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Symposium, poster session welcome graduate students



Faculty and graduate students from the Biological and Biomedical Sciences (BBS) Graduate Program gathered at the College of Veterinary Medicine for the 10th Annual Biological and Biomedical Sciences Symposium to welcome the Fall semester. This event was organized by a group of graduate students and postdocs from the Baker Institute for Animal Health. Boasting a record number of attendees, the Symposium kicked off with a breakfast held in the College of Veterinary Medicine's Veterinary Education Center Atrium at 9:00AM, followed directly by a brief "Welcome Address" given by the now former Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Education, Dr. Robert Gilmour. Six BBS

graduate students then presented their research through a series of fifteen minute oral presentations. As determined by a panel of faculty judges, the following students won best oral presentations:

First - Weishan Huang – “Mast cell specific negative regulation of LPS induced pro-inflammatory response by Itk and Btk.”

Second - Beth Licitra – “Pathogenesis of feline coronavirus is linked to mutation of a conserved furin cleavage motif in the viral spike protein.”

Other presenters included:

Lu Huang – “Eosinophils promote immune responses to preserve parasitic nematode larvae.”

Ian Welsh – “Elucidating cellular and genomic level mechanisms of asymmetric morphogenesis through analysis of Pitx2 transcriptional regulation.”

Kellie Cicconi-Hogan – “Assessment of herd management on organic and conventional dairy farms in the United States: Grazing system comparisons and somatic cell count associations.”

Michele Bialecki – “Characterization of Junin Arenavirus entry mediated by the C-type lectins DC-SIGN and L-SIGN.”

Later in the afternoon, Symposium attendees gathered in Lecture Hall 2 for a talk given by Jonathan W. Yewdell, M.D., Ph.D. in Cellular Biology and Viral Immunology, entitled “How to Succeed in Science without Really Trying.” Currently serving as Chief, Cellular Biology Section, Laboratory of Viral Diseases, NIAID, Yewdell began his presentation by linking the title of his talk with the popular musical that served as the title’s inspiration, “How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying,” in order to make the point that there isn’t an easy path to success as it relates to a career in science.

Instead there are several things in which students can actively engage that will lead to more effective, fruitful, lengthy, and successful careers in the sciences. Throughout the presentation, Yewdell combined humor and enthusiasm with honesty, urging students to pursue their passion for discovery despite roadblocks because science will ultimately provide the solution to many global problems in the future.

Following Yewdell's talk, faculty, staff and students gathered for a student-run poster session, which provided a forum for BBS students to present their work and to also practice explaining their research to a wide variety of audiences. A panel of faculty judges determined the following posters (out of a record 38) to be the winners (all tied, listed alphabetically):

Chien-Che Hung – “PAT and COBB Regulate Salmonella Invasion Gene Expression Via HILD and LON Protease”

Laura Byrnes – “Structural and Biochemical Studies of the Large G-Protein Atlastin”

Andrew Modzelewski – “Argonaute-4 Regulates Entry into Meiosis and Influences Silencing of Sex Chromosomes in the Male Mouse Germline”

The event concluded with the Douglas D. McGregor Research Lecture, given by Yewdell. Dr. Yewdell's talk was titled, Adventures in Viral Immunology: Translating DRiPs.” Dr. Joel Baines, the newly appointed Associate Dean for Research & Graduate Education at the College stated, “The BBS Symposium provides an excellent forum to showcase the breadth of research that is available in the program. In addition, the Baker Institute Symposium Planners need to be commended on a well-organized event and intriguing Douglas D. McGregor Research Lecture Speaker.”

By Enongo Lumumba-Kasongo

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BBS Symposium Photo Gallery



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