



# The GSChronicles

## September 2008

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### Upcoming Events

#### September

- 22 GPP Symposium Abstract due
- 22 Mentor Award nomination due
- 24 Grad Student Blood Drive
- 24 GSC Happy Hour, Blackfinn
- 25 Career Fair Workshop, AAAS, 8AM
- 27 Public Lands Clean-up Day

#### October

- 6 GSC Meeting 5PM
- 12 Columbus Day (*Observed 10/13*)
- 14-17 NIH Research Festival, Natcher
- 16 Job Fair, Natcher 11AM-3PM

#### November

- 11 Veteran's Day
- 14 Grad Student Research Symposium
- 27 Thanksgiving Day

### Announcements

#### ▪ GSC Meeting:

The next GSC meeting will be held on Monday, **October 6<sup>th</sup> at 5PM** in the Grad Student Lounge, Building 10 Rm 6S235.

#### ▪ 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:

Don't miss the GSC Happy Hour at Blackfinn on 9/24. Later in the fall, the social committee will be hosting hiking events along the Potomac and First Fridays gallery tours in Dupont Circle. A Halloween Party is being planned by Sandra Dunn and Deborah Kwon and a Holiday Party will be held as well.

#### ▪ GSC Positions open

The social committee needs volunteers to help plan the Halloween and Holiday Parties; contact [gayaniv@mail.nih.gov](mailto:gayaniv@mail.nih.gov) if interested.

There was a fair amount of interest from the GPP retreat survey for interest groups in immunology as well as genetics. If you would like to start one of these interest groups, please contact a co-chair at [GSCcochair@od.nih.gov](mailto:GSCcochair@od.nih.gov).

A new GSC Thesis Talk committee has been established to work with GPP to coordinate formal, publicized thesis talks on the NIH campus for graduating students. A few students have already signed up to organize the group, but more volunteers are needed. Please contact a co-chair ([GSCcochair@od.nih.gov](mailto:GSCcochair@od.nih.gov)) if you're interested in being on the committee or to schedule a talk.

#### ▪ Pathways:

Pathways is a monthly meeting where career options and development are discussed, usually from the perspective of someone outside of basic research. If you attended the Pathways CV-Resume Writing Workshop, you are eligible to attend the CV Slam (Oct 1-2). The Job Fair on campus will be considered a Pathways event and will be on October 16<sup>th</sup>.

#### ▪ 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Graduate Student Symposium:

This year's NIH Graduate Research Symposium will be taking place at the Natcher building on **November 14<sup>th</sup>**, and will be highlighted by opening remarks by Dr. Story Landis, director of NINDS, and a keynote science talk and discussion with the pioneering German cell biologist Dr. Peter Friedl. All graduate students at the NIH are encouraged to submit an abstract to present a poster or to be considered for a talk during the symposium. There will be 10 travel awards given out to students with outstanding posters, and at least one award will be given for beginning students who present a poster outlining a project proposal and/or methods. At the end of the day, an awards ceremony will be held to honor travel award winners, graduating GPP students, and 2 outstanding mentors. **Abstract submission and Mentor Award nominations close on September 22<sup>nd</sup>.**

#### ▪ Campus Area Listservs:

Please join your appropriate list at <http://gpp.nih.gov/Current/GraduateStudentCouncil>

[/GSCListServes/](#). The purpose of these lists is to foster communication among grad students and have a monthly lunch with grad students in your region of campus. There are also listservs for the other campuses. We have people in charge of organizing and sending out reminders for the main campus lunches. However, if you are off the main campus please feel free to organize your own lunches (on the main campus these lunches are occurring the 2nd Wednesday of each month). Look out for future emails for planned lunches in your area!

▪ **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@nhlbi.nih.gov](mailto:guziks@nhlbi.nih.gov)) for more information or to purchase a pass.

▪ **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, who each give 20-minute talks. If you would like to present your research to your fellow grad students, please email Roseanne Zhao ([zhaof@mail.nih.gov](mailto:zhaof@mail.nih.gov)) to schedule a date.

▪ **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 ([berberichm@mail.nih.gov](mailto:berberichm@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 Kara Lindstrom ([lindstrk@mail.nih.gov](mailto:lindstrk@mail.nih.gov)) if you would like to join.

**Happy Birthday to:** Tahir Ahmed (Sept 1<sup>st</sup>), Wes Beckstead (Sept 6<sup>th</sup>), Thelma Escobar (Sept 14<sup>th</sup>), Vania Cao (Sept 14<sup>th</sup>), Emmette Hutchison (Sept 17<sup>th</sup>), Steve Mayclin (Sept 19<sup>th</sup>), Kai-Markus Mueller (Sept 25<sup>th</sup>), and Athena Klutz (Sept 30<sup>th</sup>).

**Upcoming Birthdays:** Kate Callahan (Oct 2<sup>nd</sup>), Julien Debbache (Oct 6<sup>th</sup>), Lisa Mielke (Oct 10<sup>th</sup>), Shaun O’Brien (Oct 10<sup>th</sup>), Tracy Jill Doty (Oct 18<sup>th</sup>), Irene Avila (Oct 23<sup>rd</sup>), Alice Lim (Oct 27<sup>th</sup>), Cynthia Chang (Oct 29<sup>th</sup>), Lucia Martinova (Oct 30<sup>th</sup>), and Jesse Hanisch (Oct 31<sup>st</sup>).

Please **send your publications, awards, graduation, and birthday announcements** to Stephanie Guzik ([guziks@nhlbi.nih.gov](mailto: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:



### Shau-Ming Wei

Shau-Ming Wei was born and raised in Taipei, Taiwan – a hot and humid tropical island. Taipei is a sleepless metropolitan area stuffed with all kinds of activities. You will never get bored there and according to Shau-Ming, the food there is great!

Shau-Ming attended the State University of New York at Stony Brook as an undergraduate student

and majored in biochemistry and psychology. During her senior year, she did research in an imaging lab (mostly fMRI) where she studied sex differences in responding to emotional stimuli.

But her interest in science began a long time before college. She has always enjoyed science simply because it has given her a perfect excuse for many things. "Science" allowed her to blow things up, disassemble expensive electronic devices (which she was often unable to reassemble) or to pull out her parents' hair to examine hair follicle thickness. "As I would phrase it: it's all in the name of science." She has "played" in many different fields including microbiology, botany, biochemistry, and finally decided to settle in behavioral neuroscience. The human brain is by far the most fascinating gadget and she would love to spend her life playing with it.

Shau-Ming is currently in her 3rd year in the Brown neuroscience partnership. She works with Dr. Karen F. Berman in the Genes, Cognition, and Psychosis Program and she is interested in looking at how the interaction between gonadal steroid hormones and the BDNF Val66Met single nucleotide polymorphism affect the neural circuitries underlying human cognition and behavior.

She has also been very involved in the graduate student community on campus. She is a member of the Pathways committee in the GSC, which helps students explore alternative career paths after attaining their PhD. The committee members now work alongside the Felcom career development subcommittee to plan career-related seminars for both graduate students and post-docs. In addition, she is also the partnership representative for the Brown program and is trying to gather current students to bond more outside of the lab setting.

A little more about Shau-Ming you may not already know: According to Shau-Ming and her close friends, her life is comical. She frequently trips over her shoes, walks into things by accident, and sends emails to the wrong people. She enjoys reading very much, and has a wide (possibly strange) range of taste for books. She is currently reading a Japanese mystery novel involving the death of a genius programmer -- fascinating. She doesn't have a favorite book, but her favorite writers include Milan Kundera, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Ayatsuji Yukito, and Maurice Leblanc. Aside from reading, she also enjoys cooking, hiking, and scuba diving. She loves the

Silence of the Lambs trilogy. "Dr. Hannibal Lector is my idol!" She also likes anything with Johnny Depp in it.

As Albert Einstein said, "Only two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity, and I'm not sure about the former." So if you're feeling blue and need someone to cheer you up, or analyze your brain during an emotional response, stop by her lab and say hi!

## **B-Positive about Giving Blood!**

The next GSC Blood Drive is on Wednesday September 24<sup>th</sup>. There are shortages of types A positive, O negative, and B negative, and an urgent need for African American whole blood donors to support patients with sickle cell disease. They'll have movie ticket and gas card raffles, as well as lunch bags for all new donors. Email Kim Baxter ([baxterkim@mail.nih.gov](mailto:baxterkim@mail.nih.gov)) to reserve a time slot, anytime between 8am-4pm.

**Ever wonder why the NIH Blood Bank needs so much blood?** There is no substitute for human blood - it cannot be manufactured. People are the only source of blood. Much of the medical care of an NIH patient depends on the steady supply of blood from healthy, caring individuals like yourself. No miracle of modern medicine can help our patients who need blood, if it is not available.

The NIH Blood Bank estimates that ...

... 600 units of red blood cells go to treat patients with chronic anemias associated with sickle cell disease, thalassemia, aplastic anemia, leukemia, or cancer.

... 2,500 units of platelets go to control bleeding in patients with leukemia, cancer, or who have had surgery.

... 100 units of plasma go to surgical patients, patients with cancer, and patients with immunologic deficiencies.

... 20 units of cryoprecipitate go to patients with a variety of bleeding disorders.

... 10 units of granulocytes (white blood cells) go to patients with serious infections associated with hereditary or acquired abnormalities of white blood cells.

The blood you give is never wasted. It is used every day of the year to treat Clinical Center patients who are participating in the medical treatment and research programs of the NIH. If your blood is not required for immediate use, it may be frozen and stored. Fractions of blood unsuitable for transfusion are used for research.

Occasionally, the blood you give may not be required for a patient here, but it may be sent elsewhere in the community or the nation where it can be used to help save a life.

Sign up to give blood on September 24th! If it will be your first time, ask to go with a Buddy!

(Source: <http://www.cc.nih.gov/bloodonor/>)

## Career Services Center Extends Invitation to Graduate Students

To enhance the experience of trainees at NIH, the Office of Intramural Training and Education (OITE) launched a new service in 2007-08. Four part-time career counselors and one full-time counselor began offering professional career counseling services to help young scientists plan for the variety of positions—both in the laboratory and away from the bench—which they will assume after finishing their training at NIH. Designed to serve post-baccalaureate and postdoctoral fellows, the Center also serves your needs as a graduate student. You are invited to learn more about the Career Services Center and to use its services as you prepare to launch your career in the biomedical or behavioral sciences. Individual appointments with counselors and a Career Resource Library of over 200 books are available in Building 2 on the Bethesda campus, and trainees away from the main campus have access to counselors via telephone or periodic visits which counselors make to off-campus locations.

Counselors can help you grow in self-understanding by providing assessments, including the widely-used personality inventory, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (M.B.T.I.). They also administer and interpret, at no charge to you, the Strong Interest Inventory, a standard career interest inventory providing results on general occupational themes, basic interest and occupational scales. Discussions and exercises supplement data from assessments allowing counselors to assist you in defining your goals and in making career decisions in a planned rather than haphazard way.

Once career direction is defined, counselors can guide you in developing job search strategies. They can coach you in how to conduct informational interviews to not only learn more about alternative careers but also to build your professional network. They may direct you to print and Internet resources to support you in the job search process, practice interviewing skills with you, or review your resume or C.V.

Career counselors can also counsel you about challenging interpersonal situations which may be hindering your development in the laboratory or impeding the progress of your job search. These situations include conflicts with colleagues or mentors, lack of assertiveness in seeking out information or identifying potential opportunities, ambivalence about assuming new roles, and related concerns. All sessions with counselors are completely confidential and provided at no financial cost to you.

While career counselors cannot make decisions for you, outline every possible career path you could pursue, or provide highly detailed information about specific career paths outside the lab, they are ready and eager to meet you and to offer encouragement and support as you strive to achieve your goals. In its first year of operation, the Career Services Center provided services to more than 700 trainees, seen in approximately 1,200 individual appointments. You too can be among the savvy scientists who take advantage of every opportunity offered to prepare for a successful future. To schedule an appointment in the Career Services Center, call Kathryn Foisie at 301-594-9339 or e-mail her at [foisiek@mail.nih.gov](mailto:foisiek@mail.nih.gov).

## GSC Meeting Overview: 09/08/08

- The BBQ was successful.
- GPP reported that the Career Advancement Toolkit is available on the GPP website. Courses on Teaching and on Writing will be taught on different NIH campuses this year.
- Retreat Survey showed that most students believe thesis talks are very important; GSC commits to planning them. Interest groups on Immunology and Genetics were requested; volunteers to organize these are requested.
- Website: Files from the current year only will be available on the GSC website.
- Social committee announced events: FELCOM Naval Bowling followed by happy hour at Sapphire Café (Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>) and GSC Happy Hour at Blackfinn (Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>).
- GSC is in need of a new Social Co-chair to help plan the Halloween and/or Holiday Party; contact Gayani Weerasinghe to volunteer.
- FAES Lab Techniques Class: Teachers have met and are ready for the course to begin.
- Pathways: The August meeting was summarized. Email Sally McMillin if you'd like a copy of the presentations on MSTP and MPH programs. The next events, combined with FELCOM, include: CV workshop (Sept 16<sup>th</sup>), CV Slam (Oct 1-2<sup>nd</sup>), Job Fair (Oct 16<sup>th</sup>).

- Community Service: Contact Kim Baxter to sign up for upcoming events: Graduate Student Blood Drive on Sept 24<sup>th</sup>; Public Lands Clean-Up Day on Sept 27<sup>th</sup>; Ongoing volunteer opportunity with kids in Transitional Housing in D.C.; Children's Inn meal-prep TBA later.
- GPP suggested that all questions about finances be directed to the GPP office, since each program is different.
- Gayani reported that she learned about what her constituents wanted from her as a Partnership Rep by sending out a survey.
- GPP reports that Travel Awards will be provided if the budget permits.
- Public relations committee: Christina Saikus will be sending out a survey to compile a list of 'Who's Who' in the GSC for the website. Julien Debbache will not accept people to the GSX Yahoo group unless they fill out all the information on the 'Join GSX' form.
- GPP Symposium is 11/14. The Call for Abstracts is now open. Posters must be <42" wide. A graduation ceremony will be held.
- Summer Journal Club will continue next summer. A fall club will be held for post-baccs. Email Marieke Mur or Betsey Wade to sign up.
- Reserve the Lounge using the GSX calendar if you need it for a meeting.

## Graduate Student Entertainment

From time to time, a researcher will question the overall value of his or her research in the Grand Scheme of Things. When this happens to you, make yourself feel better by checking out <http://improbable.com/>, the home of Improbable Research. This is the organization that awards the Ig Nobel Prizes. On the website you can read their blogs and magazines, which profile research projects that are odd, funny, and interesting. If your project makes it on there, *GSCronicles* will give you a prize.

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Careers Feature

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