Welcome New Students

Graduate Students:
Ramiro Barrantes-Reynolds  
Krista Brooks  
Xiayun Cheng  
Jennie Hyde  
Xuan Jiang  
Annette LaBauve  
Sutanuka Lahiri  
Lucas Tilley

Undergrads:
Amanda Burton.......Molecular Genetics  
Justin Ferguson.......Microbiology  
William Gates .........Molecular Genetics  
Kristina Kopec .........Molecular Genetics  
Yacouba Lubula.........Molecular Genetics  
Morgan Moeglein......Molecular Genetics  
Adam Pruss...............Microbiology  
John Quinn.............Microbiology  
Laura Raucci..........Molecular Genetics  
Alec Stranahan .......Molecular Genetics  
Shawn Trudeau.........Microbiology  
Sarah Weber..........Microbiology

Seven of our new students are Presidential Scholars! Welcome, everyone.

VASE Public Forum on Influenza Pandemics
The Vermont Academy of Science and Engineering is hosting Peter Palese from the Department of Microbiology, Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York, on September 19, 2006. Dr. Palese will be giving a public lecture on influenza pandemics at 5:00 pm in the Davis Auditorium located in the Medical Education Center. He will also give a talk at noon as part of the CMB Seminar Series, entitled, Interferon Antagonists of RNA Viruses, in 200 Medical Education Center. Dr. Palese’s group is interested in fundamental questions concerning the genetic make-up and the biology of viruses using molecular biological techniques to understand how viruses replicate and how they interact with cells to cause disease in their hosts. His research focus is on the molecular areas of infectious diseases and infectious agents. His research on influenza pandemics from the pandemic of 1918/1919 to the currently circulating H1N1 viruses will give attendees a better understanding of the molecular basis of virulence and the mechanisms by which pandemic influenza viruses are transmitted.

2005–2006 Award Winners

Congratulations to Susan Wallace, who was honored by the Harvard School of Public Health for her outstanding contributions to molecular radiobiology. She received the John B. Little Award at the Annual Symposium of the John B. Little Center for Radiation Sciences and Environmental Health at the Harvard School of Public Health, October 29, 2005.

Undergrad Awards

The Warren R. Steinbring Outstanding Senior in Microbiology Award, given in recognition of
academic excellence and professional growth went to Janne Rand and Dov Pechenick. The Lucille P. Markey Outstanding Senior in Molecular Genetics Award, given in recognition of academic excellence and professional growth was awarded to Alison Kearney.

**College Honors**, from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, recognizes students conducting original research under the immediate supervision of a faculty member. MMG students include: Alison Kearney, faculty advisor Chris Huston, project entitled, "Expression of Calreticulin in Entamoeba Histolytica Inhibits Activation of Complement and Confers Resistance to the Human Immune System"; Greg Krantz, faculty advisor Susan Wallace, project entitled, "Construction, Purification, and Characterization of Escherichia coli Endonuclease III Variants"; Joe Pare, faculty advisor Tom Fowler, entitled, "Stimulation of Thousands of Sexes in Fungi: The Determination of Flexibility of Pheromone Recognition"; Dov Pechenick, faculty advisor, Rob Hondal, entitled, "The Biosynthesis of Selenocysteine Using E. Coli O-Acetylserine Sulphydrylase (OASS)".

### Lab News

**Fives-Taylor/Mintz Lab**

The PFT and Mintz labs would like to say goodbye to Marní Slavík, who has accepted a one year teaching position at St. Michael's College in Colchester, and will soon be welcoming a new baby to her family. We would also like to extend a warm welcome to Claude Gallant who comes to us from the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, where she recently completed a post-doc studying biofilm formation in Psuedomonas aruginosa.

In other lab news, Maja Sedic will be running the Nike Women's Marathon this October in San Francisco to raise money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. She has a goal to raise $4000 and would greatly appreciate any encouragement, advice or donations. Keith Mintz recently said goodbye to an old friend Oberon, but welcomes a new member, Gunner, to his pack of German Shorthair Pointers. Chunxiao Yu recently attended the Microscopy and Microanalysis meeting in Chicago, where she presented a 3-D structure of EmaA obtained by electron tomography.

**Wesley Lab**

Heng Guo and Jingping Li, both second year PhD students, joined the lab after completing a year of rotations - welcome to both of them.

Congratulations to Heng, who returned home this summer and married his longtime girlfriend Zhiheng Pan in the hot weather of Middle China.

**Cedric Wesley** vacationed throughout the western United States in July. He also welcomed a new addition to his family, Yogi, a lab-terrier puppy named after one of his son's favorite baseball players. Yogi enjoys looking out windows and eating people's food, as was evidenced at a barbeque Uma and Cedric held for the lab on August 12.
Best wishes to Amalthiya Prasad, who married Manoj Sureshkumar December 5, 2005, in Madras, located in South India. This is a picture taken at her wedding reception.

Cardy writes: I’m back fully recovered after an operation at U. Penn Hospital in February by lead surgeon Dr. Robert Fry who, incidentally, is a neighbor of our former MMG member Rick Fishel and is impressed with Rick’s finding on the colon cancer gene. (I did not have cancer.) Janet Kurjan visited me while I was recuperating at my son’s home in the Philly region, and we got together with Loraine, Janet’s former post doc and Rick’s former wife, now remarried to someone else. Loraine is happily pregnant, works as research scientist at Glaxo, Smith, Kline and drives a snazzy Audi convertible, complete with talking GPS. Janet’s still being a remarkable fabric artist in the Seattle region and has been teaching a course in Genetics at U. of Washington each winter semester.

Tom Fowler is settling into his second year as Assistant Professor of Biology at University of Illinois, Edwardsville, teaching Genetics and running a lab of about five, working on our fungal system Schizophyllum commune. He and former post doc, Steve Horton, have initiated a genome project for Schizo, thus carrying on with what they started here in MMG.

Notes on former undergrads in our lab:

Monika Martick recently distinguished herself in graduate work at University of California, Santa Cruz, by being first author on a recent Cell paper with her advisor, William Scott, entitled, “Tertiary Contacts Distant from the Active Site Prime a Ribozyme for Catalysis”.

Cynthia St. Hilare is a grad student in the Department of Medicine at Boston University Med School and is a joint author on a recent publication by Yang, et al., on the A2B adenosine receptor appearing in the Journal of Clinical Investigation.

Marie Guyette, an undergrad in our lab at the same time as Cindy and an MMG award winner in her senior year here, is a practicing genetic counselor in Boston after completing a graduate program at Howard University.

Jamie Weinstock, one of our undergrads several years ago, got himself a kidney transplant, a doctorate in physical chemistry (I think) at the University of Idaho, Moscow, and has gone on to an industrial postdoctoral at the University of Iowa, Des Moines.

Of more recent vintage, Joe Pare, a true Vermonter, has fulfilled a dream by being accepted to UVM Med School this year.

Chris Baker is starting his second year in a doctoral program working on circadian rhythms in Neurospora in the labs of Jay Dunlop and Jennifer Laros at Dartmouth after a super recommendation from Tom and me. I’m told he’s the star student of many in what is known as a very active research program. Chris started out at UVM majoring in Plant and Soil Science, aced Mary Tierney’s genetics course and got inspired to pursue molecular genetics in our lab via Mary’s recommendation. It’s been gratifying to watch him develop his expertise largely under Tom Fowler’s tutelage.

I’ve been writing a book (a scientific memoir) for quite a while now. It is currently in the hands of a professional editor---not yet (if ever) available to the public. Oh, the tales I have to tell!
Looking for ways to generate and increase International collaborations between UVM and Research Institutes from abroad. Dr. Mariana Matrajt applied and obtained the 2006-2007 International Cooperation Grant between the National Research Council of Argentina (CONICET), and the National Science Foundation, USA (NSF). The goal of this grant is to allow students from Argentina to travel to the US to work on collaborative projects. Under this grant, Natalia de Miguel, a PhD student from Argentina, worked in Dr. Matrajt’s lab at Stafford Hall. During her long weeks at UVM, Natalia was able to produce an impressive amount of results that will help her in finishing her PhD in Argentina. In addition, the feedback generated among Natalia, her lab, Mariana’s lab and its members already proved to be highly positive. Natalia wanted to thank not only Mariana’s lab members but also Dr. Gary Ward because of all the help that she received during her stay. We are already missing Natalia and we wish her the best of success in her career.

While Heng and Cedric were on vacation, Andrew Shepherd and Jingping Li bet on World Cup matches and followed the victory of Italy, one of Jingping’s favorite teams.

Christopher Folts has moved to Rochester to become our latest lab technician turned graduate student and will begin his courses this fall. On a sad note, Molly Coseno’s beloved rat, Charlie, has passed. He enjoyed a long life and will be sorely missed.

Krishnan and his dog, Aryan, recently won the USDDN (United States Disc Dog Nationals) OPEN Freestyle Competition and brought the prestigious canine-disc trophy to Vermont for the first time ever. The competition was held in Wrentham, Massachusetts, with over 40 canine-human teams from all over the US. Krishnan and Aryan were also covered earlier this year by the Burlington Free Press for the sport (before they were the national champs). They’ve been at the sport for the past two years and hope to defend their title next year.

Krishnan completed the Vermont City Marathon in May this year.
Thali Lab

The Thali lab is shrinking: After having graduated in July, Melissa Batonick is heading to Charlottesville, Virginia, where she will start working as post-doc in Gail Wertz’s lab at the University of Virginia.

Ben also got engaged to Emily this year! He will be married on 07/07/07 - a date he should be able to remember.

Sairy Martocci, an undergrad working on a Candida project, graduated in May and is pursuing her Masters in public health in Boston.

Burke Lab

The year was marked by several significant comings and goings in the Burke lab. Christina Chant, Andreas Koenig and Mike Fay left the lab and found employment elsewhere on campus and in the state. Mike took a job at MED Associates in St. Albans, Andreas is currently a postdoc in the lab of Ralph Budd, and Christina traded in her Pipetman for a research supervisor position in the Department of Radiology at FAHC.

Former and present Burke lab members experienced a remarkably productive year.

Johnson Lab

Ben Stark and Karen Cole went to the Yeast Genetics and Molecular Biology Meeting at Princeton. Ben presented a poster, “Synergistic effects of small molecule inhibitors of the budded-to-hyal-form transition in the pathogenic yeast Candida albicans”. Karen also presented a poster, “Use of bimolecular fluorescence complementation to study in vivo interactions between Cdc42p and Rdilp”. They are hanging in the hall outside the lab, so make sure you stop by to see them. Karen also gave a presentation at the Imaging Workshop on bimolecular fluorescence complementation. The food at Princeton was awful...good thing the Triumph Brewery across the street had good food (and beer) or we would have starved!

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Zhenxi and Ji also recently welcomed their first child, Linda, in March.

**Wildlife sightings!** John and Karen Burke had a visitor to their lakefront community when a yearling moose swam ashore next to their house and stayed for breakfast. John commented on the unexpected arrival, "He insisted on bagels but all we had were 'oat and bran', two of them, the kind that you need a pot of coffee to choke down, ONE BITE and they were both gone, nature is amazing! I remember thinking he was going to have a bit of a surprise in about an hour".

**Ward Lab**

The biggest news from the Ward lab in recent months was the graduation of long-timer Jeff Mital in July. The photo above shows Jeff at his graduation party, with wife Diane and a chocolate Toxoplasma cake. Jeff is currently doing a postdoc with Ted Hackstadt at the NIH Rocky Mountain Laboratories in Hamilton, Montana. The X chromosome density in the Ward lab reached saturation this year with the departure of Jeff and the addition of new technician Adele Godfrey-Certner, student Qing Tang, and postdoc Fabiola Parussini. They join Jeralyn Haraldsen, Aoife Heaslip, Jayanthi Garudathri, and Whittney Dotzler.

In lab alumni news, Mike Wichroski has moved from a postdoc at UMass Medical School to a position as Exploratory Research Scientist Bristol-Myers Squibb in Wallingford CT. Carolyn Donahue (Conant) has also made the move into biotech and is currently a Staff Scientist at US Genomics in Boston. Kim Carey and Stacey Gilk are currently postdocs at Yale and UNC, respectively, and both are doing well.

**Kirkpatrick Lab**

The Kirkpatrick Lab has been very busy over the summer, and soon new faces will be seen around the halls of Stafford. After much hard work and perseverance we learned in July that our lab, along with the Matrajt and Huston Labs in MMG, were awarded an Immunobiology COBRE grant. Thanks to Drs. Ralph Budd and Gary Ward for their leadership as Co-Principal Investigators, and congratulations to all the participating labs and faculty! This award will allow us to continue our work in Cryptosporidium infection and gut immunology. Beth Kirkpatrick was also recognized as a 2006-07 Frymoyer Scholar for her work on a project entitled “Global Health Education and Training for Health Care Professionals at the University of Vermont”.

As the summer draws to an end and fall rolls around, our lab will be involved in some clinical vaccine trials. We will be starting an Anthrax vaccine trial in conjunction with Vaxgen Inc. starting in late fall. If anyone is interested in participating please contact Cathy Larsson at 656-0013, or stop by Stafford 110 for more information. Keep an eye open for future studies that are currently in the works.

In other lab news, Cathy Larsson will soon be sending the first of two children to college.
Her daughter will be attending Castleton State College this fall. After a successful photography class this past spring, Pat Daunais continues his newly found passion for black and white photography. When he is not in the tissue culture hood he can be found in the UVM Photo Co-op darkrooms trying to relieve stress from working with human γ/δ T Cells. We would also like to thank Allison Emery, an undergraduate student from Bates College for all the hard work she put in over the summer working on various lab projects. We wish her luck as she enters her junior year, and look forward to her coming back next summer!

Wallace Lab

Matthew Hogg is recovering well after a bike accident this past March - proof that it’s best to not go barreling through bear claw cavern at 30 miles an hour! The photo shows before and after images of the Wallace Labs' new six-million dollar man.

Last year Scott Kathe had an article published in Adirondack Life on carnivorous plants in the Adirondacks with two photos and two photos published in the summer issue of Vermont Life. This year he has two photos published in the Vermont Life Engagement Book. To see more of Scott's work, visit http://www.uvm.edu/~skathe/index.html.

Bond Lab

Several people joined our lab last year. Among them Janet Murray, PhD, former member of the Johnson lab, moved from the Finette lab to the Bond lab. She has been participating in the development and delivery of outreach modules for microarray and bioinformatics for the Vermont Genetics Network (VGN). Bill Barnes came to our lab for six months and also helped with these modules. He was here on a sabbatical from Clarion University in Western Pennsylvania. We benefited from his knowledge in Biology and will miss his insights. We are sorry that somebody down the hall asked if he was Ramiro’s (Barrantes-Reynolds) grandfather and hope that is not the real reason he is not with us anymore!

Matthew Lester Harpster joined us about four months ago for a temporary position working in IT for EPSCOR and the VGN. He will be leaving in a few days and is not clear about his future plans. He loves music and plays the guitar. We made a deep impression on him, so much so that he cut his "rock-star" style hair in order to look more like the rest of the group.

Benjamin Ware joined our lab to work in IT for EPSCoR and the VGN. Running and the Red Sox are his two passions aside from computers.

Office News

One of the first things Debbie Stern did in 2006 was enter her cat, Zoey, in the Vermont Feline Fanciers Cat Show, held at the Sheraton in Burlington, January 7-8. Zoey is a 2 year old female polydactyl tuxedo cat. She was entered in the "Household Pets" category. There were 15 other competitors all actively vying to be "Best Household Pet". Out of six rings of judging, Zoey won ribbons for a 3rd, 5th, 9th and 10th place. Debbie had a lot of fun that weekend. Zoey was happy to get home at the end of the day.
In 2005, Mike Wichroski (formerly of the Ward Lab) and Kirk Brown (formerly of the Gilmartin Lab) completed their Post-Doctoral Research Fellowships at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center where their studies were focused on cellular immunity against retroviruses and RNAi, respectively. Sadly, Mike and Kirk had to eventually part ways as both became gainfully employed during 2005. Mike is now an Investigator in the Infectious Disease Unit at Bristol-Myers Squibb while Kirk is a Scientist at Dharmacon. Kirk and new bride Michelle (McGroarty, former MMG grad student and technician in Umo Wesley’s lab) reside in Pennsylvania while Mike and fiancé Kerry live near the beautiful coastline of Connecticut where they are planning a Summer 2007 wedding.

Kristin Clark, a member of the undergraduate Class of 2000 is in the first year of her pediatrics residency at Brown in Providence, Rhode Island.

Claire Kitidis Mitrokostas has been working in the laboratory of Harvey Lodish at the Whitehead Institute for the past seven years. This fall she will be starting an M.S. program at Brandeis in Genetic counseling. Congratulations, Claire, on your marriage on June 3, 2006!

Meredith Dixon writes that after finishing her first year of medical school in Pittsburgh, she volunteered to do contact tracing for a pediatric HIV project in the Albert Schweitzer Hospital in Deschapelles, Haiti. This was an amazing experience! She got to see and understand more of the developmental and clinical challenges that face healthcare in developing countries, even one so close to the wealth and resources of the US.

Since returning from Haiti Meredith has been working with the lab group at Mass General, that she worked with before heading to med school, on the development of HIV monitoring tools for developing countries. She has 2 papers pending publication, but one paper featuring the type of work that she is involved with for the summer can be found in PLoS Medicine, 2005, July. The title is “A microchip CD4 counting method for HIV monitoring in resource-poor settings.” In about a month Meredith will return for her second year of medical school, and will take the boards in February. She is dreading the boards but very much looking forward to getting to the clinical years!

Shayna Cunningham writes: after graduation, I moved to Boston and worked as a lab technician at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute. I then headed to Baltimore, Maryland to do a Masters of Health Science in the Department of International Health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (JHSPH). I am now nearing completion of my PhD, also at JHSPH, with my defense scheduled for October 2006. Both my masters and doctoral training have focused on the social and behavioral determinants of health in developing country and inner-city
settings. For my dissertation I examined the impact and multi-level determinants of STI/HIV-related stigma among adolescents and young adults in Baltimore. Although enrolled in graduate school on the East coast, for the past three years I have lived with my boyfriend, Jim, in Menlo Park, California. During this time I became an avid runner completing the Chicago and Portland marathons. Jim and I are currently planning to spend the first half of next year living and working in sub-Saharan Africa after which time we will return to CA. All my best wishes to everyone I knew from MMG. It was great to read all of your news!

Kevin Laddison, formerly a graduate student in the Raper lab (M.S. 1995), is living in St. Albans, Vermont, with his lovely wife Kate (Bilodeau) Laddison. Kevin presently works for Dr. Cory Teuscher in the Department of Medicine at UVM. Kevin and Kate were married last year in Las Vegas, and celebrated with their families and friends with a "Summer of Love Wedding Tour" which included four separate parties in three states.

Kevin and Kate are active in the local ballroom dance community and are sponsoring the 3rd Annual Camp Ta-Kum-Ta Benefit Partner Dance Showcase on Friday, September 15, 2006 at the Elly-Long Music Center in Colchester. The benefit will start at 7:00 pm with dance performances by local ballroom, salsa, swing and Argentine Tango dancers. The evening will continue with a brief dance lesson, and dancing until 10:00 pm. All net proceeds from the benefit will go to benefit Camp Ta-Kum-Ta, Vermont’s camp for children who have, or have had, cancer. For more details visit: www.FirstStepDance.com/news/takumta.php.

Alia Merla (Ph.D. 2001, Johnson Lab) writes: After much upheaval at Amersham (which was purchased by GE), I decided to leave (ie, get going while the getting was good). I’m now working at Biocmpare.com which is a buyer’s guide website for life scientists. It’s a very interesting job - I’m helping organize the products by area of study and by gene, etc., and every once in a while I get to be in a web video! I am also getting married to Scott Smith on September 29, 2006!

The North Carolina Girls (a.k.a. Stacey Gilk, Emily Alexander & Hadley Hartwell) - Stacey, (Ph.D. 2004) formerly of the Ward Lab, is doing a post-doc at the University of North Carolina in the department of Cell and Developmental Biology. She has ventured into the new world of lipid signaling in Toxoplasma, which has taken her on two trips to Europe for meetings (Little Miss World Traveler). She’s gotten quite good at balancing work with play, including playing A LOT of soccer. She plays for three different leagues in the area and would like to point out to all you Vermonters that she plays year round outdoors! (What she did not reveal is that in July and August, she is not sure if she is playing soccer or swimming in the 90% humidity). She has also picked up tennis, and runs on the weekends with Hadley. If you think her exercise routine is strenuous, there is no need to worry (Stacey certainly doesn’t). There has only been ONE knee surgery and she pays no heed to what her physical therapist says. There is an adage in there somewhere....ignorance is bliss?
Emily (formerly of the Johnson Lab) has finally escaped Duke University (she knew all along that UNC was better) and the life of a post-doc. She now is a Research Scientist for Talecris Biotherapeutics in Raleigh, and has moved from Durham to a fantastic new place in Raleigh. It is amazing how Stacey and Hadley are quick to remind her what good friends they are of hers...not that it has anything to do with her new salary! Emily has a new addition to her family - a little black and white rat terrier named Linus now lives with her and Zoe (her Jack Russell Terrier). Other than his cravings to eat (and I mean EAT) certain things (like the couch and the bed), he is a very sweet and loving little fellow.

Hadley has brought up the idea about getting the girls together for a crazy road trip up to visit, especially now that her niece is a student at Bennington College...we’ll keep you posted!! But don’t expect us anytime between November and March - those winter coats have been laid to rest - R.I.P.!

Hunter White writes - I’m still playing with creepy crawlies that pester our pets and farm animals (fleas, flies, ticks and parasitic nematodes). The lab continues to have a good run, even though we’re getting smaller. We had one paper out this past spring in J. Med. Entomol., with a couple of others either in press or still under review...so much for the myth that industry labs don’t need to publish. However, writing helps me to keep my sanity.

My wife (Tina), daughter (Haley) and I spent a fun week this summer in San Francisco. Of course, we had to eat at least once at the infamous Stinking Rose on Columbus Ave. It brought back fond memories of my first ASCB meeting in ’95, where myself, Peter Miller (another grad student in Doug Johnson’s lab) and Mike Ziman (former Johnson student, post-doc at Berkeley) feasted on way, way too much garlic-saturated food and stunk for all 4 days of the meeting! In my spare time, I’ve been having a lot of fun running (still) and coaching track & field and cross country teams for the local high school. The hectic life of high school also begins to affect another member of the family this fall - it’s our daughter’s first year in the big school!
**MMG Holiday Party**

Yes, it is early to start thinking about the MMG Holiday Party, but it is never too early to start planning the party activities. Of course, the most popular activities at the party are talking and eating. Our “tea party” consisting of desserts, finger foods, coffee, tea and hot chocolate is the mainstay of the party. Last year we had a contest that provided us with a few laughs and some interesting departmental news. Here is one of the slides from the quiz:

In 2002 we had a contest that asked the question, Which Department member is this?

In 2004 we had a creative ornament contest. Winners were: Clay’s Merry Band of Men, Doublé Lab and Kirkpatrick Lab.

Do you have any ideas for 2006?

Please help make our holiday celebration special. All ideas are welcome - you don’t have to be a current member of the Department to submit an idea! Thanks in advance.

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**MMG Retreat**

According to the feedback we got after this year’s retreat, most attendees liked both the topics (prions/career development) and, overall, the site (Grand Isle Lake House). As you may remember, one of our plenary speakers (Reed Wickner) became suddenly ill and couldn’t make it to Vermont. Nicely enough, he will now come later this year, on October 24, and give a seminar on his research on yeast prions. The retreat committee will get together in September to start planning next year’s event. As always, if you’d be interested in giving your input, please join us!

-- For the Retreat Committee: MarkusThali

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**Future Newsletters**

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There is always room for your news. Please send me your Alumni or Retiree news. The newsletter comes out once a year, usually around Labor Day in September. What have you been doing since your UVM MMG days? Please contact me at Debra.Stern@uvm.edu, by phone at 802-656-2164, or by regular mail: Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics, University of Vermont, 95 Carrigan Drive, Stafford Hall, Burlington, Vermont 05405.
Microbiology and Molecular Genetics

The Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics strives to be competitive in the scientific community. The Department funds many activities that bring researchers, students, postdoctoral associates and technicians together in a collegial manner to share research and ideas. These activities include, but are not limited to, graduate student activities, seminars, a departmental library, monthly departmental gatherings and retreats. Annual gifts from alumni and friends help defray the costs that grant money will not cover, and keep the excitement and drive at a high level among the various laboratories.

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Thank you!!!