

FUTURE in Biomedicine Program

Class of 2009 – Ongoing Connections

Coe College

Randy Christensen, Ph.D. & Brandon Hoffer

Dr. Christensen's work with Assistant Professor Anton McCaffrey (Dept. of Internal Medicine) was published in July, 2010, in an article entitled "*Correlation between microRNA expression levels and clinical parameters associated with chronic hepatitis C viral infection in humans*" in the journal *Laboratory Investigations*. Dr. Christensen attends seminars and conferences offered by the UI CCOM, and brings students with him from Coe to learn about graduate and clinical training programs. Mr. Brandon Hoffer matriculated in the College of Medicine in August, 2010.

Drake University

Jerry Honts, Ph.D.

Dr. Honts continues to interact with the laboratory of Professor Madeline Shea (Dept. of Biochemistry). He uses the laboratory instruments to assist with specialized research projects, and has used the UI library system in support of his research, and a book he is writing entitled *Protoplasm*, describing the development of cell biology. He presented a talk in the 2010 FUTURE Symposium.

Graceland University

Dan Pratt, Ph.D. & Ryan Sheehy

Dr. Pratt worked in the laboratory of Professor Ray Hohl (Depts. of Internal Medicine and Pharmacology). Dr. Pratt participated in the FUTURE Symposium in 2010, bringing two students (Alex Bagdy and Billy Witham) with him to present a poster based on their research at Graceland during the summer of 2010. Mr. Ryan Sheehy matriculated in the UI Biosciences Graduate Program in August, 2010. Several of Dr. Pratt's other students were inspired to conduct research during the summer of 2009. Ms. Koon Lam participated in the BSURF (Biochemistry Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship) program at the University of Iowa.

Loras College

David Speckhard, Ph.D. and Sujan Devbhandari

In the summer of 2009, Dr. Speckhard worked with Professor Robert Piper (Dept. of Molecular Physiology and Biophysics). In 2010, Dr. Speckhard initiated a new research project with Assistant Professor Ernesto Fuentes (Dept. of Biochemistry) to pursue his interest in learning biomolecular NMR. Dr. Speckhard hosted UI CCOM postdoctoral fellow Dr. Brooke Shields at Loras College for a seminar, giving her a chance to present her research findings and learn more about careers at liberal arts colleges.

Dr. Speckhard has begun using the DNA sequencing services of the UI CCOM DNA Core in work that grew out of his fellowship in the Piper laboratory. He may continue his work with Professor Piper who has a grant application pending that would benefit from an ongoing collaboration with an undergraduate institution. He is also applying for a sabbatical for summer 2011 and fall 2011 to continue working with Dr. Fuentes.

Mr. Sujan Devbhandari applied and was accepted in the BSURF (Biochemistry Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship) program. He opted to train at Sloan-Kettering in New York City in the summer of 2010, but plans to apply to UI graduate programs including the MSTP for admission in 2011.

Luther College

Jodi Enos-Berlage, Ph.D. & Aimee Villard

Dr. Enos-Berlage continues to interact with the laboratory of Professor Linda McCarter, Microbiology. Undergraduates from Luther College and graduate students at the University of Iowa are collaborating on a research endeavor. They are preparing a joint manuscript and grant proposal. Elements of the research project developed during the summer of 2009 have also been incorporated into investigative laboratory coursework at Luther College. Ms. Aimee Villard matriculated at Mayo to pursue graduate work in the fall of 2010.

Northwestern College

Karissa Carlson, Ph.D. & Alex Menning

Dr. Carlson continues to collaborate with the laboratory of Professor Marc Wold, Biochemistry. Mr. Alex Menning pursued a service mission in Africa in the summer of 2010, and plans to apply to the UI CCOM medical school for admission in 2011. In the 2009-10 academic year, Adam Verhoef joined the research project started by Dr. Carlson and Mr. Menning. Adam traveled with Dr. Carlson to Iowa City in June, 2010, to prepare protein samples in Dr. Wold's laboratory, and presented his research with Dr. Carlson in a poster at the FUTURE 2010 Symposium in July.

St. Ambrose University

Shannon Mackey, Ph.D.

Dr. Mackey has continued her research with Professor Lori Wallrath, Biochemistry. In 2010, she worked throughout the summer in the Wallrath laboratory with Danielle Schlimmer, a St. Ambrose University student who was supported by the BSURF (Biochemistry Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship) program and presented a talk in the 2010 FUTURE Symposium.

Through her ongoing collaboration with Professor Wallrath, Dr. Mackey co-authored an article entitled "*Nuclear organization, chromatin structure and gene silencing*," which will be published in the *Encyclopedia of Biological Chemistry* in the coming year.

The first *Biomedical Pre-Graduate School Conference* was held October 16, 2009 in response to suggestions from the FUTURE Fellows in the inaugural Class of 2009. They recommended that the CCOM offer an opportunity for their students to learn about Ph.D. programs on the same day as the popular Pre-Medical Conference so that they could coordinate transportation. At least two students from that conference joined Ph.D. programs in the CCOM in the fall of 2010. The second conference is scheduled for October 15, 2010.