NeuroTransmitter Issue 01 Autumn 2008

Neuroscience Graduate Studies Program

Upcoming Events

• NGSP Committee Meeting – September 23
  Location: 4196 Graves Hall
  Time: 10:00 am

• Fall Quarter Begins – September 24

• Neuroscience/NGSP Seminars
  October 6 - Gary Banker, PhD, Senior Scientist, Oregon Health and Science University
  October 20 - David Pilt, PhD, Assistant Professor, OSU Department of Neurology
  October 23 - Anthony Ricci, PhD, Associate Professor, Stanford University
  November 13 - Pierre Drapeau, PhD, Professor, McGill University
  November 24 - Jeffrey D. Parvin, MD, PhD, Louis Levy Professor for Cancer and Interim-Chair, OSU Dept of Biomedical Informatics
  December 8 - Maureen McCall, PhD, Professor, University of Louisville

Professional Development

Society for Neuroscience Annual Meeting – Nov. 15-19 in Washington, D.C.

Director’s Chair

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We are pleased to announce that Georgia Bishop and Brian Kaspar were elected to the NGSP committee. Thanks to each of the NGSP faculty who were willing to stand for the election to the NGSP committee.

Feedback

After reading the inaugural issue of NEUROtransmitter, let us know what you think. Please email any questions, comments, and/or ideas for articles to Keri Bantz at keri.bantz@osumc.edu.

Sincerely,
Randy Nelson
John Oberdick

The NGSP program will welcome six new students in the 2008 autumn quarter: Leslie Adams, Soluman Culver, Fatma Sahinkaya, Keerthi Thirtamara, Eric Wohleb, and Jeffrey Wojton. The incoming students represent diverse educational backgrounds and will continue to increase the quality of the program.

Leslie Adams – Leslie graduated Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science in Electrical and Computer Engineering from West Virginia University. He also graduated with a Masters of Science degree in Electrical Engineering from The Ohio State University. Leslie worked for E.I. DuPont de Nemours and Company before deciding to pursue a doctoral degree in Neuroscience. Leslie is currently working in Dr. Stuart Mangel’s lab in the Department of Neuroscience.

Soluman Culver – Soluman was admitted into the MD/PhD program and will begin coursework this summer. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Religion from Saint Leo University in Florida as well as a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from Armstrong Atlantic State University in Georgia. Soluman is interested in studying neurological disorders from their basic level to their clinical and therapeutic aspects.

Fatma Sahinkaya – Fatma is a dual citizen in Turkey and the United States. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Middle East Technical University. Fatma was nominated by the NGSP committee for a University Fellowship and was awarded a Distinguished University Fellowship which is a two-year award. Her research interest is in manipulating endogenous neurogenesis for the purpose of nervous system repair and regeneration.

Keerthi Thirtamara – Keerthi graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy from Sri Ramachandra Medical College and Research Institute in India. He is currently in the Masters in Pharmacology program at OSU under the direction of Dr. Mariano Viapiano and will receive his degree this summer. Keerthi is interested in studying neurological disorders from their basic level to their clinical and therapeutic aspects.

Eric Wohleb – Eric graduated Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science in Health Science from Marietta College in Ohio. He was nominated by the NGSP committee for a University Fellowship and was awarded a one-year fellowship. Eric is currently working in Dr. Stuart Mangel’s lab in the Department of Neuroscience.

Jeffrey Wojton – Jeffrey graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Health Science from Marietta College in Ohio. He was nominated by the NGSP committee for a University Fellowship and was awarded a one-year fellowship. Jeffrey is interested in studying neurological disorders from their basic level to their clinical and therapeutic aspects.

2008-2009 Incoming Student Preview

This issue
2008-2009 Incoming Students P.1 Courses, rotations, seminars, oh my! P.2 Student Publications P.3 Upcoming Events P.4
Courses, rotations, seminars; oh my!

We asked former first year advisor Tony Brown to give his advice on acclimating new students to the program.

Talk with the PI (principal investigator) and lab members about the techniques and approaches that they use and the scientific problems they are addressing.

Second, it is important to choose your rotations wisely. The relationship between student and thesis advisor is a close one. A PhD studentship is an apprenticeship and your advisor will serve as your mentor and employer; sometimes friend and teacher, and sometimes taskmaster. Thus it is critical that you can communicate with members before you make your decision, openly with your thesis advisor and that you are excited about his or her research. Talk with PIs and their lab members about the techniques and approaches that you value and their proposed scientific problems. Give PIs the opportunity to excite you about their research. Recognize that neuroscience is a very diverse discipline, and that the approaches and techniques are very varied. Labs also have very different cultures and faculty have very different mentoring styles. Make sure that you have sufficient interaction with the PIs and their lab members to be sure that your lab of choice is a good fit for you.

Third, make sure that the laboratories you rotate have funding to take on a student. It may be acceptable to rotate in a lab that has no funding if there is a strong prospect of funding, but this is something you should discuss explicitly with the PI and also with your first year advisor. During your first year, your stipend is paid by the Program, but after that your stipend comes from the grant funding of your thesis mentor. In this way, you have the opportunity to devote yourself to research with minimal teaching obligations.

If for some reason one of your rotations is not going well, your first step should always be to talk to your rotation mentor. Problems are rare, but when they do arise it is usually due to poor communication between the student and PI. Your first year advisor can help if problems persist.

Have a great year!


Activities for 2007-2008
- Reviewed 77 applications and made admission decisions
- Participated in recruitment activities
- Approved 8 candidacy committees
- Conducted 27 student annual reviews
- Revised NGSP handbook
- Participated in PhD Completion Project
- Participated in OSU Graduate School doctoral program welcome day
- Revised NGSP minor requirements
- Awarded travel funds to students
- Conducted NGSP faculty review

Acknowledgements:
The NGSP committee would like to thank Phil Pipichoff and David Schirberg for their service. Phil and David’s term ended on June 30, 2008.
Courses, rotations, seminars; oh my!

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I'd like to extend a warm welcome to our new students. This will be an exciting and simulating year. You will divide your time between coursework, seminars and laboratory rotations. The role of the first year advisor is to help guide you in the selection of laboratory rotations. Starting this year, the first year advisor will be John Oberdick. Once you have selected a lab, the PI of that lab will take over as your thesis advisor and mentor. Here are several bits of advice. First, at its best, the rotation experience is more than just a matching exercise. While clearly the selection of a thesis advisor should be the principal thing on your mind, the laboratory rotations are also a rare opportunity to immerse yourself in the culture and research endeavors of multiple different laboratories. You will encounter the diversity of approaches and techniques that characterize neuroscience and you will carry this experience with you into your thesis research and beyond. So take full advantage of this unique opportunity. Spend as much time as you can in each lab. Read and think deeply about the research problems in each lab.

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Student Publications


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