

The Medical Scientist Training Program

School of Medicine & Dentistry - University of Rochester Medical Center

MSTP Newsletter



VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2 UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

WINTER, 2008-09

Message from:



Kofi Mensah
Fifth year MSTP
student
(3rd year graduate in
Microbiology &
Immunology; Dr. Eddie
Schwarz, advisor)

American Physician Scientist Association
(APSA)

Another year has drawn to a close, and we inch closer to receiving our dual degrees. This May will see our medical scientist training program here at the University of Rochester graduate one of the largest classes in its history. With the growth of the student body came the need to organize so that our concerns are efficiently heard and met. By organizing a student council, we have been able to effect some changes in the curriculum that affect our unique educational path, as well as put together outreach conferences to help younger students decide if this is the right path for them. While all of the students in the program may not agree on what social activities to hold each year or whether to exchange wall sconces for a tie rack, we appreciate the ability to meet every other month over pizza slices (a.k.a. pieces) and soda (a.k.a. pop) to put forth our ideas on how to maximize our training experiences here, both academically and socially. However, we are no island; our training experience extends beyond the boundaries of Elmwood and Crittenden.

In 2005, the year that most of the current graduating MD class entered, a little under 600 MD-PhD students matriculated with them across the US – only 4% of the total medical student population (Ley and Rosenberg 2005). In February of that same year, the American Physician Scientists Association (APSA) was

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incorporated as an organization for individuals training for a career as a physician-scientist. Initial concepts for such an organization came about in October 2003 from the ideas of its four founding members: Sean Pyper (Northwestern), Brian Fuehrlein (Florida), Stephanie Graves (Chicago), and Freddy Nguyen (Illinois). My first interaction with APSA came at the National MD-PhD Student Conference in Keystone, CO in July 2005. I met Brian Fuehrlein there at the poster session where he had a poster on APSA. Providentially, Kerry encouraged me to attend a small roundtable discussion where the whitepapers for APSA were distributed. As we went around the table introducing ourselves and sharing ideas on what we would like to see from a group like APSA, it became quite apparent to me that there was a great opportunity for programs to learn from each other through this kind of organization. By the end of the evening, most of us present had agreed to serve as institutional representatives to APSA with the goal of advocating its four pillars: outreach, networking, mentorship, and resources among our peers.

Since that summer evening in the mountains of Colorado, APSA has grown exponentially. The first national meeting of APSA in 2005 at Northwestern University only included 58 members; by comparison, the April 2008 meeting held at the Fairmont Hotel Chicago, in

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conjunction with the American Society for Clinical Investigation and American Association of Physicians annual session, drew over 200 APSA attendees with 65% of them attending for the first time. APSA now has representatives from more than 120 different US and Canadian medical institutions and a membership of over 1,100 and growing. The main goals of APSA are to enhance career development and to foster community building among physician-scientists. To achieve these goals, APSA supports the growth of MD-PhD and DO-PhD training programs as well as other formal research training opportunities. APSA encourages the active exchange between current and future physician-scientists independent of institutional affiliations. APSA is inclusive of physician-scientists with and without dual-degrees, as an increasing number of medical students enrolled in traditional MD curricula are engaged in significant research initiatives. These objectives are achieved through various avenues including the APSA Annual Meeting, APSA Regional Meetings held in California, New York, and Texas, and the APSA quarterly newsletter "Phi-Psi." APSA further provides opportunities for networking and communication with members at other institutions through various APSA group forums as well as mentoring opportunities for current and future physician-scientist trainees. APSA also provides resources and information regarding available research funding and residency programs that promote utilization of dual degrees.

Our own MSTP has been very involved in APSA. In fact, we are often regarded as one of the most active APSA chapters with representation from the very top as Kerry O'Banion is a member of the APSA Board of Directors. I have served as your institutional representative for two terms (2005-2007). Debbie Dao continued our representation from 2007-2008 when we formalized an election process for the APSA institutional representative from our student body. Mercedes Szpunar now holds the position and will be handing it over to Rebekka Matheson in the 2009-2010 academic year. I have written several articles for the APSA newsletter and was co-editor from 2007-2008. Currently, I am the co-chairperson of the APSA Public Relations Committee overseeing the newsletter and the website which our dear

President Susan Lee has worked very hard on revamping to make it the professional-looking virtual doorway to APSA you can visit online today. Our past president Vincent Fong is involved in the APSA Policy Committee and has expressed interests in studying MD-PhD programs around the country to learn about what works best at each institution to help improve the experiences of all trainees. Debbie Dao, also on the Policy Committee, contributed to this effort of sharing what works at our institution when she wrote an article about our student council in the APSA newsletter. Mercedes Szpunar is also actively involved in the Policy Committee where she is helping to lead APSA's Women's Physician-Scientist Initiative. She co-authored a widely read article on the current state of female physician-scientists in our recent issue of the APSA newsletter, which was dedicated to this important topic. Mercedes will represent APSA to the American Medical Women's Association (AMWA) regional conference in Chicago next month. Mercedes's article could not have come together in its final form without the help of Rebecca Porter who is currently co-editor of the APSA newsletter. Yasser Elshatory has served on an APSA standing committee. Jim Hart presented his work to eminent physician-scientists at the 3rd APSA Annual Meeting in 2007. Babak Razavi, Laura Fornarola, and Phillip Rappold have all expressed interest in helping out with APSA initiatives.

As you can see, our program is quite involved with APSA at multiple levels. We have gone far beyond the limits of Crittenden and Elmwood to reach out to our peers. As APSA enters its fifth year, I encourage the UR MSTP to continue to uphold its noted history of support for this organization. By uniting our skills and passion with those of other like-minded students across the country, we have the opportunity to change the future of medicine. Please, register to become a member of APSA and attend an Annual or Regional meeting during the course of your training. To learn more, please see the APSA website at:
<http://membership.physicianscientists.org>.

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Calendar of Events:

February 22, 2009

- MSTP monthly social event: Curling! Rochester Curling Club. This Olympic event has become very popular in the MSTP and is now held yearly. It involves a small piece of granite, ice and a broom.

March 27-28, 2009

- Revisit Weekend for all accepted applicants and current students

April 4, 2009

- Annual MD/PhD Program Outreach Fair. High school students as well as undergraduate students and premed advisors will be invited to learn about MD/PhD Programs and to help attract more applicants to our MSTP. Last year's fair was a tremendous success and we want this one to be even better!

May 3, 2009

- MSTP Graduation Party, *Mario's Via Abruzzi*. This year, 5 graduates will be HONORED (some may even be roasted!): Cindy Duke, Christine Gorman Zanghi, Amish Naik, Babak Razavi, Solomon Shaftel. Congratulations in advance!

May 15

- Medical School commencement
Eastman Theatre

May 16

- Graduate School commencement
Eastman Theatre

Wedding Announcements

Joanna Touger (G2 in IMV, Dr. Steve Dewhurst, advisor) married fellow MSTP student **Keith Olsen** (G2 in IMV, Dr. Patricia Sime, advisor) on September 6, 2008. They met prior

to being accepted into the MSTP. Joanna and Keith honeymooned in Peru, hiking the Inca Trail!



Scott Peslak (G1 in Pathology, Dr. James Palis, advisor) married Laurie Wager on August 16, 2008 in beautiful Rochester, NY. Scott and Laurie had a romantic honeymoon in Riviera Maya, south of Cancun, Mexico. Laurie recently completed student teaching in the Secondary Math, Science and Technology Education Program at St. John Fisher College. She is employed in a long-term substitute position at West Irondequoit High School teaching regents and AP physics. See next page for photos.

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Laurie and Scott on their wedding day

Ana Tablante (G4 in Pharmacology/Physiology; Mark Noble, Ph.D., advisor); and Daniel Nunes were wed in Connecticut on August 9, 2008. Many MSTP students were in attendance, including one in the bridal party: **Debbie Dao** (G3 in Pathology). Ana and Dan honeymooned in the Philippines and Thailand in late November.



Laurie and Scott swim with dolphins in Mexico (far right)

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Births

Danny Rogers (G2 in NBA, Dr. Nina Schor, advisor) and wife Mary Rogers announce the birth of their daughter Kate, born February 23, 2008. Kate joins big brother Colby, age 2.



Candace Gildner (G4 in BME, Dr. Denise Hocking, advisor) and **Adam Dziorny** (G4 in BME, Dr. Anne Luebke, advisor) proudly announce the birth of their daughter, Julia Grace on 4/21/08. Julia weighed in at 7 lbs., 15 ounces, 21 inches long. A nice side note: Candace and Adam met in the same entering MSTP class in 2003! Congratulations on your new arrival, Candace and Adam!



Christine Gorman Zanghi (M4; PhD in IMV, Dr. Steve Dewhurst, advisor) and husband Joey received an early Christmas present of a beautiful baby boy on December 20, 2008 at 5:37 pm. Joseph Anthony Zanghi III ("Trey" for short!) weighed 8 lbs., 8.6 oz. Christine reports "I cannot believe how insanely busy such a little guy can keep two grown adults, but we are finally settling in and enjoying every minute together as a new family of 3!"



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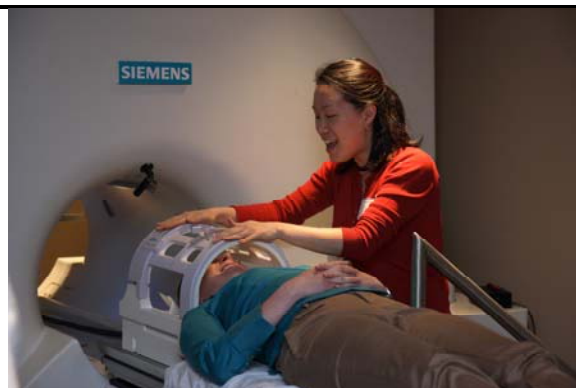
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Past Events

Debbie Dao (G3 in Pathology; R. O'Keefe, advisor) did some recruiting for the MSTP by attending her high school (Gretchen Whitney H.S., Cerritos, CA) alma mater's Career Day in California in April, 2008. Debbie presented 3/28/08 on MD/PhD training to aspiring students.



The first MSTP Outreach Conference was held on May 4, 2008. This conference titled "Transforming Tomorrow's Thinkers" allows undergraduates, high school students, parents, educators and counselors to learn about physician-scientist careers. It was held in conjunction with the annual **Upstate MD/PhD Program Conference with both SUNY Upstate (Syracuse) and University at Buffalo MD/PhD Programs.** The conference was deemed a tremendous success as we had 4 undergraduate applicants interview this year who attended the conference! It will now become a biannual event and is planned this year for April 4, 2009.



Virginia Winn (MD '96, PhD '94), Assistant Professor of Ob/Gyn at University of Colorado Health Sciences Center and **Leonard Dragone (MD '96, PhD '94)**, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the National Jewish Medical and Research Center at University of Colorado presented the final seminar in the MSTP dinner seminar series for the 1997-98 academic year. Virginia and Lenny are alumni of the MSTP, meeting and marrying when they were students in the Program. The June 3, 2008 seminar brought a large attendance of students who listened intently to the unique career pathways that Drs. Dragone and Winn chose. Children Kathryn and Samuel also were in attendance.

Eight students (the most ever!) represented the University of Rochester at the **annual MD/PhD Program National Conference in Keystone, Colorado** July 18-20: Qi Cui, Debbie Dao, Kate Eisenberg, Conan Kinsey, Kevin Makino, Dave Meoli, Mike Moravan and Chris Richardson. Director, Dr. Kerry O'Banion also attended.



MD/PhD Conference, Keystone, Colorado

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The annual **MD/PhD Program Retreat** was held at Casa Larga Vineyards on August 8, 2008. Chi Dang, M.D., Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University was keynote speaker. Dr. Dang is Professor of Oncology Research, Director of the Johns Hopkins Institute for Cell Engineering as well as Vice Dean of Research.

Two students gave oral presentations: Rebecca Porter (G2 in pathology, Dr. L. Calvi, advisor) spoke on Targeted Regulation of Specific Hematopoietic Stem Cells Subsets by Prostaglandin E. Kate Eisenberg (then G4 in epidemiology, E. van Wijngaarden, advisor) presented her research on Lead Exposure in Refugee Children in Massachusetts, 2000-2007. Sol Shaftel (M4) presented on "Life as an MD/PhD Student and What a Long, Strange Trip It Has Been". Posters were presented during the station party luncheon.

Student Council elections resulted in the following newly-elected officers (Susan Lee is President for another year as it is a two-year term): Laura Fornarola, Events Chair; Anat Kohn, Social Chair, Rebekka Matheson, Public Relations, Rich Gaines, Applicant Dinner Coordinator, Kofi Mensah and Joanna Touger, Admissions Chairs, Ed Vuong, Hosting Coordinator, Tristan Nicholson, Applicant Greeting Coordinator, Michael Jacob, Outreach; Jonathan Langdon & Andy Pistner: 1st/2nd year medical school curriculum committee; Adam Simning: 3rd/4th year medical sch. curriculum committee; representatives to Honor Board: Rebecca Porter and Keith Olsen; historian: Adrienne Chesser.

A special surprise for Cathy Senecal-Rice, MSTP Administrator came when the students presented her with an enormous gift basket in thanks for her 14 years of service to the MSTP, as well as 30 years service to the University!

A picnic supper followed at Powder Mill Park where Sol Shaftel and Danny Rogers entertained us sliding downhill on garbage bags in the torrential downpour! A beautiful rainbow brightened the skies just as the picnic ended. A perfect ending to a great day...



Debbie Dao (MSTP seminar chair), Dr. Chi Dang, Retreat keynote speaker



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The first seminar of the academic year was held October 27. **Joseph Bliss, M.D., Ph.D.** returned to his alma mater and spoke on choosing his career path as well as his research in neonatology. Dr. Bliss graduated from the MSTP in 1998 receiving a Ph.D. in microbiology & immunology (Richard Silver, Ph.D., advisor). He is now Assistant Professor of Pediatrics (Neonatology) at Women & Infants Hospital, Brown University.

Students, families and friends got lost in a cornfield at the **Amazing Maize Maze on Long Acre Farms in Macedon, NY September 27, 2008.** They came home exhausted but happy that they found their way out!

Catherine Senecal-Rice, MSTP Administrator and **Dr. Kerry O'Banion, MSTP Director** attended the annual MD/PhD Program Director/Administrator Conference in Seattle October 2-4, 2008. Of course, they found time to visit the Pike Place Market!



left to right: Dorothy Petrie (Kerry's wife), Dr. Kerry O'Banion, Cathy Senecal-Rice

Kevin Makino (G4 in Health Service Research, Dr. Bruce Friedman, advisor) and **Dr. Kerry O'Banion**, MSTP Director represented the University of Rochester MSTP October 9-12, 2008 at the **annual SACNAS (Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science) conference in Salt Lake City.** They manned an informational booth, speaking to undergraduate students

about the MD/PhD Program and giving out literature, chapstick and candy.

November 5-8, 2008 was the annual ABRCMS (Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students) held in Orlando, Florida.

Michael Jacob (G2 in NBA, Dr. Charles Duffy, advisor) and **Dr. Kerry O'Banion** represented the MD/PhD Program by manning a recruiting booth and giving valuable advice to prospective applicants about our MSTP as well as medical school and graduate school. Dr. Doug Portman, assistant professor of genetics represented the UR graduate school.

Mercedes Szpunar (G2 in Pathology, Dr. Ed Brown, advisor) and **Kofi Mensah** (G3 in IMV, Dr. Eddie Schwarz, advisor) ran the Chicago Marathon on October 12. Mercedes also raised money in support of the "Caring for Carcinoid Foundation". Carcinoid is a rare, deadly form of neuroendocrine cancer. Congratulations on this great achievement, Mercedes and Kofi!



Not to be outdone, **Rebecca Porter** (G2 in Pathology, Dr. Laura Calvi, advisor) ran the Niagara Falls Half Marathon on November. Unfortunately, Rebecca sustained a stress fracture to her knee but actually DID complete the race! Feel better, Rebecca and don't race again till the knee heals!

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The second dinner seminar of the semester was held Tuesday, December 2 and presented by Julie Fudge, MD. Dr. Fudge is Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Neurobiology and Anatomy here at U of R. She spoke on the ever-popular topic: "How I Got Started on the Clinician-Scientist Path and My Adventures Along The Way"

The annual MSTP holiday party was held on Friday, December 5 at the home of MSTP administrator Cathy Senecal-Rice.

Close to 70 students, spouses, children, and significant others attended this festive event. The gift exchange was again a big hit with two gifts very popular: wine and a tie rack (hmm, what does this say about our students?). The Operation game was not seen for the first time in years. Plenty of great appetizers, side dishes and desserts brought by students as well as entrees provided by Wegmans were enjoyed by all.



Thomas Carroll, MD, PhD presented the MSTP dinner seminar on January 27, 2009.

Dr. Carroll is a 2008 graduate of MD/PhD Program, University of Connecticut and a first year Internal Medicine Resident at University of Rochester. He gave a delightful, sometimes hilarious talk on "Insight into the Transition from MD/PhD M4 to Residency".

January 31 brought the monthly social event with snow, cold and snowtubing! A group of



approximately 20 students, families and friends went to PolarWave, a tubing hill in Batavia, NY and had lots of fun flying through the air. Lunch and plenty of hot cocoa was consumed afterward!

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Elias Zambidis, MD, PhD, 1998 graduate of our very own MSTP presented a special luncheon seminar to the MSTP students on February 5, 2009. His talk focused on patient-specific human pluripotent stem cells for modeling and treating hematologic disorders. Dr. Zambidis was in Rochester to be honored by receiving the distinguished Alpha Omega Alpha Alumni award presented by the School of Medicine that evening. He is currently Assistant Professor of Oncology and Pediatrics at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

Drew Scoles (M1) adopted a new kitten last year just before matriculating to the MSTP named Gu ((short for Guglielmo, after Guglielmo Marconi, who won the Nobel peace prize for inventing the telegraph). Gu was just 6 weeks old at the time and fit perfectly in this UR mug! He recently sent a photo of Gu as an adult. Maybe the MSTP should have a mascot?



Drew also competes in many cycling events. See page 11 for details.



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WELCOME!

Medical Scientist Training Program Entering Class 2008



(left to right: Brandon Bader, Adrianne Chesser, Youssef Farhat, Jonathan Langdon, Rialnat "Bisi" Lawal, Tristan Nicholson, Sal Priore, Drew Scoles, Jharon Silva)

Brandon Bader

Brandon grew up in Brandon, South Dakota, a town of 7000 people that is also the 12th largest in the state (however, he was born in Sioux City, IA). He recently graduated from Colorado State University, majoring in biochemistry and receiving a B.S. in May, 2008. Brandon spent all four years of undergrad researching molting in crabs. He loves the outdoors: hiking, biking, skiing, soccer. Whatever time is left after sports, he enjoys spending time with friends.

Adrianne Chesser

Adrianne hails from beautiful Portland, Oregon where she was born. She graduated in 2007 with a B.A. in neuroscience from Carleton College in Minnesota. Adrianne was on the varsity cross country and track teams at Carleton. She also was an active leader for Habitat for Humanity for three years at Carleton. She enjoys camping, hiking, drumming and singing in her spare time. Sounds like a prime candidate for Music Night!

Youssef Farhat

Youssef comes to us from California, having been born in Long Beach and raised in Orange County. He attended the University of California at Irvine, graduating in June, 2008 with a B.S. in biomedical engineering. Youssef's many interests include biking, rollerblading, spending time with friends and family, billiards, racquetball, reading, seeking knowledge. An interesting factoid: Youssef was born Muslim, raised Christian but became Muslim again in college and is very involved in the Muslim community.

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Jonathan Langdon

Jonathan is from Holtsville, NY (Long Island). He received a B.S. in May from SUNY Stony Brook, majoring in physics. Jonathan and wife Melissa moved to Rochester in June so that he could begin a lab rotation with Dr. Stephen McAleavey in biomedical engineering. Jonathan is a self-professed computer geek, who enjoys fixing and tweaking computers. He also has had formal voice and piano training, as well as being involved in numerous summer acting programs; he played the lead in his high school musical and has participated in New York All-State Chorus twice, as well as numerous school and community shows. Jonathan sounds like a prime candidate for both Music Night and the Class Plays!

Rialnat AdeBisi Lawal

Bisi, as she prefers to be called, was born in Houston, but grew up in Brooklyn. Her parents are both from Nigeria and she actually lived there herself for two years before returning to Texas. She is quite the world-traveler, having been to Paris, Turkey, London, and Amsterdam. She received a B.S. in Biology from Rutgers University in May, 2008. Bisi is an accomplished cultural dancer, who also enjoys yoga and paintball. We may have some good competition at the next MSTP paintball outing!

Tristan Nicholson

Tristan had a very strong connection to Rochester, which is why she applied here: Tara Arndt Wenger! In fact, she and Tara are best friends and have known each other since high school. Ironically, Tara graduated this past June and Tristan started the MSTP by doing an early lab rotation beginning May 15 in Dr. Jon Mink's lab. Tristan was born and raised in Seattle, receiving a B.A. in 2001 from University of Washington in anthropology. She moved to Colorado to become a professional snowboarder and ski patroller! She also enjoys downhill, telemark and Nordic skiing, as well as running, soccer, hiking, backpacking, mountain biking and whitewater rafting. She has already impressed senior MSTP student, Sol Shaftel with her mountain biking skills!

Salvatore Priore

Sal recently completed second year medical school here at SMD. After spending last summer (2007) in Dr. Doug Turner's lab, he decided to apply to the MSTP. Sal was born and raised here in Rochester, attending SUNY Geneseo where he earned a B.S. in biochemistry in 2006. Sal's hobbies include singing in the Eastman/Rochester Chorus, cooking, reading, camping, eating goose liver (foie gras) every day (if affordable and it didn't give him an MI), and playing squash. He has two pet ferrets, Hellen and Hugo. An interesting factoid: Sal worked part-time last year at the Monroe County Medical Examiner's Office, investigating deaths and helping with autopsies. One of his life's goals is to visit a new country every year.

Drew Scoles

Drew completed his undergraduate work at UR, graduating in May, 2008 with a B.S. degree in biomedical engineering. Drew is fluent in Italian after studying abroad for 4 weeks in Padua, Italy. He was drawn to UR for its optics/vision science programs, as he hopes to go into that field eventually. He volunteers for "Unite for Sight" community organization to help educate school kids about their eyes, helping a group "Project Eye Care" carry out free eye exams and partnering with UR Well, a medical student group. Drew enjoys cycling (he was Cycling Team President of Club Sports) and running in his free time. He just completed a very successful cyclocross season earning a medal for third place in the NYS championships! Last summer, he adopted a Maine Coon cat named Gu. See page 10 for details and photos.

Jharon Silva

Jharon is also very familiar with SMD. He originally came to Rochester as a participant in the PREP program under Dr. Steve Dewhurst's mentorship. He just completed one year of graduate school in the Microbiology & Immunology Graduate Program in Dr. Dewhurst's lab. Jharon grew up in the Bronx and received a B.A. in biology from CUNY Hunter College (MSTP alumni Toni Eyssallenne's alma mater!). Jharon enjoys playing with his two dogs, as well as spending time with his fiancée, Ariane, who will be graduating from Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine soon.

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STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

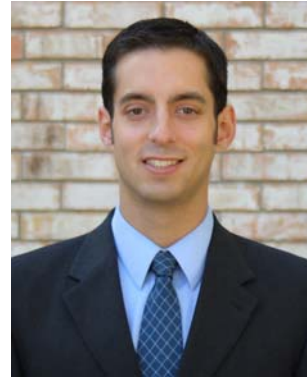
Sol Shaftel
Class of 2009

"The Road Less Traveled"

As MD/PhD students, we have decided to take the road less traveled. We've embarked upon a long, but seemingly straightforward path towards reaching our academic dreams. As I reach the end of my training at the University of Rochester I find myself reflecting upon the journey that has taken me to where I am now, and all the interesting experiences along the way.

My own path was not straightforward and included some interesting turns and unexpected destinations along the way. At times when I lost track of the "big picture", I repeatedly found comfort in the nature of our vocation - the lifelong learner. I feel this is the most incredible aspect of what we do and I derive the greatest satisfaction from this ideal. In my time here I learned that it is the journey of the lifelong learner, not the destination, from which we can derive pleasure. As we progress through the program our ultimate destination isn't always that clear, but each of us will learn much along the way. In my own experiences I learned a great deal about medicine, life and about myself. I believe that I grew personally through overcoming many academic and personal challenges. I learned much about my true motivations, sense of personal satisfaction, and achieved better emotional intelligence.

As I get closer to my next big transition into residency, I'm drawn to the memories of what truly makes our program so special - the individuals who have aided my journey. We are quite fortunate to be exposed to so many passionate teachers, brilliant researchers, caring mentors, and outstanding clinicians who are so easily accessible and generous of their time. When approaching a fork in the road, it is these people who have inspired and prepared me for each new turn. This coupled with our incredible program administration provides us with a great family supporting our progress.



As I look back now on my long journey through the MSTP at the University of Rochester, I almost can't believe all the places I've been, all the obstacles I've overcome, and how much I've grown along the way. I'm excited to set out on my next journey into ophthalmology residency. I'm confident that the superb academic training I've received here and skills as an experienced lifelong learner will take me on many future exciting journeys.

With a gentle smile, I recount the words of Robert Frost's poem *The Road Not Taken*

"I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference."

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HONORS AND AWARDS

Keith Olsen (G2 in IMV, Patricia Sime, M.D., advisor) was chosen to receive a Keystone Symposia scholarship of \$1000 in travel expenses to attend the Fibrosis meeting January 20-25, 2009 in Keystone, Colorado. Keith presented his work on pulmonary fibrosis at this meeting.

Nancy Ann Oberheim (M3; graduate work in neuroscience, Maiken Nedergaard, Ph.D., advisor) successfully defended her thesis on June 18, 2008. Her title was "*The functional organization of astrocytes in normal and epileptic brain*". Congratulations, Dr. Oberheim!

Alex Pearson (G4 in Biostatistics, Derick Peterson, Ph.D., advisor) successfully defended his thesis on Wednesday, October 1, 2008. Thesis title was: "*Subset selection for high-dimensional data, with applications to gene array data*". Congratulations, Dr. Pearson!

Laurie Robak (M3; graduate work in neuroscience in Dr. Roman Gigers' lab): successful thesis defense was held on 12/3/08. Laurie's defense title was: "*The structural basis of the interaction between myelin-associated glycoprotein and nogo receptor 2: design of novel therapeutic agents for spinal cord injury*". Much celebration was enjoyed two days later at the MSTP holiday party. Congratulations, Dr. Robak!

Solomon Shaftel (M4; graduate work in NBA in Dr. Kerry O'Banion/John Olschowka's labs) received the illustrious Alpha Omega Alpha (AOA) award at the annual dinner held February 5, 2009. Also, the alumni AOA was awarded to one of our own MSTP alumni, Dr. Elias Zambidis from the Class of '98, currently at Johns Hopkins (see Alumni News section below). Congratulations, Dr. Shaftel!

PUBLICATIONS

KATE EISENBERG (M3; graduate work in Epidemiology, Dr. Ed vanWijingaarden, advisor):

Eisenberg KW, Szilagyi PG, Fairbrother G, Griffin MR, Staat M, Shone LP, Weinberg GA, Hall CB, Poehling KA, Edwards KM, Lofthus G, Fisher SG, Bridges CB, Iwane MK; New Vaccine Surveillance Network. 2008. Vaccine effectiveness against laboratory-confirmed influenza in children 6 to 59 months of age during the 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 influenza seasons. *Pediatrics*. 122:911-919. This article was also mentioned in the 11/5/08 edition of the Democrat and Chronicle, as well as in UPI: http://www.upi.com/Health_News/2008/11/04/Past_flu_shots_effective_in_young_kids/UPI-51101225857173/

KOFI MENSAH (G3 in Microbiology & Immunology, Dr. Eddie Schwarz, advisor):

Mensah KA, Schwarz EM, Ritchlin CT. 2008. Altered bone remodeling in psoriatic disease. *Current Reports in Rheumatology* 10:311-317.

Mensah KA, Li J, Schwarz EM. 2008. The emerging field of osteoimmunology. 2008. *Immunologic Research* (in press)

Mensah KA, Chiu Y, Ritchlin CT, Schwarz EM. 2008. Differential expression of fusion-related genes correlates with the osteoclastogenic potential of DC-STAMP^{lo} vs. DC-STAMP^{hi} precursors. *Arthritis and Rheumatism* 58:S646. Presented at the American College of Rheumatology Scientific Meeting, San Francisco, CA, October 24-29.

Mensah KA, Chiu Y, Ritchlin CT, Schwarz EM. 2008. IFN- α effects on expression of fusion-related molecules in osteoclast precursors: insights into non-erosive SLE arthropathy. *Arthritis and Rheumatism*

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58:S668. Presented at the American College of Rheumatology Scientific Meeting, San Francisco, CA, October 24-29.

Chiu G, **Mensah K**, Durham R, Feng C, Schwarz E, Ritchlin CT. 2008. Dendritic cell-specific transmembrane protein (DC-STAMP) is a biomarker for osteoclast precursors in psoriatic arthritis. *Arthritis and Rheumatism* 58:S945. Presented by G. Chiu at the American College of Rheumatology Scientific Meeting, San Francisco, CA, October 24-29.

AMISH NAIK (M4; graduate work in Pathology (Orthopaedics), Dr. Regis O'Keefe, advisor):

Naik AA, Xie C, Zuscik MJ, Kingsley P, Schwarz EM, Awad H, Guldborg R, Drissi H, Puzas JE, Boyce B, Zhang X, O'Keefe RJ. 2009. Reduced COX-2 expression in aged mice is associated with impaired fracture healing. *J. Bone and Mineral Research* 24:251-264.

SCOTT PESLAK (G1 in Pathology, Dr. James Palis, advisor):

Garcia-Bates TM, **Peslak SA**, Baglione CJ, Maggiorini SB, Bernstein SH, Phipps RP. 2008. Peroxisome proliferator-activated receptor gamma overexpression and knockdown: impact on human B-cell lymphoma proliferation and survival. *Cancer Immunol. Immunother.* E-published ahead of print.

REBECCA PORTER (G2 in Pathology, Dr. Laura Calvi, advisor):

McGrath KE, Kingsley PD, Koniski AD, **Porter RL**, Bushnell TP, Palis J. 2008. Enucleation of primitive erythroid cells generates a transient population of "pyrenocytes" in the mammalian fetus. *Blood* 111:2409-2417.

NANCY ANN OBERHEIM (M3; G in Neuroscience, Dr. Maiken Nedergaard, advisor):

Takano T, **Oberheim N**, Cotrina ML, Nedergaard M. *Astrocytes and Ischemic Injury*. *Stroke*. 2008 Dec 8; E-published ahead of print.

Ye ZC, **Oberheim N**, Kettenmann H, Ransom BR. 2009. Pharmacological "cross-inhibition" of connexin hemichannels and swelling activated anion channels. *Glia* 57:258-269. This manuscript also has one of Nancy Ann's photos as the cover of the journal!

LAURIE ROBAK (M3; graduate work in Neuroscience, Dr. Roman Giger, advisor):

Giger RJ, Venkatesh K, Chivatakarn O, Raiker SJ, **Robak L**, Hofer T, Lee H, Rader C. 2008. Mechanisms of CNS myelin inhibition: evidence for distinct and neuronal cell type specific receptor systems. *Restor. Neurol Neurosci.* 26:97-115.

Lee H, Raiker SJ, Venkatesh K, Geary R, **Robak LA**, Zhang Y, Yeh HH, Shrager P, Giger RJ. 2008. Synaptic function for the Nogo-66 receptor NgR1: regulation of dendritic spine morphology and activity-dependent synaptic strength. *J Neurosci.* 28:2753-2765

DANNY ROGERS (G2 in NBA, Dr. Nina Schor, advisor):

Rogers D, Nylander K, Mi Z, Hu T, Schor N. 2008. Molecular predictors of human nervous system cancer responsiveness to enediyne chemotherapy. *Cancer Chemotherapy Pharmacology* 62:699-706.

TurtleQuill is a literary journal for students, by students. Articles, poetry, photography are all done by current students. The editorial staff this year has 4 MSTP students: **Imran Punekar**, Editor-in-Chief (G1 in NBA), **Bisi Lawal** (M1), Layout and Publicity, **Mercedes Szpunar** (G2 in Pathology), Treasurer, and **Kofi Mensah** (G3 in Microbiology & Immunology), Webmaster. Several reviewers for the journal are also MSTP students: **Adrienne Chessier** (M1) and **Babak Razavi** (M4). Babak and **Jonas Wilson-Leedy** (M2) have several photographs of their own in the Fall, 2008 issue on Life and Death.

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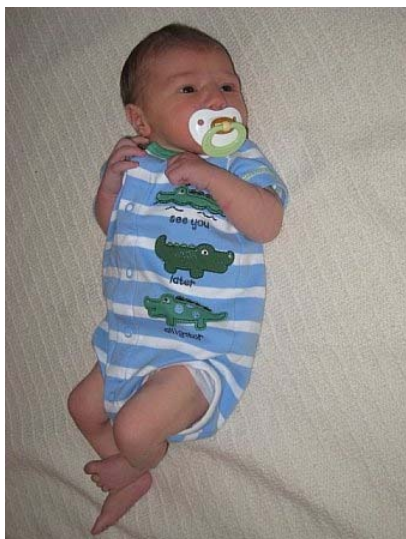
Alumni News

Thank you to everyone who responded to our plea to contact us. Feel free to keep us up-to-date. Enjoy reading about your fellow alumni. We hope to hear from many more. Please send correspondence to: cathy_senecalrice@urmc.rochester.edu

Tara Arndt Wenger, M.D. (2008), Ph.D. (2006) and husband Jesse Wenger, M.D. (2008) recently returned to Rochester and the UR to visit good friend **Tristan Nicholson** (M1 in MSTP). Tara gave a lecture to first year medical students in the Molecules to Cells course on "Teratology". A small play on words, perhaps?

Robert Colbert, M.D., Ph.D. (1987) recently joined the NIH in September, 2008 as Senior Investigator and Chief of NIAMS' newly formed Pediatric Translational Research Branch. Prior to that, he was on the faculty at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center in the Division of Rheumatology beginning in 1994. He also served as Associate Director of the University of Cincinnati's Physician-Scientist (M.D.-Ph.D.) Training Program from 1998-2008. He was promoted to full Professor in 2005 and served on the Executive Committee of the Center for Immunological Research and as Director of the Cincinnati Children's Trustee and Procter Scholar Awards Programs from 2006-2008. Dr. Colbert was Division Director in Rheumatology from 2006-2008. His research in the Pediatric Translational Research Branch (PTRB) aims to understand more about spondyloarthritis, an immune-mediated inflammatory disease. Congratulations on your new position!

Julie Gunzler (formerly Richards), M.D. ('04), Ph.D. ('02 in microbiology & immunology in Dr. Steve Dewhursts' lab) and husband Steve became the proud parents of their second child Brian Mathew born on 8/6/08, 8lbs., 3 oz. Brian joins big sister Alison. The Gunzlers recently moved from Oregon to Ohio where Steve joined Case Western University. Julie is currently a stay-at-home mom but plans to do a pediatric fellowship.



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Ramothea Webster, M.D. ('07), Ph.D. ('04) recently completed a postdoctoral fellowship as a research analyst at the Office of Policy and Planning at University of Maryland School of Medicine. Ramothea also



began a Family Medicine residency in Queens, NY in July, 2008. She and son Joshua (age 4) enjoy spending time together. She tells us: "My goal during residency is to initiate a research network that will allow physicians to collaborate with each other on health projects that can benefit their community. After my residency program in Family Medicine, I plan on obtaining my Executive MBA degree in the field of healthcare management. My long-term career goal is to formulate family wellness centers within inner-city communities. These wellness centers will encompass medical teams that incorporate mental, physical, and spiritual health to healing while addressing each individual as a whole entity and not as an organ system."

Elias Zambidis, M.D. ('98), Ph.D. ('98) returned to Rochester for the first time since graduation to receive the AOA alumni award from the School of Medicine. The annual AOA banquet was held at the Genesee Valley Club on February 5, 2009.

As an added bonus, Dr. Zambidis also spoke to the MSTP students at a special lunch time seminar that day. He was extremely positive about the long training period and gave them sound advice on survival techniques.

MD/PhD Alumni – Let us hear from you.

Our goal is to hear something from each graduate of the program. When we hear from you we will **bold** your name as a sign of acknowledgement. We encourage you to contact us and watch us **boldly** grow. **We need current e-mail addresses for names in RED.** Please contact Cathy Senecal-Rice, Administrator, MD/PhD Program at: cathy_senecalrice@URMC.Rochester.edu

Ackerman, Kurt D., M.D. 1991, Ph.D. 1990
Adam, Jamie, M.D. 2001, Ph.D. 2000
Anolik, Jennifer H., M.D. 1996, Ph.D. 1994

Arceci, Robert J., M.D. 1981, Ph.D. 1980
Bahler, David W., M.D., Ph.D. 1987
Bellizzi, Matthew, M.D., Ph.D., 2007
Berk, Bradford C., M.D., Ph.D. 1981

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Bleicher, Paul A., M.D., Ph.D. 1983
Bliss, Joseph, M.D., Ph.D. 1998
Breneman, Stephen, M.D. 1998, Ph.D. 1996
Brenner, Gary J., M.D., Ph.D. 1995
Burkard, Mark, M.D. 2002, Ph.D. 2000
Burkat, Paul, M.D. 2003, Ph.D. 2001
Cheng, Shinta, M.D. 1995, Ph.D. 1994
Chin, Michael T., M.D. 1991, Ph.D. 1989
Colbert, Robert A., M.D. 1987, Ph.D. 1986
Collins, Tucker O., M.D., Ph.D. 1981
Dedon, Peter C., M.D., Ph.D. 1987
Deng, Sophie, M.D., Ph.D. 2001
DiLoreto, David, M.D. 1997, Ph.D. 1995
DiPersio, John F., M.D., Ph.D. 1980
Dragone, Leonard L., M.D. 1996, Ph.D. 1994
Dubin, Marc J., M.D. 2004, Ph.D. 2002
Dunn, Michael G., M.D., Ph.D. 1983
Feulner, Lisa Kale, M.D., Ph.D. 1995
Froehler, Michael, M.D. 2004, Ph.D. 2002
Gallo, Richard L., M.D., Ph.D. 1986
Gambello, Michael J., M.D., Ph.D. 1993
Goldstein, Barry J., M.D., Ph.D. 1982
Goldstein, Barry M., M.D. 1981, Ph.D. 1982
Greene, James, M.D., Ph.D. 1998
Grimsrud, Christopher, M.D., Ph.D. 2000
Guillet, Ernest G., Jr., M.D., Ph.D. 1979
Guillet, Ronnie B., M.D., Ph.D. 1980
Hall, Craig G., MD-PhD, 1984
Hallows, Kenneth R., M.D. 1995, Ph.D. 1994
Halterman, Marc, M.D. 2002, Ph.D. 2002
Hoefen, Ryan, M.D., Ph.D. 2005
Hsu, Lewis L., M.D., Ph.D. 1988
Huang, Willis, M.D. 2005, Ph.D. 2003
Joseph, Luc, M.D. 1996, Ph.D. 1994
Junig, Jeffrey, M.D. 1987, Ph.D., 1986
Kasckow, John, M.D. 1987, Ph.D. 1986
Kenny, Alan, M.D. 2002, Ph.D. 2000
Kim, James, M.D., Ph.D. 1999
Kim, Jin, M.D. 2000, Ph.D. 1998
Kimbrough, John, M.D., Ph.D. 2000
Koh, Sookyong, M.D. 1991, Ph.D. 1989
Kruse, John, M.D. 1990, Ph.D. 1989
Kulas, Donald, M.D. 1997, Ph.D. 1995
Lerner, Robert M., M.D. 1977, Ph.D. 1978
Lesser, Harold, M.D., Ph.D. 1989
Lichtman, Andrew H., M.D., Ph.D. 1981
Lim, Kuei-Cheng, M.D., Ph.D., 2007
Love, Paul E., M.D., Ph.D. 1987
Malchoff, Carl D., M.D., Ph.D. 1978
Martin, Stephen S. M.D., Ph.D. 1981
Massa, Stephen M., M.D., Ph.D. 1984
Mathews, David H., M.D. 2003, Ph.D. 2002
Maytin, Edward V., M.D., Ph.D. 1985
McAdam, Alexander J., M.D. 1995, Ph.D. 1994
McFarland, Nikolaus, M.D. 2002, Ph.D. 2000
Mendelsohn, Steven L., M.D., Ph.D. 1978
Mendler, Jason, M.D. 2005, Ph.D. 2003
Milano, Michael, M.D., Ph.D. 2000
Nasir, Adnan, M.D. 1995, Ph.D. 1994
Navon, Samuel E., M.D., Ph.D. 1989
Nead, Michael, M.D., Ph.D. 1999
Nguyen, Minh-Doan Thi, M.D. '02, Ph.D. 2000
Nichols, Alan R., M.D., Ph.D. 1980
Nierenberg, Jay, M.D. 1997, Ph.D. 2001
Pallant, Adam D., M.D. 1991, Ph.D. 1990
Palmer, Edward, M.D., Ph.D. 1980
Peale, Franklin V., Jr., Ph.D. 1989, M.D. 1990
Phung, Thuy L., M.D., Ph.D. 1999
Podell, David N., M.D., Ph.D. 1980
Profenno, Louis, M.D., Ph.D. 1999
Proweller, Aaron, M.D., Ph.D. 1998
Querfurth, Henry W., M.D., Ph.D. 1983
Ribes, Julie A., M.D., Ph.D. 1990
Richards, Julie, M.D. 2004, Ph.D. 2002
Roberts, Alice, M.D., Ph.D. 1999
Roda, Ricardo, M.D. 2005, Ph.D. 2003
Roshal, Mikhail, M.D. 2005, Ph.D. 2003
Rosier, Randy N., M.D., Ph.D. 1978
Rubin, Edward M., M.D., Ph.D. 1980
Rumbaugh, Jeffrey, M.D., Ph.D. 2000
Sandhu, Faheem A., M.D. 1995, Ph.D. 1994
Scully, Sean P., M.D. 1986, Ph.D. 1985
Seed, Patrick, M.D., Ph.D. 1998
Senyk, Oksana, M.D., Ph.D. 1984
Shimamura, Akiko, M.D. 1991, Ph.D. 1990
Snyder, Lawrence H., M.D., Ph.D. 1992
Storozynsky, Eugene, M.D. 2000, Ph.D. 1998
Tan (Formerly Cheun), Jane E., M.D. 1995, Ph.D. 1993
Thertulien, Raymond, M.D. 1994, Ph.D. 1992
Thom, Stephen R., M.D., Ph.D. 1981
Toribara, Neil W., M.D. 1981, Ph.D. 1982
Waldman, David L., M.D., Ph.D. 1988
Webster, Ramothea, M.D. 2007, Ph.D. 2004
Wenger, Tara Arndt, M.D. 2008, Ph.D. 2006
Williams, Joseph, M.D., Ph.D. 1989
Williams, Marshall T., M.D., Ph.D. 1980
Wilson, Robert E., M.D., Ph.D. 1989
Wingrove, Douglas E., M.D. 1987, Ph.D. 1986
Winn, Virginia Dragone, M.D. 1996, Ph.D. 1994
Zambidis, Elias, M.D., Ph.D. 1998

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We hope you have enjoyed reading about your fellow alumni and current MD/PhD students. We thank everyone who wrote and sent in pictures and hope it will inspire others to do the same. If you would like to communicate with any of your fellow alumni, please send an email with the name of the person to Cathy Senecal-Rice: cathy_senecalrice@urmc.rochester.edu. This may be an avenue for current MD/PhD Program students to network with alumni that have a common interest. In this way, privacy is secured and the recipient has the choice whether to reply or not. Again, thank you for participating.

This Newsletter was designed and distributed with the direction and approval of the Medical Scientist Training Program Executive Committee. If you do not wish to receive future mailings please e-mail this request to Catherine Senecal-Rice at: cathy_senecalrice@urmc.rochester.edu and your name will promptly be removed from our distribution list.