



# The GSChronicles

## October 2008

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### Upcoming Events

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### Announcements

#### ▪ GSC Meeting:

The next GSC meeting will be held on Monday, **November 3<sup>rd</sup> at 5pm** in the Grad Student Lounge, Building 10 Rm 6S235.

#### ▪ GSC/FelCom Halloween Party:

Don't miss this joint GSC/FelCom party on October 30<sup>th</sup> from 5-9pm! It will be at the FAES Social Academic Center (9101 Old Georgetown Road), just a short walk from the Bethesda campus; there is also free parking. Tickets are \$5 in advance and \$8 at the door. If you have an Activity Pass and want to attend the Halloween Party, contact Sandra Dunn [dsandra@niaid.nih.gov](mailto:dsandra@niaid.nih.gov). Buy advance tickets at the FAES Business Office (Bldg 10, B1C18, near the B1 level NIH Credit Union).

There will be a variety of food, including hotdogs, turkey & veggie burgers, chicken, vegetables, and strawberry cake. The activities planned include old horror movies, games, music, Taboo, Jenga, karaoke, and a surprise raffle drawing. And don't forget to wear your costume!

#### ▪ Upcoming Social Events

After the Halloween party this week, the next major event will be the Holiday Party in December.

#### ▪ Nominations for GSC Positions

Nominations for the 2009 GSC co-chairs are now open. If you know someone you think would make a good co-chair, or would like to nominate yourself just send the nomination to [GSCcochair@od.nih.gov](mailto:GSCcochair@od.nih.gov). Co-chair nominations will close at the Nov 3<sup>rd</sup> GSC meeting; voting will take place Nov 17<sup>th</sup>-Dec 5<sup>th</sup>.

Nominations for all GSC positions for 2009 will open in November and elections will take place in December. This includes positions in the Executive, Social, Academic, Career Development, Trainee Advisory, Public Relations, Symposium, and Thesis Committees as well as Partnership Representatives. Nominations should be emailed to [GSCcochair@od.nih.gov](mailto:GSCcochair@od.nih.gov) and may be anonymous.

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).

#### ▪ 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. Eight student talks and over 80 posters will be showcased. 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 3 outstanding mentors.

#### ▪ Pathways:

Pathways is a monthly meeting where career options and development are discussed, usually from the perspective of someone outside of basic research. The next event is a Science Policy lunch and seminar with a AAAS Fellow and the head of a non-profit group, Nov 13<sup>th</sup> at 12 and 1pm.

▪ **Campus Area Listservs:**

Please join your appropriate list at <http://gpp.nih.gov/Current/GraduateStudentCouncil/GSCListServs/>. 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 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month). Look out for future emails for planned lunches in your area!

▪ **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.

▪ **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. The next GS3 will be held on November 20<sup>th</sup> at 12pm in the GSC Lounge. Amanda Higley and Wes Beckstead will be speaking about their research. If you would like to present your research to your fellow grad students, please email Matt Berberich ([berberichm@mail.nih.gov](mailto:berberichm@mail.nih.gov)) to schedule a date.

▪ **Science Policy Internship Program:**

Julien Debbache wishes to initiate a Science Policy Internship program at the NIH. If you would like to be involved, email [debbachej@mail.nih.gov](mailto:debbachej@mail.nih.gov) with your name, program, and area of interest.

▪ **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:** 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>).

**Upcoming Birthdays:** Danielle Basset (Nov 3<sup>rd</sup>), Kim Baxter (Nov 8<sup>th</sup>), Maureen Kiley (Nov 13<sup>th</sup>), Nazanin Ashourian (Nov 15<sup>th</sup>), D Kueler (Nov 20<sup>th</sup>), and Stephanie Kim (Nov 22<sup>nd</sup>).



Congratulations to **Phil Ryan** for successfully defending his thesis this month! Phil was a student in the GW Partnership.

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



**Dan Crooks**

Dan Crooks was born in Westchester, Los Angeles, which is a stone's throw from LAX. His family later moved to Orange County, CA where they lived in Mission Viejo for many years and finally Laguna Beach for the last few years of high school. Although Orange County has left him with a life-long hatred of lower-middle class tract housing developments, he can't complain about anywhere he lived as a child. After all, California is a beautiful place, and Southern California has so many great outdoor activities to offer.

"I think that I have always had the science bug." Dan collected a lot of disgusting bugs, and brought in a jar of baby snails for show and tell in first grade. He had a large collection of carnivorous plants when he was a kid, and was planning on going into plant science for many years. He also liked to go to neighborhood garage sales with his mom to find old electronic devices and then completely disassemble them when they got home to see how they were made. Now, similarly, his project involves grinding up cells and separating the pieces to see how they might go back together.

Dan was an undergraduate at UC Santa Cruz, which is about a 1.5h drive south of San Francisco, and majored in Molecular/Cell/Developmental Biology. He was quite unfocused for the first few years of college and took lots of language and music classes, as well as a lot of camping and road trips. "I don't regret that at all as these were some of the best years of my life." He worked in a Toxicology lab for the last two years of college and got so engrossed in research that he stayed to get a Master's degree so that he would have time to finish his projects.

Dan is currently starting his third year as a Georgetown Partnership student. He works in the lab of Dr. Tracey Rouault in the Molecular Medicine Program of NICHD. His current research

is directed at observing the regulation of the biosynthesis of heme, the oxygen-binding cofactor of hemoglobin, in developing red blood cells. Specifically, he is trying to take a mechanistic look at how the terminal enzyme in the pathway (ferrochelatase) is regulated at the post-translational level. "Lately, this has involved using large amounts of radiochemicals, and a sub-aim of this project is to not make my lab bench into a mini-Chernobyl waste site."

Dan has also been very involved in the GSC for the past several years. He is a co-chair for this year's Graduate Student Research Symposium committee, and recently became a FelCom-GSC liaison. He feels that working on the Symposium has been very rewarding so far, and has been a good reason to break away from tedious lab work to socialize and help in planning what should be an outstanding event on November 14<sup>th</sup>!

Outside of NIH, Dan has many interests. He has always liked boats, SCUBA diving, snorkeling, and fishing. Hiking and rock climbing are things he loves to do when he can find willing participants. Weekend road trips to anywhere are always a favorite. His favorite movies are *Edward Scissorhands* and *The Abyss*. He enjoys reading *The Neverending Story* by Michael Ende as well as various J.R.R. Tolkien books. He likes cats but is unfortunately allergic to them. He still collects carnivorous plants, "though most of them don't seem to like the dry forced heating needed here in winter."

As for his philosophy of getting a PhD: "We spend what seems like half of our lives at work. It's a crime to not find some way to enjoy your work." Dan seems to be finding several ways to enjoy his time on the east coast both in and out of the lab – it's a shame his plants aren't as agreeable.

### Tip of the Month: *Flu Shots*

This year's Foil the Flu campaign is set to start this week and will continue through the first half of November. The shot is free to employees, and this year, any employee in contact with patients is required to get a shot. Please be sure to bring your badge and wear clothing that will allow you to expose your arm easily. Dates for flu shot administration are posted on the website [www.foiltheflu.nih.gov](http://www.foiltheflu.nih.gov) and are scheduled according to the first letter of your last name. If for some reason you miss your scheduled day or if you decide to get the shot later, they are available through OMS (Building 10, Room 6C306) by appointment after November 21<sup>st</sup>.

## GSC Meeting Overview: 10/06/08

- GPP reported that OITE will begin monthly orientation sessions on the first Tuesday of October. Writing workshops will be offered once a month starting in January.
- GSC still needs volunteers to lead Immunology and/or Genetics interest groups.
- Nominations for GSC Co-chairs are now open and will close at the end of the November meeting; send nominations (they can be anonymous) to [GSCcochair@od.nih.gov](mailto:GSCcochair@od.nih.gov).
- Co-chairs will let the GPP know that the listservs GSC-Insti; GSC-INDIVUS; GSC-INDIVnonUS are being used.
- Mentor Awards will be given to three NIH mentors at the Symposium.
- The vote on Partnership Reps was moved to the November meeting; nominations will open then.
- Social Committee reported the plans for the Halloween Party; the December Holiday Party will also be held jointly with FelCom.
- FAES Lab Techniques Class: Kate Callahan reported the class is going well; there are 11 students.
- Pathways: No event was planned for October, but GSC was reminded about the Research Festival Job Fair on Oct 16<sup>th</sup>. There is a Science Policy lunch and seminar, Nov 13<sup>th</sup> at 12 and 1pm.
- GS3: Matt Berberich will take over GS3 while Roseanne is away at Cambridge; they need volunteers to speak.
- Community Service: There were many recent activities, including packing food at Manna, a September Blood Drive, cleaning up a public park, and volunteering with Transitional Housing Corp in D.C. Next event: packing boxes at Manna Food, Oct 7<sup>th</sup>.
- Trainee Advisory Committee: Once there is a final count of constituents in each program there will be a vote (at the next meeting) on increasing the number of reps from each program. Nominations will be open from November till the end of December, and new reps will go into effect in January 2009.
- Public relations committee: Christina continues to update photos, links, and past GSC documents. She will also clean up old websites so that the GSC site is easier to find when searching.
- FELCOM rep: Heather Pressler announced the Oct 8<sup>th</sup> Happy Hour and Oct 16<sup>th</sup> Job Fair. A FelCom Retirement Subcommittee has formed to find out how fellows (who do not receive earned income and lack a 401K or IRA) can save for retirement.

- Symposium Committee: 84 poster submissions were received. GSC is requested to spread the word to recent graduates so that they can be acknowledged on the Nov 14<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony at the Symposium.
- Thesis Committee: Currently drafting the mission statement of the Committee. They plan to write an article for the *NIH Catalyst*, and present to Partnership and Training Directors. Suggestions are welcome.
- A telephone was installed in the Grad Student Lounge.
- Julien Debbache spoke about starting a new Science Policy Internship program at the NIH.

## Graduate Student Entertainment

Have you ever wondered how science thesis topics could be communicated effectively...via dance? Look no further than the following link: <http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/319/5865/905b#dancegallery>. These are the submissions to the first Dance Your PhD Contest held in 2008, with grad students, post-docs and professors dancing with the inspiration of science. It's quite entertaining. If you feel subsequently inspired to enter the 2009 competition, act fast! Videos must be posted on YouTube, and the link emailed to [gonzo@aaas.org](mailto:gonzo@aaas.org) by November 15, 2008. For full details, see <http://gonzolabs.org/dance/>. (Thanks to Megan Cleland for posting the contest information on GSX!)

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GSC Spotlight

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