

# MCB GSA

SPRING 2018 NEWSLETTER



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We are excited to present our Spring 2018 MCB GSA newsletter! Have ideas for what you would like to see in our next issue, or interested in contributing? Fill out this form to let us know (<https://goo.gl/forms/Fp3atOyTYCA9ftAm1>). In order to make sure you stay updated throughout the semester, make sure to subscribe to the [MCB GSA E-mail list](#). Want to see more from MCB GSA? Support MCB GSA by purchasing a [mug](#) or [sticker](#).



## A Letter from the President

*Jessica Kelliher*

Dear MCBees,

The Spring 2018 semester marked another successful term for the MCB GSA! We added multiple new activities to our regular outreach repertoire, held our annual Rapid Fire! research flash talk competition, and hosted a highly engaging (and, unsurprisingly, highly competitive!) MCB Olympic Games during recruitment. We also celebrated Graduate Student Appreciation Week in style, with Jet's pizza and streaming Disney's Coco in the Charles Miller Auditorium (I'm not crying, you're crying).

Another major highlight was establishing GSA Career Development Week. The GSA Board recognized a need for career development activities for MCB graduate students, so we created Career Week with the goal of providing resources and encouraging you to take an active role in your own professional development. By holding multiple events each day, progressively building from exploring career options to an informational interview from an actively recruiting company, we wanted to ensure there was something for everyone! If you missed out, check out our Career Week website to download presentations from each event and additional handouts: <https://publish.illinois.edu/mcbgrad-gsa/gsa-career-week/>

We are eager to build on this first year's successes and make this a valuable event for you to participate in every spring. Please help us improve by filling out our Career Week survey, open through Friday, July 13: <https://surveys.illinois.edu/sec/1079524>

As always, sincere thanks to those of you who participated, volunteered, and donated this past semester. We hope you are proud of your GSA and all that we accomplish together. With elections on the horizon, I encourage you to consider giving back to the GSA by running for a Board position. The GSA is what we make of it, so our continued success depends on your help!

All the best,  
Jess and the GSA Board



# MCBee Outreach: Expanding the Hive

*Mara Livezey*

The MCB GSA Outreach Committee has been hard at work this past semester! In addition to maintaining our regular programming, GSA outreach has been working towards our goal of targeting underrepresented minorities and communities in science by introducing new events in Champaign-Urbana and central Illinois. By targeting these populations, we hope to be providing additional expertise and resources to the communities that need it most. We were also happy to welcome Maxwell Baymiller as Assistant Outreach Coordinator this past winter!

The MCBees introduced three new recurring outreach events this past semester, targeting students in elementary and middle school. For our first new initiative, a group of 8 graduate students volunteered twice monthly at Jefferson Middle School in 8<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms. The focus of these events was to bring hands-on scientific activities into the classroom while introducing the students to scientific topics not normally taught in classrooms. Our hope was that our work in these classrooms would show the students how exciting science can be so that they might be more likely to pursue studying science in high school and beyond. We received overwhelmingly positive feedback from both students and the teachers we volunteered with and are looking forward to volunteering at Jefferson Middle School next semester! The MCBees also continued our work with Next Generation School in Champaign by participating in their Girls Science Social Café. Our volunteers were excited to be invited as positive role models of women in science and to talk about their career trajectories with the girls who attended. Lastly, we increased our impact in our community by doing our first-ever outreach in a rural school district outside of Champaign-Urbana, Gifford Schools. MCBees participated in Gifford's annual STEM Night and demonstrated basic scientific principles involved in forensic science, including visualization and analysis of DNA using gel electrophoresis.



MCB GSA outreach also continued our adult-focused outreach at Champaign Public Library with our BioCafe seminar series. Dr. Catherine Christian of MIP gave a talk about compounds that act as the brain's own valium, called "endocannabinoids", and their physiological functions. Dr. Sayee Anakk of MIP gave a seminar focusing on the positive and negative effects of bile acids on the physiology of the heart and liver. If you are inter-

ested in presenting a seminar as a part of our BioCafe series, please contact [mcb.gsa@gmail.com](mailto:mcb.gsa@gmail.com). We are especially looking for topics that are visible in the public domain, such as vaccines and autism, genetic engineering in therapy, or similar.



Keep a lookout for a new outreach opportunity coming this summer at the Urbana Farmer's Market! As always, the Outreach Committee wouldn't be half as successful without the dedication of our wonderful volunteers. We are thankful for the hard work of all of our volunteers this past semester and over the past 3 years.

For more information, to suggest an additional outreach idea, or to volunteer for our next outreach event, please email [maralivezey@gmail.com](mailto:maralivezey@gmail.com).

Check out highlights of the MCBees in our community!

<http://www.istem.illinois.edu/news/MCBees.@jms.html>

<http://www.istem.illinois.edu/news/ngs.social.cafe.mcbees.html>



## Upcoming Events

### June

- 27 **June Journal Club (4PM B124 CLSL, Dr. Xin Li)**
- 29 **June Happy Hour (Murphy's Pub, 6PM)**

### July

- 7 **Science at the Market (Urbana Farmer's Market, 7am-12pm)**
- 14 **DIY Weekend Wizards (Orpheum Children's Museum, 2pm)**
- 15 **Science on Tap (Riggs, 4pm)**
- 27 **July Happy Hour (Barrelhouse, Time TBD)**
- 29 **Oral Presentation Abstracts Due for Research Symposium**

### August

- 3 **Poster Presentation Abstracts Due & Final Registration Deadline for Research Symposium**
- 4 **Science at the Market (Urbana Farmer's Market, 7am-12pm)**
- 11 **DIY Weekend Wizards (Orpheum Children's Museum, 2pm)**
- 17 **MCB GSA Research Symposium**
- 31 **August Happy Hour (TBD)**

For more updates, subscribe to our [mailing list](#) and follow us on social media!



Website: (<https://publish.illinois.edu/mcbgrad-gsa>)



Facebook (MCB.GSA)



Twitter (@MCBGSA)

### GSA SWAG FUNDRAISER

BEE PREPARED FOR THOSE  
MUGGY MONDAYS

**MUGS: \$10**

Venmo: @MCBGSA  
Cash: contact Katie Frye at  
kafrye2@illinois.edu



### GSA SWAG FUNDRAISER

SHOW THAT YOU STICK  
WITH THE MCBEES

**STICKERS:  
\$2 OR 2/\$3**

Venmo: @MCBGSA  
Cash: contact Katie Frye at  
kafrye2@illinois.edu



# A Semester in the Life of a First Year Liason

*Katie Frye*

The MCB GSA is comprised of board positions that many people are familiar with including President, Secretary, and Treasurer. However, the GSA also has a board position that is quite unique, the First-Year Liaison. When the MCB GSA was created, we wanted to make sure that as we grew we wouldn't forget about the concerns and needs that are specific to students in their first year, and thus, the First-Year Liaison was created.

The current First-Year Liaison, Katie Frye, spends her time focusing on creating events that will help the First-Year students transition into the program so they can hit the ground running when they arrive and join a lab.

Much of the "behind the scenes" effort occurs from April through early August when the incoming class' Facebook group is abuzz with questions from the incoming students and tips from the First-Year Liaison. Once the business of helping the incoming students find housing is done, Katie most enjoys her "Life in CU" series where she introduces the incoming class to the multitude of activities available to do when they have a moment away from the bench.

After the incoming students arrive on campus, orientation week begins. One of the highlights of orientation week is the MCB GSA Annual Research Symposium where current graduate students and post docs present their work in the form of poster presentations and invited talks. Not only does the symposium offer a great opportunity for students to present their work and hear about the work being done throughout the school of MCB, but it also gives the incoming students a glimpse into the work being performed in the labs they might be interested in joining. For the remainder of orientation week, the incoming students hear talks from the labs that are taking rotation students while also getting an opportunity to go to lunch with current graduate students. At the end of the week, we host a social with everyone in the GSA to introduce the first-year students to current graduate students throughout MCB.

While the first-year students are completing their first semester rotations and courses, we host an Upper Level Graduate Student Panel where they talk openly with upper level graduate students about life as a graduate student, how to balance classes, rotations, and lab work, as well as anything else that is on their mind. Towards the end of their rotations when it is time to choose a lab to join, we host coffee hours with upper level graduate students in each of the MCB departments in order to offer a neutral sounding board for the first-year students' thoughts and concerns about joining any particular lab.

When all is said and done and they have joined their labs, we send out a survey to get their feedback on the events that we hosted leading up to and during their first semester so that we can always be working on improvements to make the transition to life at Illinois as smooth as possible.

If you have any questions or comments for the current First-Year Liaison, Katie Frye, please feel free to email the GSA at [mcb.gsa@gmail.com](mailto:mcb.gsa@gmail.com) or Katie directly at

[kafrye2@illinois.edu](mailto:kafrye2@illinois.edu). Additionally, if planning these events and working with First-Years sounds like something you would be interested in, please consider running for the First-Year Liaison position during the MCB GSA elections this summer!

## SAVE THE DATE!

### ELECTIONS MCB GSA 2018-2019

Are you interested in getting more involved with MCB GSA? The MCB GSA will be holding elections for all positions on the board for the academic year 2018-2019. Keep an eye out for an e-mail with info about the following positions:

- President
- Academic Chair
- First Year Liaison
- Communications Chair
- Social Chair
- Outreach Co-chair
- Treasurer/Fundraising Chair
- General Board Member

**Registration: July 3-July 16**

**Elections: July 17-July 31**

### MCB GSA RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM AUGUST 17, 2018

**KEYNOTE: DR. IN-HYUN PARK - YALE UNIVERSITY**

The MCB Graduate Student Association invites all MCB graduate students, postdocs, and faculty to attend the second annual MCB GSA Research Symposium. Current graduate students and postdocs are highly encouraged to submit a poster, as incoming first-year MCB graduate students will be in attendance to learn about ongoing research in MCB labs. Abstracts submitted will also be considered for invited talks.

#### ORAL PRESENTATIONS

**ABSTRACTS DUE: JULY 27TH**

#### POSTER PRESENTATIONS

**ABSTRACTS DUE: AUGUST 3RD**

# MCBees Branching Out



## Inform, Equip and Engage with the Science Policy Group

*Libby Haywood (Microbiology) and Robby Goldman (Geology)*

Have you ever been concerned about federal funding for scientific research? Do you wonder if your policy-makers value basic science? Have you ever considered how your research can directly impact public policy? You're not alone.

In the Fall of 2016, a group of Chemistry (and one MCB!) graduate students founded the Science Policy Group (SPG) at UIUC, a non-partisan RSO with the mission to foster continued conversation on science policy issues and unify the voices of science, technology, and engineering students in matters of science policy. SPG is part of a larger network, the National Science Policy Group, with over 50 student groups across the country. SPG is organized around actionable goals- 1) to inform students and community members about science policy 2) to create professional development opportunities for STEM students interested in science policy careers, and 3) to advocate for change in specific science policies. Thus, the Inform, Professional Development, and Advocacy committees were born. Since its inception, SPG has grown to include graduate students from across disciplines, including Neuroscience, Geology, Kinesiology, Physics, Electrical Engineering, and more! By providing opportunities for emerging scientists and engineers to learn more about policy, advocate for science, and network with the larger science policy community SPG works to bridge the gap between science and society.

The Advocacy Committee has organized several exciting events this past semester to increase student engagement with their state and Congressional representatives. In February, they co-hosted a workshop with a representative from the Union of Concerned Scientists, to write letters to Congressman Rodney Davis (R, IL-13) urging him to join the Stefanik Resolution, a Republican-sponsored commitment to finding economically viable solutions to man-made climate change. Representative Davis replied to each

of these letters, expressed his awareness of the Resolution's details and said would consider our thoughts if the legislation came up for a vote in the House. Members of SPG visited our State Capitol in Springfield, IL twice in the past year, once in September and again in April. For the most recent trip, members attended a workshop on how to communicate their scientific expertise and discussed environmentally friendly and economically sound science policy with legislators, State Senator Scott Bennett (D, Champaign and Vermilion) and State Representative Carol Ammons (D, Champaign).

There are many more upcoming events in the pipeline to continue engaging members of Illinois' science community with science policy! A policy writing game night (similar to a model UN activity) is planned for this July, facilitated by Dr. Clifford Singer, the Director of the Program in Arms Control and Domestic and International Security at UIUC. The advocacy committee is also hosting a town hall this July to discuss ways of developing the next generation of clean energy legislation. This fall, be on the look out for a networking workshop and reception to take place at The Beckman Institute and Get-Out-The-Vote events to encourage members of the UIUC community to be pro-science and pro-climate voters.

You can find more information about SPG at <http://publish.illinois.edu/sciencepolicygroup/>



## Career Week Recap

This year, MCB GSA hosted our first annual Career Development Week. If you are interested in revisiting some of the material that was presented during the week, or missed a workshop and would like to take a look, workshop materials have been made available on our website at <https://publish.illinois.edu/mcbgrad-gsa/gsa-career-week/>. Throughout the week, we ran a Career Week Competition, where you all were asked to take steps towards advancing your professional development. Congratulations to this year's competition winner, Pooja Agashe, who won a leather portfolio for her hard work! If you missed out on the competition, or didn't have the time to go through it then, don't worry—it's never too late to start professional development! The contest checklist can be found on the next page if you would like to start going through it this summer. (Challenge: bring it up during lab meeting and make it a lab-wide competition! It's easier to be accountable when you have friends (&friendly competition!) to keep you on track! ) Good luck, and get excited for next year!



Speaking of advancing careers, we are proud to highlight some high achieving MCBees that made strides towards completing their degrees this week by publishing first author papers, presenting at conferences, or taking the ultimate step of defending their dissertation! If you would like to be recognized in a future newsletter, or if you would like to nominate someone keep an eye out for the next call for newsletter contributions. We bee-lieve in you!

# MCBee Department Spotlight

## Department of Microbiology

### Ik-Jung Kim, Blanke Lab

First author publication in *Cell Host & Microbe*

*Helicobacter pylori* Infection Modulates Host Cell Metabolism through VacA-Dependent Inhibition of mTORC1 ([Cell Host Microbe 2018](#))

## Department of Biochemistry

### Jeremiah Heredia, Procko Lab

First author publication in *Journal of Immunology*

Mapping Interaction Sites on Human Chemokine Receptors by Deep Mutational Scanning ([J Immunol 2018](#))

## Department of Molecular & Integrative Physiology

### Dr. Whitney Edwards, Raetzman Lab

Completion of Doctoral Defense

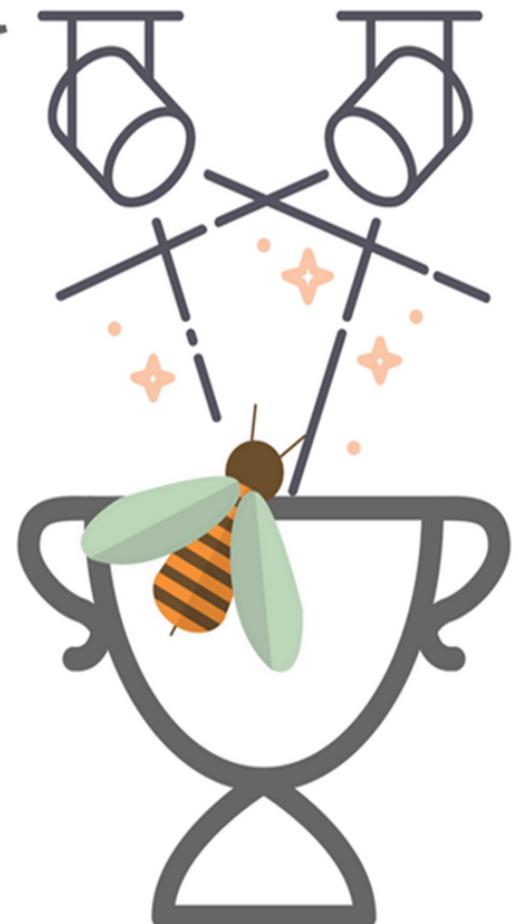
Uncovering Molecular Mechanisms of the Notch Signaling Pathway in the Regulation of Pituitary Gland Development

## Department of Cell & Developmental Biology

### Nayab Abidi, Smith-Bolton Lab

First author publication in *Scientific Reports*

Cell fate changes induced by a *Distal-less* enhancer-trap transgene in the *Drosophila* imaginal disc. ([Scientific Reports 2018](#))



## 2018 MCB GSA Career Development Week: THE GAME

If you missed out on this year's career week competition or didn't get as far as you'd like, a copy of it is provided below.

Instructions: Complete as many tasks as you can! Tasks are grouped into themes based on Career Week modules but can be completed in any order. Presentation slides from Career Week can be found [here](#).

Note: the idea for Career Development week and many of these competition tasks come from the [Avasthi lab's career development week](#)! Thanks to the Avasthi lab for sharing.

### Starting Out:

- 7 pts:** Make or update your CV
- 5 pts:** Write a short paragraph on your current career goals
- 5 pts:** Write a list of the career development activities you have completed in the past year

### Taking an Active Role in Career Development:

- 3 pts:** Identify two potential faculty mentors that you could ask for feedback and advice; they should be faculty members you don't already know so you can expand your connections and diversify the advice you receive.
- 3 pts:** Identify one career development area where you feel you are weakest and make a plan to improve it systematically over the next year
- 5 pts:** Initiate contact with a scientist outside the lab/institution that may, after fostering a relationship, be able to provide career advice, scientific advice or provide a letter of recommendation

### Career Exploration:

- 5 pts:** Review Dr. Imlay's presentation on career identity
- 2 pts:** Set up a meeting with one of the panel discussion facilitators to further discuss Dr. Imlay's presentation
- 3 pts:** Explore non-academic scientific careers (<https://myidp.sciencecareers.org/ReadAboutCareers/Resources>)
- 7 pts:** Complete the AAAS's myIDP (<https://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>)
- 7 pts:** Make a career timeline (must include 1 year, 5 year, and 10 year goals with decreasing level of detail)
- 5 pts:** Initiate contact with someone who works in a field you're interested in to ask questions about their training and current position

### Professional Development:

- 3 pts:** Review Grad College presentation: "Convincing People Your Research Matters"
- 5 pts:** Join twitter (must be public account and have name, some photo, bio)
- 5 pts:** Follow 20 scientists or science organizations on Twitter (5 points given for every 20 followed)
- 5 pts:** Make (or update) your website (must include your research interests, CV, and publications)
- 5 pts:** Give a 5 minute verbal presentation to a scientist in a different field and ask them to rate their level of understanding afterwards (1 pt=didn't get it, 5 pts=very clear and understandable).
- 3 pts:** Give a 5 minute verbal presentation to a non-scientist and ask them to rate their level of understanding afterwards (1 pt=didn't get it, 5 pts=very clear and understandable).
- 5 pts:** Learn a skill you don't know but feel you should (must show evidence of progress or proof of proficiency). This could be an experimental technique, proficiency with some software, type of data/statistical analysis).
- 5 pts:** Prepare an elevator pitch so you have one ready when you meet new people/scientists.

**5 pts:** Review a preprint and email comments to the senior author

### **Job Search:**

**3 pts:** Attend Thursday's information session for international students

**5 pts:** Practice tailoring your CV to a specific job ad, exchanging with a friend and providing feedback to one another

**2 pts:** Spend 15 minutes exploring the "applying for jobs" section of the Graduate College Career Development Office's website (<https://grad.illinois.edu/careers/applying>)

### **Interview Strategies**

**5 pts:** Schedule a career coaching appointment with the Graduate College Career Development Office to prepare for the interview process

**5 pts:** Practice answering 5 sample interview questions (<https://grad.illinois.edu/careers/int-questions>), asking a friend to be your mock-interviewer; then switch roles

### **Wrapping Up**

**7 pts:** Write a short paragraph about what you gained by focusing on career development this week

**3 pts:** List activities you would like to do during Career Week next year

**5 pts:** Update your CV

**5 pts:** Write a short paragraph on your updated career goals

**5 pts:** Write a list of the career development activities you plan to complete in the next year.

**3 pts:** Plan to attend one of the summer workshops through the Graduate College Career Development Office

**5 pts:** Come up with your own career development activity and share it with a friend  
their wonderful idea!