



The GSChronicles

July 2008

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Announcements

▪ GSC Meeting:

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

▪ Graduate Student Retreat:

This year's retreat was a great success! Despite a power-outage that occurred right before our student presentation section, the new venue, the meals provided, and a shortened schedule were commended. If you attended this year's retreat, please fill out the online survey to improve our retreat for next year (<http://tinyurl.com/6e2983>). We hope to see everyone at next year's retreat!

▪ GSX Listserv:

The Graduate Student Exchange (GSX) is a social listserv for grad students at NIH. Postings for roommates, items for sale, and social outings are common. It's a great way to connect to the group of grad students. To join the group, visit the GSC webpage for the link.

▪ Upcoming Social Activities:

On August 13th, join the GSC and GPP staff at the FAES house for a summer BBQ. Also next month, look for details about outings for First Fridays Gallery tours in Dupont Circle and hiking in Great Falls.

▪ GSC "Activity Pass"

Typically, each major event the GSC hosts (including the Halloween Party, Holiday Party, and retreat activities) costs participating students between \$5 and \$15 at the event. As an alternative, the GSC is offering an "activity pass" for interested students to pay a once-a-year nominal fee of \$20 to attend all of these events throughout that year. The pass will not be required to attend events, but will prove much cheaper than paying for each event separately. *Thank you to the many students who have already purchased GSC Activity Passes!* Contact a co-chair or Stephanie Guzik (guziks@nhbi.nih.gov) for more information or to purchase a pass.

▪ Pathways:

Pathways is a monthly meeting where career options and development are discussed, usually from the perspective of someone outside of basic research. The date of the next Pathways discussion is TBA with a topic of Continuing Education after a PhD. Fall Pathways sessions with Felcom include CV-Resume writing on September 16th and the Job Fair on campus October 16th.

▪ GS3:

The **Graduate Student Seminar Series (GS3)** is a monthly meeting where students present their work to fellow graduate students. These meetings are great practice for talks, conferences, retreats, a dissertation defense, etc. Students meet on the third Thursday of the month at lunchtime with two speakers, each giving 20-minute talks. If you would like to present your research to your fellow grad students, please email Roseanne Zhao (zhaof@mail.nih.gov) to schedule a date. The next GS3 will be held in August with details to follow.

▪ 5th Annual Graduate Student Symposium:

Plans are underway for this year's symposium, which highlights the research and achievements of the graduate students at NIH. This year's symposium will be held on November 14th and will include a graduation ceremony. Please plan to participate in the symposium and consider giving a talk or poster at the event. Look for more details to come soon about the day's events!

▪ Thesis Talk Committee:

A new GSC committee has been established to coordinate formal, publicized thesis talks on the

NIH campus for graduating students. Gayani Weerasinghe and Khalisa Herman have volunteered for the committee, but more volunteers are needed. Please contact a co-chair if you're interested in being on the committee or to discuss scheduling a thesis talk.

▪ **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 (berberich@mail.nih.gov).

▪ **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 to listen to a talk from a member of the group. Often these talks are rehearsals for thesis proposals, defenses, conference posters, etc. Sometimes they have someone give a tutorial. An informational email is sent out once a week. From time to time there will be lunches with renowned outside speakers from the NIH Neuroscience series. Please contact Lei Qin (qinl@ninds.nih.gov) or Kara Lindstrom (lindstrk@mail.nih.gov) if you would like to join the group.

▪ **Campus Area Listservs:**
The first Campus Area lunch was held in July. Future lunches will ensure that all students on the listservs receive the announcement in advance of the scheduled day and time. Sorry for the inconvenience, we look forward to seeing you at the next lunch!



Congratulations to **Kristi Norris** and **Tony Griswold** on successfully defending their theses! Kristi and Tony were both members of the GW program.

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

Graduate Student Spotlight:



Julien Debbache

July's Graduate Student Spotlight is on Julien Debbache. A GPP International Individual agreement student, Julien is originally from Rennes in Brittany, France. Rennes is a lovely, medium-sized French city with more than 200,000 residents (including roughly 60,000 college students). While the city is the administrative capital of the region, it is also known for its nightlife: it has the highest density of bars in France!

It was in Rennes, in his first year of high school, that Julien decided he wanted to study science. Because he wanted to understand how living things work, he focused on biology. At some point he had to choose between medicine and biology. Julien felt that biology better fit his learning style and his interests in explaining why things happen, while he did not like the idea of memorizing long lists and acronyms as is required in medical training.

As a result of this choice, Julien enrolled in his hometown university, Rennes 1, and majored in genetics and molecular biology. He participated in 2 research internships while he was doing his masters degree. The topic of the research was the gene Mitf (microphthalmia associated transcription factor.) These internship experiences inspired Julien to continue studying Mitf for his PhD.

After 23 years and 3 months of living in Rennes, Julien moved to Washington, DC to work at the NIH. He is now in his second year on the NIH campus, but officially his first year in the GPP. He is in the Mammalian Development Section of NINDS, in Heinz Arnheiter's lab. Mitf, the topic of his research, is a transcription factor essential to the melanocyte lineage. It is a complex gene with

different alternative promoters and alternative exons that give rise to multiple isoforms. Little is known about the differential roles of these isoforms, and Julien's project will be centered on how two splice variants have different effects on cell proliferation.

Despite his devotion to Mitf, Julien does not spend all of his time working on it! He is an active member of the GSC, serving as one of this year's international Individual Agreements representatives and as the moderator of the GSC unofficial listserv, GSX. He also leads an active lifestyle, often running and playing tennis or volleyball. He is also a fan of the cinema. His favorite movies include the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, *American History X*, and *The Matrix*.

In fact, a funny story about Julien involves the movies. He went to see a film at the theater recently. As he usually does, ("poor grad student that I am," he explains,) he tried to sneak into another movie when the first one was over. He successfully managed to enter the room of the second movie without being caught. Julien enjoyed the fruits of his bad behavior for over an hour, but 40 min before the end of the movie, the fire alarm went off! The movie stopped and everybody had to evacuate. The other theatergoers weren't angry, because they knew they could go back in and see the end of the movie with their tickets, but Julien's was clearly invalid. So in the end, Julien missed half of the movie, and he learned that crime doesn't pay!

The next time you see Julien at a GSC event, or at the movie theater, be sure to introduce yourself. Maybe he'll treat you to another bizarre adventure story or tell you more about his hometown. You might also ask him about his favorite quote: "Everything's conditional. You just can't always anticipate the conditions."

Tip of the Month: eTOCs – stay up to date in your field!

If you're like most grad students, your monthly (or less frequent) PubMed literature search always returns a flood of new articles that you wish you had known about as soon as they came out! Or maybe you've been in the awkward situation in which someone asks you about the latest big finding—and you have no clue what they're talking about. An easy way to prevent such situations is to sign up for an "electronic table of contents" (eTOC). Almost any journal will email its eTOC to you the moment the current issue comes out. Just visit the website of the journal of your choice and

look for "email alerts". With the large publishing companies (e.g. NPG: npg.nature.com/npg/servlet/Content?data=xml/08_account.xml&style=xml/08_account.xml or Cell Press: www.cell.com/personalize/emailalerts) you can conveniently choose from a list of interesting journals. For the aficionados of search alerts, you can additionally define your key words using <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/alerts>. Any new article from an Elsevier journal matching your search criteria will be announced to you often long before the final publication. Just remember, though—this is not an excuse to stop doing literature searches!

GSC Meeting Overview

- The first round of orientation welcome lunches and ice cream socials was a success.
- Building listservs had their first lunches and will hopefully plan more soon.
- A picture of the GSC was taken for the website.
- A new committee for Thesis Talks was formed, with Gayani Weerasinghe and Khalisa Herman volunteering to serve. More volunteers are needed to help coordinate thesis talks on NIH main campus and publicize them.
- Bowling at Naval Medical center will be held on July 29th. A trip to Dupont Circle for First Fridays at the art galleries is possible on August 1st. Hiking in Great Falls is possible for a social outing in August or September.
- Journal Clubs for summer students are going well, but only half of students who signed up participate. The clubs may be extended into the fall for post-bacs.
- FAES Lab Techniques course is now looking for graduate student teachers.
- Send community service ideas to Kim Baxter.
- Website for GSC is not secure, so concern was raised about putting information about members online. Christina Saikus will work to make a document with names, committees, and photos to post on GSX server.
- Symposium planning is looking for an organizer for the poster session, preferably a post-doc and are open to suggestions for volunteers.

Graduate Student Entertainment

What do scientists in a lab have in common with pop stars in a music video? Check out this ad to find out:

www.eppendorf.com/int/hawkpopup.php?contentid=13

Disclaimer: GSC, GPP, and NIH do not endorse this company or its products. This is posted for entertainment purposes only!

The GSChronicles editors do, however, support the filming of music videos with science topics. Please send all such videos for inclusion in the next issue of GSChronicles. Bonus points will be given for informed, consenting participation of your PI/mentor.

Writers and Contributors:

Stephanie Guzik

Layout, Composition, Upcoming Events,
Announcements, Meeting Overview

Cynthia Chang

GSC Spotlight, Tip of the Month, Grad
Student Entertainment

Kai-Markus Mueller

Tip of the Month

Kim Baxter

GSC Meeting Overview

Julien Debbache

Grad Student Spotlight

Editors: Stephanie Guzik, Cynthia Chang,
Vanessa McMains, Athena Klutz, Megan
Cleland, Tracy Jill Doty, Cathy Kolf,
Caroline Duffy, Betsey Wade, Sharon
Milgram