



BIOSPHERE

The Weekly Bulletin of Biology

Biology Colloquium: Friday, 4 September 2015, 2:00 pm in CR 5125

“Avian Ecomorphology and Why Birds Waddle”

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No Classes Next Monday

Enjoy the Labor Day holiday!

New Publication

PLOS ONE has published, “PEAK1 acts as a molecular switch to regulate context-dependent TGFbeta responses in breast cancer,” by **Megan Agajanian, Anaamika Campeau, Malachia Hoover, Alexander Hou, Daniel Brambilla, Sa La Kim, Richard Klemke, and Jonathan Kelber**. Certain cancers metastasize responding improperly to naturally occurring hormones, namely transforming growth factor beta (TGFbeta). In this paper, the Kelber lab has identified a new protein-kinase target (PEAK1) in cancer cells that can be used to identify these mis-wired cells. When blocked, these can reverse the response of cells to TGFbeta, which should prevent metastasis. Future studies will use agents that reduce PEAK1 levels in cancer cells in an attempt to block faulty TGFbeta signaling in animal models of

metastatic breast cancer.

Annual Awards

During graduation time last May, many very important awards and honors were bestowed upon Biology students. Biology congratulates all the winners!

Tania Benjamin won the Wolfson Award, the university’s highest honor bestowed upon a graduating senior. We are very proud to have had Tania as one of our majors.

At the College level, **Erica Holdridge** won the Mack I. Johnson Memorial Research Award, which honors an outstanding grad student who is accepted into a Ph.D. program. Erica is now attending Yale University.

The Department of Biology also gives out a number of awards, selecting among the hundreds of Biology students.

- **Nicole Looper** won the Bennett Bickford Award, which goes to a

student with great promise as a biology teacher.

- **Megan Agajanian** won the Bianchi Outstanding Biology Graduate Student Award. She also won the Hugo & Irma Oppenheimer Biology Department Award.
- **Erica Holdridge** won the Bianchi Outstanding Graduate Research Award.
- **Loni Hands** won the Bianchi Outstanding Graduate Teaching Award.
- **Menaga Shanmugam** won the Alumni Prize for Undergraduate Research in Areas of Cellular, Molecular, Physiological, or Developmental Biology.
- **Michael Mousselli** won the Alumni Prize for Undergraduate Research in Areas of Ecology, Evolution, Ethology, or Systematics.
- **Giancarlo Cardoza** won the Judge Julian Beck award to an Outstanding Graduating Senior.
- **Lourdes Espinoza** won the Ian & Kathy Leslie Scholarship in Biology.
- **Menaga Shanmugam** won the award for Undergraduate Student Graduating with Honors in Biology.

Last May, some additional awards and scholarships were recognized, awards that are funded by extraordinary donors or based on study of a specific topic. *Biosphere* will feature those honorees in forthcoming issues.

BIOL 106L Manual Goes Digital

In response to popular demand and at long last, the BIOL 106L lab manual has moved into the multimedia digital era, thanks to the hard work of Dr. **Paul Wilson** over the past summer. There will be additional revisions in the future, but the big jump was made this semester.

Past students are welcome to download the new iBook to their iPads (don't try this on a PC). It is a large file (it contains many excellent hi-res images and programs), so it may take up to 10–30 min to download depending on your WiFi connection. Tap [HERE](#) just once and wait for 3–15 min. A large box should appear with tiny gray print that says 330 MB and larger blue print that says Open in “iBooks.” Tap the latter once, wait for about 3 min, and Voilà!

The iBook includes a number of widgets and lessons that take advantage of organisms found on our campus. This feature will be expanded in future revisions.

If you've been a Biology major for a while, you know that the cost of the iPad is made up by money not spent on paper textbooks, lab manuals, and such. Before the current iBook, students paid about \$50 for the lab manual and about \$50 for an atlas. Now, with an iPad, the iBook is free!

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