih.gov for recognition. Also send your **requests for nominations** for students to be included in the **Graduate Student Spotlight**.

Happy Birthday to: **Stephanie Guzik** (Jan 11th), **Megan Cleland** (Jan 15th), **Jennifer Reed** (Jan 16th), **Kelly Jean Thomas** (Jan 28th) and **Lydia Durant** (Jan 30th).

Upcoming Birthdays: **Philip Wang** (Feb 7th), **Lei Qin** (Feb 8th), **Phil Ryan** (Feb 13th), **Fernando Paiva** (Feb 24th), **Anastasia Wise** (Feb 25th) and **Loren Hansen** (Feb 28th).

GSC Meeting Overview

- Grad Student Symposium – committee must choose date as soon as possible. Shawn Mullen from GPP will check available dates at Natcher. Requests for help will be sent out soon.
- Activity Pass – details of pass discussed, including \$20 amount, what the money will be used for. See Announcements for more info.
- GSC Retreat – Jan 25th 12-4PM. Sample agenda passed around; to plan goals of GSC. Social gathering after retreat will be planned.
- Symposium Committee – Phil Wang, Kate Callahan, Marieke Mur, Dan Crooks still need more help
- Pathways – Nick McBride: Pathways is being revamped and may be combined with FELCOM. New format will include 2-3 speakers on a certain topic, a seminar, and lunch (lunch only open to graduate students). Michael Gates and Shau-Ming Wei volunteered for the

- committee.
- Felcom Rep – Phil Wang’s term is ending. Need a volunteer by next month.
- FAES Rep – Richard Conroy. GSC should put out a housing survey to get input on what FAES should do with land that will be developed. We will have a lounge in the new Academic Center once it is built, but it may be shared with post-docs and post-bacs. Contact Athena Klutz with any problems regarding insurance or teaching FAES courses and she will tell Richard Conroy. If you are interested in teaching an FAES course, contact the current teacher directly.
- FAES Lab Techniques Class – Marieke Mur reported that the class went well and they will be evaluating it and making plans for next year’s class.
- Biophysics and Structural Biology Interest Group – Matt Berberich. Next meeting Jan 31, 1pm, Bldg 50 – topic: NMR.
- Pathways – Nick McBride – next meeting Feb 4th, 5th, or 8th. Topic: Clinical Research PhD careers
- GS³ – Roseanne Zhao. Next meeting Jan 17. Speaker: Athena Klutz
- Community Service – Kim Baxter. Packing food boxes at Manna Food Center went really well. We’re going to try to make it a monthly or bi-monthly event. Still interested in sending volunteers to serve as science fair judges at nearby schools.
- Trainee Advisory Committee – new chairs: US formal partnerships chair Kate Callahan; US individual agreements chair Christina Saikus; International individual agreements chair Marieke Mur
- Interview Committee – Shau-Ming Wei. Need about 10 people for Symposium Poster Sessions, plus some P.I.s. We also need people to volunteer to be on panels to answer interviewee’s questions. Please volunteer on the day that your program is interviewing: see Announcements.
- Website – Christina Saikus may take over

- GSX –Julien Debbache will take over moderating membership; messages still not moderated.
- FELCOM rep –Phil Wang. Career counselors are well-integrated into OITE. Teaching opportunities are plentiful. On 2/7: Leadership Workshop (must take Myers-Briggs analysis before attending). On 2/12: Grants Seminar. FELCOM Happy hour 1/15 6:30pm at Black Fin. FELCOM career symposium will be 4/9, with Happy Hour to follow. Attendees will need to register in advance.
- Symposium Committee – Will work with new Deputy Director on Graduate Student Research Symposium

GSC Year in Review:

This has been a year of change and growth for the NIH Graduate Student Council. While dealing with the changing administration has proved itself to be a challenge, we are proud of the progress the council has been able to make this year.

From Tracy Jill Doty:

Working with the council this year has been an amazing experience. The council consists of many dedicated and talented individuals who have accomplished so much this year. I’ve seen my job as co-chair this past year to provide an efficient foundation for those who volunteer their time and energy to build our graduate student community. I can only hope that the contributions I’ve been able to make this year have assisted and will continue to assist the students who are actively enhancing graduate student life at NIH.

Restructuring, Reorganizing, and Communication

My co-chairship began with restructuring. All committees were reorganized and students who had been active on the council now had positions which reflected their hard work. It was amazing from the beginning how many

different programs the GSC supports (all without a budget!) and how dedicated the members of the council are. Meeting agendas became more comprehensive and acknowledged these various different GSC sponsored activities. Also the weekly compiled was revamped and the final product was something I felt was much more readable for the masses, including the addition of "GSC Events."

Improving the weekly compiled was one of the first steps taken to improve communication overall between the GSC and students. Additionally, the agendas were sent to the internal GSC list (people who attend meetings) no later than 24 hours before the meetings. Vanessa McMains was great about getting the minutes posted to GSX within a week of the meetings.

Meetings have always run way too long, and in the final months I played around with allotting each item a certain amount of time and running the meeting under Robert's Rules of Order. I hope that this trend will continue in order to promote efficiency during meetings.

The Constitution

From the beginning, constructing a GSC Constitution was my personal project. There were two major reasons for this. First, I think without a governing document, an organization does not really exist. I felt like we had finally been established after years of the NIH community not really acknowledging the existence of graduate students on campus. A constitution was the final step to being established on campus, in my opinion. Second, the GSC has been growing very fast, and without a governing document, chaos would reign. This constitution was a way to pave the road for continued success.

After polling the GSC several months on several issues, I started finalizing the actual document, which honestly took much more time and energy than I realized it would. Without the meticulous eye of Cynthia Chang, I do not know that we would have a constitution today. She and I sat through 5-hour long sessions where we

scrutinized every word so that the document would be as solid as possible before the vote. Needless to say, I was overjoyed when an overwhelming majority of voters voted in favor of ratification.

The challenge of the next year will be to use the document and consider creating legislation if any sections are not practical for the current council.

New Students

When I entered as a first year student some years ago, I do not remember feeling like a part of a larger community of students. I spent at least another year feeling very lost on such a large campus and with no graduate students around me. So I've been driven to make sure new students were aware of the council and also felt comfortable in the larger community. Luckily we were able to inject lots of current graduate student influence into the interviews this past year. The idea of "interview coordinators" was born and gave every interviewing student contact with current students. Before students came onto campus for orientation, I wrote a welcome letter for the new students which had a link to basic information online about how to sign up for GSX and the peer mentoring program, where the lounge is located, and when GSC meetings occur. And then when orientation came around, the GSC was able to interact with the new students at lunches and social events outside the city. Many of the students I met during interviews and orientation have become active on the council and their ideas and opinions have greatly enhanced discussions and decisions made by the council.

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you all for electing me to this position. The challenges I've taken on this past year have helped me grow professionally and personally in a way that I do not think would have been possible without this position. I am confident the GSC will grow and be even more successful in creating a graduate student community that rivals and even exceeds the best graduate student climates

in academia. We have the most talented students in the world doing cutting edge research in all disciplines gathered here at NIH. It is a recipe for success.

From Tony Barnitz:

This past year saw many exciting events and accomplishments for the GSC. One of the first of these events rode on the accomplishments of the previous co-chairs, Phil Ryan and Jeff Blackinton. Through their hard work and determination, we were granted space for a Graduate Student Lounge after being without a central meeting place for **years**. With the help of the GPP, TJ and I had the room cleaned and outfitted with furniture, so that now, we have a multipurpose room where we hold all of our grad student meetings as well as a quiet place to get away from our labs. Once everything was settled in the lounge we held a Grand Opening celebration to thank Joan Schwartz and Cyrena Simons for their help in providing us with the space.

One of the biggest events affecting the GSC was the change in leadership in the GPP. With the new administration in place, we have brought the GPP into a closer coordination with the council by inviting them into the GSC itself. I think that this has been a great addition to the meetings and would like to thank the many members of the GPP that came to the meetings.

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the members, the GSC had a very successful year. The GSC underwent a restructuring this past year, and as such, new positions were created. Stephanie Guzik was the first GSC treasurer, and she did a fantastic job of keeping track of the money that the GSC was actually able to make (not much, but it's better than none). When Sharon Milgram came to take over both the director of GPP and OITE, she started the Trainee Advisory Committee to help get feedback and ideas from all trainees at the NIH. The GSC had three representatives on this committee to represent the three constituencies of graduate students here at NIH. Athena Klutz represented the institutional

partnerships, Patricia Gonzales the US individual partnerships, and the international individual partnerships were represented by Gulcin Pekkurnaz. Stephanie Guzik and Abby Vogel took the idea of a peer-mentoring program for incoming students and made it a reality with every new student who wanted a mentor paired up with an established student.

The leadership for teaching the FAES Laboratory Techniques class transitioned very smoothly from me to Megan Dennis, Marieke Mur, and Kara Lindstrom. As such, the class had another successful year, with interested and motivated students. This opportunity gave 15 of our fellow graduate student the chance to gain experience as teachers.

Our student run interest groups are still going strong. Kai-Markus Mueller took over as the organizer of the Systems Neuroscience Interest Group, and taking the group to a new level, started the first invited speaker lunches. The Biophysics and Structural Biology Interest Group was revived by Matt Berberich, who started a new format of having tutorials taught by students using the featured technique.

The Graduate Student Seminar Series (GS³) continues to be great opportunity for students to practice their talks before having to present in more formal settings. Brenna Hill, the inaugural organizer of GS³, made the series better and more helpful for the speakers, incorporating feedback for the speakers based on a system we tested at the Retreat from Sharon Milgram. Roseanne Zhao has taken over the reigns of GS³ and is continuing the tradition of excellence.

The Pathways lunches, organized by Athena Klutz and Patricia Gonzalas, brought us many new perspectives of what we can do after we graduate (yes it's possible). With increased interest from the GPP in this area, Athena worked hard with Sharon Milgram to reformat our Pathways opportunities, and we look forward to seeing how this helps as more of our numbers graduate.

Cathy Kolf continued the good work with the Community Service committee, with the help of Kim Baxter, who now heads the committee. GSC members have cooked again for the Children's Inn, packaged food for the Manna Food Center, and had many other service events through out the past year.

Reorganizing several positions into the Public Relations committee let us know just how much several of our members work to publicize the views of the GSC. Vanessa McMains, along with being a fabulous secretary for the GSC, continued publishing the monthly GSChronicles that you are reading now. Stephanie Guzik and Cynthia Chang became assistant editors later in the year, and now are the co-editors. Megan Cleland updated the official GSC website and had the minutes for each meeting up during that week. As the liaison between the GSC and FELCOM, Phil Wang did an amazing job representing our views to the NIH fellows community. Some of his accomplishments including continuing the tradition of having post-docs judge the posters at the Graduate Student Symposium and organizing many joint social events between the two groups.

This year we've had a number of people working on social events. Arjun Prasad did a great job of organizing a barbecue at the FAES house for the incoming students to meeting current students and a fair number of the faculty as well. TJ and Emmette Hutchison threw the very first GSC Halloween party with a good turnout. Sophia Cleland, as a social co-chair, introduced many new activities to the social scene, so that we didn't only have social events at bars and parties. Our annual holiday party was a hit once again, thanks to TJ, Sophia, Gayani Weerasinghe, and all the members who helped set up, clean up, and collect money.

Now we come to the two biggest events for the GSC, as well as for all the graduate students in NIH labs. The fourth annual Graduate Student Research Symposium was the biggest and best yet. There were well over 300 attendees for the

day. Over 100 students presented posters, and 8 students gave excellent and well-attended talks. Drs. Michael Gottesman and Sharon Milgram gave great talks as our keynote speakers. Once again, FELCOM was a huge part of the success, with a large number of post-docs judging the posters, which for the first time, thanks to Sharon, were being judged for travel awards. Many, many thanks go out to Kate Callahan, Phil Wang, and Emmette Hutchison for organizing the symposium, the many post-doc judges, and everyone who presented their work for making the Symposium great.

In September, we once again trekked out to The Woods Resort for our annual Graduate Student Retreat. Over 100 students made the trip, not just from the main campus but from our other locations as well, almost filling The Woods to their capacity. The Retreat had a new format this year focusing on skills workshops to help make us better scientists and students. Kate Callahan, Jodi Gilman, Stephanie Guzik, Kai-Markus Mueller, and Marieke Mur did a great job of organizing this event.

We've had a very busy year, and without all of you, we couldn't have done it. Thanks to all of those who planned and/or participated in all of these events. TJ and I would also like to thank the GPP staff, who without, we couldn't have had many of these events. Thank you to Sharon Milgram, Caroline Duffy, Pat Wagner, Adrian Warren, Shawn Mullen, Kathryn Foisie, Barbara Ward, Deloris Mills and Tanya Prior.

It's been a pleasure getting to serve as one of your co-chairs this year. It was wonderful working with and for all of you. Thanks for making it such a successful year for the GSC.

Graduate Student Spotlight:



Athena Klutz

Athena grew up in Pumpkintown, SC. The town is so small that it still does not have a single stoplight, but it still manages to host the largest one day festival in South Carolina – the Pumpkintown Festival. She decided to pursue science when she was in grade school. Her 5th/6th grade teacher wrote her name in ethanol and then lit it on fire. Unfortunately, the table did eventually catch on fire and shut down the school for the day due to smoke.

She then went to Clemson University in South Carolina, home of the Clemson Tigers, where she majored in Biochemistry and Chemistry. While in college, she worked on DNA mutations in Dr. Cao's lab. She also did a co-op at Honeywell, working in an analytical lab in Richmond, VA.

Athena is currently working on attaching GPCR ligands to dendrimers in Dr. Kenneth Jacobson's lab in NIDDK. She gave a great presentation about this topic at the 2007 GPP Retreat. One of her current projects involves attaching adenosine receptor agonists to dendrimers, large branching polymers, to determine how this

changes the pharmacological profile of the agonists.

Outside of work, Athena loves beach volleyball and tries to play in at least two tournaments every summer in Virginia Beach. While she was playing in her second beach volleyball tournament at Virginia Beach, the opposing team served her the ball and she passed it up, hitting a seagull that was flying overhead. Unfortunately, her partner was following the seagull in the air (which was fine and flew away) and ran into the poll holding up the net. She had a giant bruise on her collarbone, but they did finish the tournament.

Athena also has two cats, Max and Salem. Max weighed 23 pounds at his last vet visit and is now on a diet. However, he does fetch like a dog. Salem is the crazy girl that loves to run around the apartment. But her cats aren't the only object of her affection. She's currently planning her wedding to Donnie Keene that will be held in Virginia Beach during the Spring of 2009.

She is very involved with the GSC and was on the Pathways and OITE committee. She was recently elected with Megan Cleland as the new GSC co-chairs.

Tip of the Month

The NIH Library in Building 10 has recently opened several secure mini-offices for daily and monthly use. Reserving these rooms is on a first-come-first-served basis with 5 rooms set aside for daily reservations and 18 for a person to have access to for a month. All of these rooms are secure and they have a desk and internet access and provide a quiet place to do your work away from the lab. To reserve one of these rooms, or for more information, stop by the Library Help Desk located on the first floor of Building 10 or call 301-496-1080. The library is open Monday - Thursday 7:45AM - 8:00PM; Friday 7:45 AM - 6:00 PM; Saturday 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM; and Sunday 1:00 - 5:00 PM

Graduate Student Entertainment



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GSC Year in Review

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Announcements

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