Double Helix

Biology Department Newsletter
Notes from the Chair

Welcome to the future! As we congratulate our graduates, we are preparing to welcome the first class of students in which most will have been born in this century! We here in the Biology Department have been doing our best to keep ahead of the accelerating curve. One thing we know about the future: it is interdisciplinary. The biology department is playing a major role in CSM’s development of interdisciplinary programs in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (because we are getting closer and closer to the chemical machinery of life); in Neuroscience (because the brain is arguably, in the words of Francis Collins, “the most complicated biological structure in the known universe”); and in Environmental Science (because we still are the stewards of just this one planet). As an ecologist, I might challenge Dr. Collins and claim the biosphere itself is the most complicated! Our biology majors are building the fundamental understanding of biological processes which will lie at the center of innovation in this 21st Century in healthcare, in technology development, and, yes, in finding a way to live together comfortably and sustainably on this planet. We send our best wishes to the class of 2017, as you go on to shape the future and join our alumni already out there contributing. Back here at Belmont, we will be excitedly preparing for research projects with the seniors of 2018, and welcoming the first class of completely 21st-Century students.

Graduation 2017!

18 Biology
4 Neuroscience
3 BMB
3 ENV

Graduation!!

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More photos can be seen on our Facebook page, Serotonin Helix.
CSM Awards

CSM Awards were held in the Ayers Academic Center on April 10, 2017. Dr. John Niedzwiecki, Dr. Darlene Panvini and Dr. Robert Grammer, presented awards to eleven deserving students, from freshmen to graduating seniors.

Freshman Achievement Award in Biology
Alexander Wharton

Ronald M. Barrett Pre-Health Award
Priyanka Kumar

Donald R. Ramage Award for Service to the Learning Community in Biology
Rachel Hongo

Robert T. Grammer Research Award
Anna Anderson and Anna Margaret McDonnell

Outstanding Student in Biology
Kerry Sommers

Biology Scholarship Award
Rebecca Derby

David R. Hill Environmental Service Award
Sandra Bojic

Freshman Achievement Award in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
Kailey Shannon

Outstanding Student in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
Sarah Maxwell

Benjamin Walloch Endowed Scholarship for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
Isria Jarrett

Congratulations to Spring 2017 Alpha Chi Inductees!

Biology
Rachel Hongo
Tori Hongo
Cody Rasner

Alpha Chi membership is the highest academic honor awarded by Belmont University. It is an international, interdisciplinary honors society open to junior and senior university students who rank in the top 10 percent of their class.

TAS Awards

Tennessee Academy of Sciences Regional Meeting,
Belmont University, April 8, 2017.

Student Presentations
Botany, Zoology, Ecology:
First place - Anna Anderson and Curtis Brown
Third place - Joanna Sorrell
Honorable Mention - Jaquantey Bowens from TSU

Cellular/Micro/Health Medical Sciences:
First place - Brian Song
Second Place - Kerry Sommers
Third Place - Mohamed Darwish
Honorable Mention - Madeline Johnson

Joanna Sorrell; Anna Anderson; Jaquantey Bowens; Curtis Brown

Kerry Sommers; Mohamed Darwish; Brian Song; Madeline Johnson
Spring Semester
Biology Speakers

This spring, students and faculty had opportunities to hear from numerous speakers, including:

Neuroscience Speaker:
Letimicia Fears, M.S.
Tennessee State University
"Investigating the Effects of Chromobacterium violaceum Violcein at the Human Serotonin 2C Receptor"

Environmental Science Lecture Series Speaker
Heidi Brown, Ph.D., MPH, University of Arizona, Tucson
“Changing climate of vector-borne disease”

BMB Series Speaker
D. Borden Lacy, Ph.D.
Professor of Pathology, Microbiology and Immunology, Department of Biochemistry
Vanderbilt University School of Medicine
“Structures and functions of the Clostridium difficile toxins”

Biology Spring Speaker Series
William Sutton, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Wildlife Ecology
Department of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
College of Agriculture, Human and Natural Sciences
Tennessee State University
“The Importance of Spatial Scale for Amphibian and Reptile Conservation”

CSM Colloquium Series
Vincent A. Cobb, Ph.D.
Professor of Biology, Department of Biology
Middle Tennessee State University
“Where to Set the Thermostat? Lessons from Snakes”

Biology Alumni Speakers
Beth Bowman, Ph.D. (08) is Assistant Director of the Vanderbilt Biomedical Graduate Program.
“Biomedical Graduate and Medical Programs: which is right for me?”

Morgan Turner (16) is currently attending the Masters of Genetic Counseling program at the University of Alabama Birmingham. Ms. Turner spoke to Dr. Chris Barton’s Molecular Genetics class about her studies and careers in genetics and genetics counseling.

Alumni: if you would be interested in talking with current students about your career path and experiences, please contact us.

ASB Conference

Three Biology faculty and eight students in Biology, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Neuroscience, and Environmental Science attended the joint meeting of the Association of Southeastern Biologists and Beta Beta Beta in Montgomery, AL on March 29-April 1, 2017. The faculty attending were Darlene Panvini, Chris Barton, and Matt Heard. Three students received awards in the Beta Beta Beta Division II oral presentations: Anna Margaret McDonnell (1st place), Brian Song (3rd place), and Gary Noel (Honorable Mention). Research presentations covered a range of biology and teaching topics.

More photos can be seen on our Facebook page, Serotonin Helix.

Belmont Scholarship and Awards Day Convocation - April 12, 2017

Congratulations to the following Biology students!

The Williams-Murray First Year Writing Awards:
Alexander Wharton (“Frankenstein: The Incorrect Origin of Man’s Fear of Androids”)

The Third Year Award, Leadership and Service:
Joseph LaMartina
Congratulations to our seniors!!

Here is just a partial list of places our seniors are headed after graduation. Watch our Facebook page as we update graduating seniors information this summer!

Kerry Sommers (BIO) “After graduation I will be selling real estate as a Buying Specialist with Keller Williams in Nashville.”

Sandra Bojic (ENV) “I will be pursuing my master’s in biology at Austin Peay State University in the fall!”

Krystin Estes Forbis (BIO) “I will be moving to Sigonella, Province of Catania on the island of Sicily, Italy on May 31st. I will be volunteering off and on for different marine research NGOs in Italy. I will be on multiple 2 week to 3 month cruises surveying different whale and dolphin populations in the Mediterranean with Frontier and Cetacean Sanctuary. I also plan on working part time on the military base in the veterinary since the cetacean cruises happen in the summer months.”

Curtis Brown (BIO) “I will be attending the Master of Science in Nursing program at Vanderbilt University in order to become an Adult-Gerontological Acute Care Nurse Practitioner.”

Madeline Johnson (BIO) “Beginning this fall (august 2017) I will be starting a 2 year Women's Health Nurse Practitioner program at Vanderbilt.”

Brian Song (BIO) “I'll be going to Trevecca Nazarene University for their Physician Assistant Program starting in May until August 2019!”

Sarah Maxwell (BIO) “UTHSC. I am going to be starting at University of Tennessee Health Science Center in August. I'm starting in the Pharmaceutical Science Ph.D. program with a concentration in Medicinal Chemistry.”

William Muhic (BIO) “I'm attending Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine in the fall.”

Mohamed Darwish (BIO) Attending UT Medical School.

Anna Anderson (BIO) Attending Southern College of Optometry in Memphis, Tennessee.

Joanna Sorrell (BIO) “I am moving to Berkley, California in the fall. I have been accepted into the Natural Chef program at Bauman College. I hope to stay for at least a year and travel all over the coast.”

Stacey Crockett (BMB) A research assistant for a neonatal research lab at Vanderbilt.

Ryan Tapley (BIO) “grad school for my masters in education at Belmont”

Austin DeMaagd (BIO) Attending DeBusk College of Medicine

Gary Noel (BIO) “I will be attending graduate school (M.S.) for Biology in the fall of this year at MTSU.”

Emily Shearon (BIO) will be working on project at Vandy HIV clinic.
Alumni Corner

Hensley Barnes (15) “I accepted University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, and I will be pursuing my doctorate in Occupational Therapy as of Fall 2017 (will graduate with my OTD in 2020). I am so thankful for every member of the Belmont Biology department! I would not be where I am with out each of you guys!”

Parker Tumlin (16) completing his first year of medical school at UT-Memphis working in radiation oncology; participating in St. Jude's POE program this summer

Liberty Foye (13) has been matched at INOVa Fairfax Hospital in Falls Church, VA in the Pediatrics program.

Shea Harrison (13) matched into general surgery at Washington University, St. Louis, MO.

Lindsay Millward (16) is attending Central Washington University and working on her Masters Thesis entitled, “Assessing Connectivity Improvements across an Interstate Highway by testing use of habitat features by small mammals”

Parth Majmudar (13) was accepted at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, OH.

Jimmy Berthaud (06) Recently became board certified in Neurology, currently in the middle of the first of two years of a Vascular Neurology fellowship at the University of Virginia. Next month Jimmy and the program director will begin the process of forming a research plan. “My intent is to choose clinical trials in Stroke as my main focus. The majority of the second year of fellowship is spent doing research on a more independent basis. I’ve discovered that I enjoy teaching Neurology so much that I have decided to become a clinician-educator and become involved in medical student/residency education...The hospital is truly a hidden gem as I have already seen numerous less common/rare neurological diseases that I could only read about in a textbook.

Patsy Vaden (83) Currently a science teacher at Franklin High in Williamson County. She participated in the 2016 Teacher Conservation Workshop at the San Diego Zoo Institute for Conservation Research. “Lindsay Millward (16) was one of my high school ecology students! It was great seeing her recognition. I also saw Dr. David Hill, former professor of biology at Belmont, following the Franklin’s Veteran’s Day Parade in November. Dr. Hill was my biology advisor, ecology and microbiology professor, and led the Senior Seminar class. He is a veteran and I had the privilege of serving him and other veterans with my DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution) chapter luncheon provided in their honor.”

Jordan Helms (15) “EXCITING NEWS! I have accepted a position with Prism Health at @rollinspublichealth (Rollins Public Health, Atlanta, GA). I will be joining the ICON+ team as Public Health Program Associate. I’m ready to apply the skills and knowledge I have learned in graduate school and hopefully make a change in the world!” Jordan just received his Master’s Degree in Public Health from Emory University.

NCUR

National Council of Undergraduate Research

Dr. Chris Barton (Biology) and Dr. Jennifer Thomas (Biology) and two of their students, Sarah Anderson and Anna Margaret McDonnell, both senior Biology majors, traveled to the University of Memphis in Memphis, Tennessee to present at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) on April 6-8. NCUR, established in 1987, is dedicated to promoting undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative activity in all fields of study by sponsoring an annual conference for students. With more than 4,000 undergraduate students in attendance, this is the largest annual gathering of undergraduate research students. Anderson presented her senior research project, “Examining the Effect of Convallatoxin, a Cardiac Glycoside, on the Growth of Colorectal Cancer Cells” and McDonnell presented her senior research project, “Anti-proliferative Effects of Epigallocatechin-gallate and Enoxacin on Cervical Cancer-derived Cells in Culture”. Drs. Baron and Thomas participated in the Faculty-Administrator Network Sessions and led a workshop entitled, “Envisioning, Implementing, and Assessing a Required Undergraduate Research Program in Biology”.

Sara Anderson; Chris Barton; Anna Margaret McDonnell; Jennifer Thomas
Biology Alumni Update

We want to hear from you! Please take a moment to fill out the information below and send to us.

Name ____________________________________ Graduation Year ________________

Address ______________________________________________________________________

City __________________________ State __________ Zip Code __________ Phone __________

Email address ________________________________________________________________

Employment __________________________________ Title ____________________________

Recent promotion, honor, award, family activity? ______________________________________

Contact Us!

- Have any comments about the newsletter or the Department?
- An alum with an update on activities?
- Like further information about the Department, its offerings or activities?

Please contact us by one of the following e-mail addresses or by postal service.

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