



# The University of Vermont

## POSTDOCTORAL ASSOCIATION

Promoting a culture reflecting the University of Vermont Common Ground that facilitates professional development, broadens the training experience, and enhances quality of life for all postdoctoral members at UVM to better serve the community.

Newsletter  
Vol 2, Issue 1  
Jan. 2018

LCOM Research Day  
Postdoc Spotlight  
Announcements  
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### LCOM Excellence in Research Day

Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017

For the first time, the LCOM Research Day included a Postdoctoral Scholar presentation session. Eight postdocs from within and outside the College of Medicine were judged on short format talks of their research.

We'd like to congratulate the winners and recognize all who participated!:

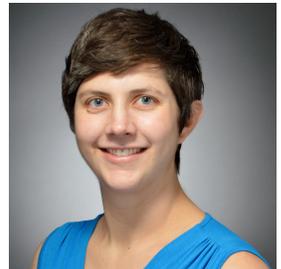
1<sup>st</sup> Place: **Gabriela Bucini** (Department of Plant Soil Science, mentor Scott Merrill), "*Protecting herd health: Interactive agent-based modeling used to reduce the impact of disease in livestock industries*"

Gabriela's innovative simulations predicting disease outbreak are available to play [here](#). Email Gabriella for login info.



2<sup>nd</sup> Place: **Kirsten Tracy** (Department of Biochemistry, mentor Jane Lian), "*Mitotically Associated Long Non-coding RNA MANCR Affects Cell Cycle in Breast Cancer*"

lncRNAs are increasingly recognized players in cancer progression. Kirsten linked a novel lncRNA, MANCR, to cancer cell division and growth.



**Xun Chen** (mentor Dawei Li) has developed a novel sequencing analysis method to uncover integration of viral genetic sequences in the human genome.



**Juan Jose Uriarte** (mentor, Daniel Weiss) uses emu and chicken lungs as a model for developing new therapy devices.



**Ubong Peters** (mentors Anne Dixon and Jason Bates) studies the link between asthma and obesity to help personalized patient treatment.



**Irene Pericot-Vaverde** (mentor Diann Gaalema) studies the relationships between stress, cravings, and e-cigarette use.



**Franziska Uhl** (mentor Daniel Weiss) develops enhanced lung decellularization techniques to aid mass spectrometry analysis of lung tissue.



**Andrew Fritz** (mentor Gary Stein) identified the protein RunX1 as a cancer indicator through its role in maintaining cell differentiation.

An additional congratulations to **Matt Albaugh** for winning the Dean's Excellence in Research Award, (Postdoctoral Division) given out to most outstanding research paper. The research article, completed in the Department of Psychiatry under the mentorship of Hugh Garavan, was published in *Biological Psychiatry* and can be viewed [here](#).

This event, complete with free food and cash prizes, was a great opportunity for speakers to practice talking about your research in a low-pressure, but formal setting – great for upcoming interviews, conferences, and meetings. It was well supported by the faculty and administration of the Larner College of Medicine (LCOM). We hope to have even more participants next year and continue this on an annual basis.

# Featured Postdoc: Kimberly Coleman

by Franzi Uhl

I would like to introduce to you Kimberly Coleman from the Rubenstein School of Environmental & Natural Research. She has been working under the supervision of Rachelle Gould since April 2017. Her location is Aiken Hall, named after the 64<sup>th</sup> Governor of Vermont and U.S. Senator George Aiken of Putney. Aiken was also a plant conservationist and ran one of the largest plant nurseries in New England. As you can see, we are entering the area of flora-related research with this interview.



Kimberly is one of UVM's own breeds. Originally from the Greater Boston Area, she completed both her B.S. and M.S. degrees at UVM in environmental studies and natural resources, respectively. She left New England and its cold winters for 3.5 years to do her PhD at Virginia Tech in Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation, focusing on the complex social and ecological dynamics associated with wildland fires. Many forests, homes, jobs, and lives get lost by wildland fires all over the US and the value of the forest is hard to determine since different groups have different and often times opposite interests. To reduce the risk of fires, it is important to reduce the load of flammable material, but this interferes with commercial, spiritual, and sometimes recreational interests. The Tribal Forest Protection Act for example was designed "to carry out projects to protect Indian forest land". You can say that Kimberly is in a position between all these groups and her job is somewhat political, too. Federal land with community forest needs regulations to bring all these different groups and interests together and satisfy all their needs, which takes lots of compromise and negotiation. Kimberly helps evaluate the forests value and develop policy recommendations towards governmental agencies, and is thereby shaping the management of public land. This involves a combination of on-site data acquisition, interviewing and recording, and lots of coordination and phone calls.

Funding is not always easy to get for her projects. Her life is made up *en bloc* traveling to sites and interviewing during winter and early spring, collecting samples during "fire season" throughout spring and summer, and analyses of all of that in between. The interviews need to be transcribed in order to be evaluated with self-written algorithms to determine patterns. This is pretty similar to other scientific fields having biased and unbiased approaches to tackle this task, i.e. the algorithm could be programmed to search for the connection of specific words mentioned in the interview at the same time (biased) or look at all the things that were mentioned together in multiple interviews and analyzing those (unbiased). Another project out of Kimberly's lab group (The Gould Lab) at UVM will determine the effect of degraded landscapes on humans. For this, the group is measuring cortisol levels in persons' saliva after "exposure" to those landscapes.

In her spare time Kimberly likes to spend time with her husband, Ben, and son, Nico. Kim and Ben are both competitive mountain bikers and they compete throughout New England. They hope exposing Nico to mountain biking and the race scene will instill in him a love of outdoor recreation and physical activity.

If you would like to contact Kimberly please use [Kimberly.Coleman@uvm.edu](mailto:Kimberly.Coleman@uvm.edu) or 802-656 5849.

## Recaps and Announcements:

**Jon Losch**, director of the NIH National Institute for General Medicine presented current policy initiatives and met with representatives from the graduate student council and UVM PDA.



- The NIH has very little data on postdocs since every institute handles them differently.
- Visa regulations for foreign-born postdocs present added barriers to unified policies regarding postdocs.
- One-track training is not adequate for many trainees: Ask for new experiences, and advocate for non-traditional training.
- Regardless of your situation you can use the [National Resource Mentoring Network](#) to help get advice and make connections.

**Gagan Bajaj** is the current LCOM Grant Specialist. She has the following tips and resources for postdocs looking to streamline their grant application process:

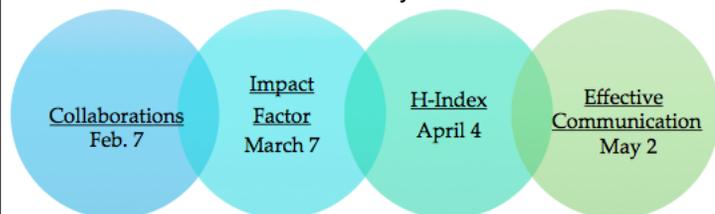
- Generally, the funding landscape is shifting toward more opportunities for early career scientists – this is positive news for postdocs!
- "Think 5 years ahead": Get the training you need for your next move, wherever it is. Take a programming, management, or teaching course to get ready, for example.
- Ask your advisor to help reviewing and writing grants
- Spend time on research, not application deadlines: create timelines and skeleton administrative documents to streamline funding application.
- Gagan is working on an open resource for grant applications with volunteer sample sections publically available. It's on the docket for this Spring. Stay tuned!

The NPA recently published a report incorporating survey results from dozens of US universities into concrete recommendations for the support and retention of postdocs. See the report [here](#).

**2017** National Postdoctoral Association  
Institutional Policy Report

## Upcoming Events:

Career Matters: 20 min. talks to enhance you in your career. Wednesdays at noon



Gary Ward, Ph.D.



David Warshaw, Ph.D.



Chris Huston, M.D.



Charlie Irvin, PhD



The winter is in full swing, and the mountains are calling! We'll be announcing a ski trip soon!

Grab those old posters! We are planning a recycled poster session for the Spring. This will be minimal effort and maximum benefit.



If you have a seminar, workshop, or social event that you think postdocs should know about, send us the info at [Postdocs@uvm.edu](mailto:Postdocs@uvm.edu).

Full Day Workshop: Smart Drug Development & Design  
Novartis, Cambridge MA, 8am-4pm  
[More info](#)



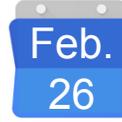
½ Day Event: Community Engaged Scholarship Presentations  
UVM Alumni House Silver Pavilion  
9:30 am–12pm



½ Day Seminar: The Road to the Biologic IND  
J & J Labs, Cambridge, MA, 12pm-5pm  
[More Info](#)



Global and Regional Studies: The Red Cross in the Shadow of the Holocaust  
Waterman 338, 7pm



Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Week Seminars and panel discussions on academic career progression in all fields.  
Contact Jennifer Diaz for more info



LCOM Career Matters: H-Index  
Chris Huston  
HSRF 400, 12pm



College of Arts & Sciences Professor Lecture Series – Amani Whitfield  
Research Topic: African American Slavery in the American and Canadian Northeast  
Waterman 338, 4pm



# We're Official!

The UVM Postdoc Association was just officially recognized by Provost David Rosowsky as a university group! We hope to use this firm foundation and new administrative connection as common ground to grow and better support postdocs in the years to come.

### Call for Volunteers

The UVM-PDA strives to be both a professional resource and an encouraging community to actively grow the careers and lives of all postdocs. With this in mind, we are organizing several opportunities to share expertise and expand communication skills. Opportunities include **group blogging, peer-led workshops, flash talk sessions**, and behind-the-scenes work **connecting postdocs to new career growth opportunities on and off the UVM campus**. Email [postdocs@uvm.edu](mailto:postdocs@uvm.edu) for more information or to volunteer.

### Join Us!

Meetings are in the Larner College of Medicine (adjacent to Given and HSRF research buildings.) Meetings are announced here and by group email. Our next meeting is:

**Feb 8<sup>th</sup>  
12pm, MedEd 204**

All postdocs are welcome! For more details, email [postdocs@uvm.edu](mailto:postdocs@uvm.edu).