



College News

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9th Annual BBS Symposium a stand-out success

According to Dr. Graham Medley (pictured at right), “Science without context is not science.” Further, he said that biology is special among the sciences, creating its own context and requiring the exploitation of patterns and commonalities to even begin to understand. This is what makes it exciting, what makes it interesting. Medley shared these and other thoughts as the Douglas D. McGregor Research Lecture speaker at the 9th Annual Biological and Biomedical Sciences Symposium at the College, presenting current research on endemic diseases with the record crowd that attended his session on August 23 in the John D. Murray Lecture Hall (LH1). His address was the culmination of orientation activities for incoming students, the aim of which was to help the incoming students eventually select the most appropriate faculty mentors and labs so they may pursue their own scientific endeavors.



“All of the sessions were designed with a purpose in mind,” said Elva Cha, DVM, current graduate student, and conference student organizer. “In particular, the breakfast session was designed to bring some perspective to the plethora of options graduate students have.”

These options were highlighted during six student presentations and at the annual poster session that featured approximately 40 other research projects. Oral presenters discussed topics ranging from T-cell inflammatory diseases like asthma to new strains of avian coronaviruses that are causing economic concerns for the poultry industry. Poster presentations showcased work that is exploring a wide variety of applied and basic scientific investigation, including lameness in dairy cows, post-translational modifications of identified proteins, novel regulators of imprinted gene expression, and parasitic infections in dogs. In sum, nearly 50 students shared their current research projects with faculty, staff, and students from the Biological and Biomedical Sciences graduate program.

“Our goals for this year’s Symposium were very clear,” said Cha, who was most excited to help with this year’s program, which was sponsored by the Department of Population Medicine and Diagnostic Sciences. “We wanted to showcase as many options as we could, and we wanted to reach as many students as we could. The BBS program is broad and covers many disciplines. The research projects are as diverse as our student body. Some projects explore basic science concepts. Other projects are designed to have immediate application in the field. The Symposium was open to all Departments of the

College, and we wished to emphasize the breadth of research being done here, and encourage students from different departments to share their research interests with each other.”

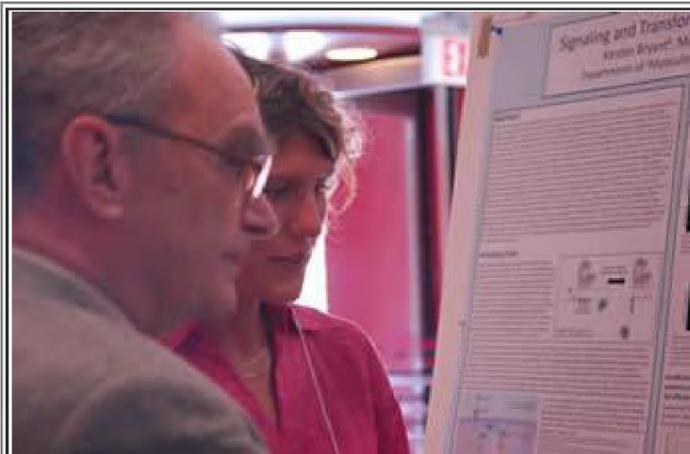
This year’s Symposium attracted more abstract submissions as compared to previous years, from which the student presentations and poster presentations were selected. All of the student oral presenters were rewarded with a \$500 travel grant, donated by the College’s Office of Graduate Education.

Students selected and the titles of their talks were:

- Arun Kumar Kannan - Itk negatively regulates Interferon-gamma, influencing T helper 2 Response In Vivo
- Elva Cha - The cost and management of different types of clinical mastitis in dairy cows estimated by dynamic programming
- Kirsten Bryant - Signaling and Transforming Capabilities of a ER-Retained EGF Receptor Mutant
- Yueting Zhang - Productive infection of Avian coronavirus Infectious bronchitis virus in chicken peripheral blood derived monocytes
- Alyson Spealman Nadworny - C-kit+ Cardiac Precursor Cells Exhibit a Unique Nox Isoform Profile which Influences their Capacity for Differentiation
- James Brooks - The Active Form of TLR9 is Insufficient to Reconstitute CpG DNA-Induced Signaling

In addition, three students who presented posters were recognized: Sachi Horibata (A Constitutively Active Mutant EGF Receptor Promotes Human Cancer Progression Through a Tissue Transglutaminase dependent Pathway) won first-place honors, entitling her to a \$500 travel grant, and Gabriel Balmus (Genotoxin-specific requirement for HUS1 following DNA-damage in vivo) and Minxing Li (Dissecting the mechanism of ribonucleotide reductase induced lung tumorigenesis in mice) both received \$50 Cornell Store Gift Cards in recognition of their stellar presentations. All presenters received a gift certificate to the College’s dining facility.

“The symposium is a fantastic start to the year,” said Dr. Robert Gilmour, associate dean for research and graduate education. “Every year, I walk away with new insights and renewed appreciation for the talent, knowledge, and expertise that resides in the BBS program’s faculty and students. The work that is done here improves our understanding of fundamental biological processes, which is the foundation for making a difference at the bench or the bedside.”



Dr. Douglas McGregor, sponsor of the Symposium's keynote address, and Kirsten Bryant, who was selected to give an oral presentation, review her poster at the Poster Session.



Conference organizers at the poster session – Elva Cha, Becky Mitchell and Dr. Yrjo Grohn – sharing a good moment.



This year's poster session attracted a record number of submissions.



As the crowd waits for keynote address, Caitlin McDonald, first-year student (left) and Becky Mitchell, Symposium organizer, chat in the front.