Departmental News

You can’t be everywhere at once. Here is a quick recap of what’s been happening lately in the IMB Department.

Prelim Milestone Success

Graduate Student, Krysta Felix, in Joyce Wu’s Lab, completed her prelim exams and passed! Krysta received her undergraduate degree from Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah where she studied Molecular Biology. She began her graduate studies in the Fall of 2013 and has been a positive, successful member of our department.

Krysta recently was awarded the ARCS Foundation Scholarship for 2015-2016! The award includes a $7,000 stipend from the ARCS Foundation, $2,000 stipend, full base tuition if needed, and a $500 travel grant from the Graduate College. We are so proud of her accomplishments thus far and we look forward to her future ahead in the IMB Department!

New IMB Graduate Students

The Department of Immunobiology welcomed two new graduate students with a department Potluck on March 30th, Jacob Zbesko (on left) and Nico Contreras (on right).

Jacob has joined Dr. Kristian Doyle’s Lab and is studying, “The Glial Scar: An Imperfect Repair”.

Nico joined Dr. Janko Nikolich-Žugich’s Lab and is studying “Your Immune System and Your Food”

Tucson Festival of Books/Science City

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Tucson Festival of Books/Science City in March. The department had a great turn out of faculty, staff and students who all came to support science in the greater Tucson community. This event was a huge success with over 100 hands on activities, exciting demonstrations, informative talks, author panels, book signings, and engaging presentations for all ages. A special thank you to Dr. Richard Friedman, Dr. Adam Buntzman, and everyone on the Science City Committee including Dr. Kristian Doyle, Dr. Vesna Pulko, John Davies and Alyson Hockenberry.
Changes in Staff
(+ is for people who joined IMB, - is for people who left IMB.)

January
+ Alex Urzua, Undergraduate Research Assistant, joined the Doyle Lab
+ Suzu Igarashi, Research Specialist, Goodrum Lab
+ Apoorva Bhaskara, Student Worker, Koshy Lab
+ Talulope Obafemi, Volunteer, Nikolich Lab
+ Mingfeng Lu, CMM Master’s Student, Wu Lab

February
- Partha Samadder, Associate Research Specialist, Nikolich Lab
- Jason Pugh, Post Doctoral Fellow, Nikolich Lab
+ Shuaizhi Li, CMM Master’s Student, Goodrum Lab
+ Breanna Eder, Student Worker, Goodrum Lab
+ Carol Rosanelli, Volunteer, Goodrum Lab

March
+ Nico Contreras, Graduate Research Assistant, Nikolich Lab
+ Jacob Zbeskso, Graduate Research Assistant, Doyle Lab
+ Oscar Mendez, Neuroscience Graduate Student, Koshy Lab

April
+ Shrividyha Ganesh, Intern/Exchange Student, Ahmad Lab
+ Ahmad Safdar, Volunteer, Ahmad Lab
+ Jordyn Rippberger, Volunteer, Kuhns Lab

May
+ Miladen Jergovic, Post Doctoral Fellow, Nikolich Lab
+ Megan Hayes, UBRP Undergraduate Research Assistant, Doyle Lab
+ Anna Ragland, Research Technician, Ahmad Lab
+ Mingfeng Lu, CMM Master’s Student, Wu to Campos Lab
+ Maj Krumburger, UBRP Undergraduate Research Assistant, Doyle Lab
+ Neha Deshpande, Recent Graduate, Post Doctoral Fellow, Kuhns Lab
+ Katie Caviness, Recent Graduate, Post Doctoral Fellow, Goodrum Lab

June
+ Karen Rico, CMM Master’s Student, Doyle Lab
- Anna Ragland, Research Technician, Ahmad Lab
+ Yarah Ghomte, Volunteer, Koshy Lab
+ Colin Potter, Volunteer, Koshy Lab
+ Victoria Ramirez, UROC, Koshy Lab
+ Lisa Ekeanyanwu, Medical Student, Nikolich Lab
- Christina Klinger, Research Technician, Wu Lab
- Pierce Klinger, Research Technician, Wu Lab
- Cassie Bradley, UBRP Student, Frelinger Lab
- Christen Nguyen, Student Worker, Frelinger Lab
- Breanna Eder, Student Worker, Goodrum Lab
+ Morgan Brown, Student Worker, So Lab

Grad Slam 2015
IMB Graduate Student, Matthew Bronnimann, won 3rd place at the 2015 Grad Slam competition.

Grad Slam is a campus-wide competition for the best 3-minute talk about student research and discovery. The event was co-hosted by the UA Graduate College and Graduate and Professional Student Council, involving 140 students who are pursuing masters and doctoral degrees across campus.

Matt was the best male on campus and the only male contestant to make it to the finals! He represented our department and the College of Medicine as he presented his research during the final round, held on March 6, 2015. Great Job Matt!!
Graduates!!!
Neha R. Deshpande, Ph.D. (Kuhns Lab) and Katie Caviness, Ph.D. (Goodrum Lab) both graduated in Spring 2015!
Neha’s Dissertation Title: “Impact of time on the size, shape and effector responses of CD4+ T cells”
Katie’s Dissertation Title: “Complex Expression and Interplay of the UL136 Protein Isoforms Influence Human Cytomegalovirus Persistence”
We are fortunate to keep both as department members as they transition into Post Doctoral Fellows in their respective labs.

Grants
Dr. Anita Koshy, IMB & Neurology Assistant Professor
Awarded the Basil O’Connor Starter Scholar Research Award from the March of Dimes, for “Toxoplasma-Cre: defining in vivo the molecular mechanisms that drive Toxoplasma neuropathogenesis” 2015-2017, $150,000.

Dr. Magdalene So, IMB Professor
Awarded a NIH R21 grant for “Tribal Warfare: Killing of pathogen N. gonorrhoeae by commensal N. elongate”. The goal of this project is to identify the mechanism by which N. elongata kills N. gonorrhoeae in vitro and in vivo, 2015-2017, $275,000.

Publications


Grad Slam 2015
Third year graduate student, Matthew Bronnimann of the Campos Lab placed 3rd at the 2015 Grad Slam. Matt presented his research on investigating ways to develop better drug treatments to prevent human papillomavirus infections. (article on pg. 2)

Award Nominee
Tammie Rippberger, IMB Business Manager, Sr. was nominated for the Laura Hanekamp Award for Excellence. Congratulations Tammie!
Oral Presentations

Carla Cabral, Research Specialist, Koshy Lab
March 2015—Presented “Using a common brain parasite to discover novel therapeutic targets for Alzheimer’s Disease” at the Arizona Alzheimer’s Consortium Retreat, Winslow, AZ
March 2015—Presented “Strain specific effects on Alzheimer’s disease pathology during Toxoplasma gondii infection” at the Frontiers in Immunobiology & Immunopathogenesis Symposium. University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ

John Davies, IMB Graduate Student, Nikolich Lab

Dr. Kristian Doyle, IMB Assistant Professor
March 2015—Presented “B lymphocyte-mediated delayed cognitive impairment following stroke” at Frontiers in Immunobiology & Immunopathogenesis Symposium at The University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ
April 2015—Presented “Immune-mediated delayed cognitive impairment following stroke” at Research Seminar Series at Casa Colina Hospital and Centers for Healthcare, Pomona, CA
May 2015—Presented “Immune-mediated delayed cognitive impairment following stroke” at First Friday Seminar Series, Oklahoma State University Center for Health Sciences, Tulsa, OK

Dr. Jeffrey Frelinger, IMB Professor
January 2015—Presented “Subversion of Host Immunity by Francisella” at the Shanghai Institute of Immunology, Shanghai Jiao Tong, University School of Medicine, Shanghai, China

Dr. Felicia Goodrum, IMB Associate Professor
February 2015—Presented “Host-virus Interactions Controlling Human Cytomegalovirus Persistence” at University of California, Irvine, CA
April 2015—Presented “Host Pathways Central to Pathogen Persistence” at University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

Dr. Anita Koshy, IMB & Neurology Assistant Professor
March 2015—Presented “Using Toxoplasma gondii to understand brain immune capabilities” for the Department of Immunology, UTSW, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ
April 2015—Presented “Can a common brain parasite help find novel therapeutic targets for AD?” for Banner Sun Health Research Institute, Sun City, AZ
June 2015—Presented “Toxoplasma gondii & the CNS: Frenemies?”, Department of Neurology, Stanford University, Stanford, CA

Dr. Mike Kuhns, IMB Assistant Professor
January 2015—“Presented Evidence for a pivot point in TCR-CD3 triggering” at the Midwinter Conference of Immunologists at Asilomar in Pacific Grove, CA
February 2015—Presented “A mechanistic basis for TCR triggering” at the Pew Scholars Program Meeting in Island of Vieques, Puerto Rico
May 2015—Presented “Evidence for a pivot upon TCR engagement” at the American Association of Immunologists Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA

Dr. Janko Nikolich-Zugich, Bowman Professor and IMB Department Head
April 2015—Presented “Metabolic, transcriptional and epigenetic factors guiding impaired differentiation of naive T cells with aging” as an invited speaker at the Venice Thymus Conference in Venice Italy.
April 2015—Presented “New surprises from an old friend: Is CMV a friend or foe to the aging immune system?” as an invited speaker at the University of Parma, Parma, Italy
May 2015—Presented “Aging with MCMV maintains TCR repertoire diversity in late life” as a speaker, co-organizer, session chair at the European Federation of Immunological Societies Belgrade, Arandjelovac, Serbia
May 2015—Presented “Molecular basis of the age-related vulnerability against the Chikungunya virus” as a speaker, organizer and session chair at the Belgrade Workshop on Immunity and Autoimmunity – a tribute to Professors Marija Mostarica-Stojkovic and Miodrag L. Lukic, Belgrade, Serbia
Dr. Vesna Pulko, Postdoctoral Research Associate, Nikolich Lab

Oral Presentations Continued...

Dr. Megan Smithey, IMB Research Assistant Professor
March 2015—Presented “Aging with MCMV maintains TCR repertoire diversity in late life”, Basic Medical Sciences Seminar Series UA College of Medicine-Phoenix, AZ

May 2015—Presented “Aging with MCMV maintains TCR repertoire diversity in late life” Arandjelovac, Serbia

Dr. Heather Thompson, Postdoctoral Research Associate, Nikolich Lab

Poster Presentations

Carla Cabral, Research Specialist, Koshy Lab
June 2015—Presented “Toxoplasma cysts are located predominantly in distal neuronal processes” at the 13th International Congress on Toxoplasmosis & Toxoplasma gondii Biology, Gettysburg, PA

Dr. Kristian Doyle, IMB Assistant Professor
February 2015—Presented “B lymphocyte-mediated delayed cognitive impairment following stroke” Keystone Meeting; Neuroinflammation in Diseases of the Central Nervous System in Taos, NM

Neha Deshpande, IMB Graduate Student, Kuhns Lab
January 2015—Presented “Affinity for self drives the preferential accumulation of promiscuous CD4+ T cells over the lifespan” at the Midwinter conference of Immunologists in Pacific Grove, CA

Heather Parrish, IMB Graduate Student, Kuhns Lab
January 2015—Presented “Dissecting the role of the CD4 transmembrane domain in T cell activation” at the Midwinter conference of Immunologists in Pacific Grove, CA

Dr. Daniel Powell, Postdoctoral Fellow, Frelinger Lab
June 2015—Presented “Oral colonization with Neisseria highlights differences in wild derived mouse immune responses” at the American Association of Immunologists Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA

Dr. Megan Smithey, Research Assistant Professor
June 2015—Smithey MJ. American Federation for Aging Research, Annual Grantee Meeting “The contribution of age-related complement dysfunction on T cell immunity to infection.” Santa Barbara, CA

Shraddha Tuladhar, IMB Graduate Student, Koshy Lab
March 2015—Presented “Differential modulation of CNS host cells with genetically distinct Toxoplasma strains defines neuroninflammatory response” at the Frontiers in Immunobiology & Immunopathogenesis Symposium, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ

June 2015—Presented “Determining Toxoplasma strain-specific CNS immune responses” at the 13th International Congress on Toxoplasmosis & Toxoplasma gondii Biology. Gettysburg, PA

Group Poster Presentations:
February 2015—Dr. Kristian Doyle, Omar Hussain, Dr. Jennifer Frye, Nico Contreras, Nasiha Ahmed, and Dr. Vivian Nguyen. Presented “Scanning and transmission electron microscopy of the glial scar after stroke” at the Keystone Meeting on Neuroinflammation in Diseases of the Central Nervous System in Taos, NM.

February 2015—Dr. Vivian Nguyen, Dr. Jennifer Frye, Nico Contreras and Dr. Kristian Doyle presented “Characterization of inflammation in acute and non-acute ischemic infarcts in human brain tissue” at the Keystone Meeting on Neuroinflammation in Diseases of the Central Nervous System in Taos, NM.
Group Poster Presentations continued:

May 2015—Dr. Jennifer L. Uhrlaub, Dr. Vesna Pulko, Dr. Victor R. DeFilippis, and Dr. Janko Nikolich-Zugich. Presented “Impaired CD4 and Antibody Responses in Old Mice Increase Chikungunya Virus Disease Severity and Viral Persistence” at the European Federation of Immunological Societies Symposium on Immunoregulation in Arandjelovac, Serbia

Travel Award

John Davies, IMB Graduate Student, Nikolich Lab
May 2015—American Association of Immunologists trainee abstract travel award,

Neha Deshpande, IMB Graduate Student, Kuhns Lab
February 2015—Travel Award Recipient for The 54th Midwinter Conference of Immunologists at Asilomar Conference grounds, Pacific Grove, CA from the Graduate School Professional Counsel, The University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ

Dr. Mike Kuhns, IMB Assistant Professor
May 2015—Travel Award to attend the American Association of Immunologists Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA

Heather Parrish-Bronnimann, IMB Graduate Student, Kuhns Lab
January 2015—Awarded the University of Arizona Graduate and Professional Student Council Travel Grant to attend the Midwinter Conference of Immunologists in Monterrey, CA

Dr. Megan Smithey, IMB Research Assistant Professor
May 2015—Travel Award to European Federation of Immunological Societies Symposium on Immunoregulation

Other Accomplishments

Dr. Adam Buntzman, Research Associate, Frelinger Lab
May 2015—Attended Community Meeting on Storing and Sharing High-throughput Sequencing, Antigen-Receptor Repertoire Data, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Neha Deshpande, IMB Graduate Student, Kuhns Lab
January 2015—"Ray Owen Poster Award" Sponsored by The American Association of Immunologist for outstanding Graduate Student Poster at The 54th Midwinter Conference of Immunologists at Asilomar Conference grounds, Pacific Grove, CA
March 2015—Travel grant judge for March 2015 round of Graduate School Professional Counsel travel awards, The University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ
April 2015—American Association of Immunologists Trainee poster award for Immunology 2015, New Orleans, LA
May 2015—Graduated with Ph.D. in Immunobiology, from The Department of Immunobiology at The University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ.

Dr. Kristian Doyle, IMB Assistant Professor
January 2015—Became a faculty member of the Graduate Interdisciplinary Program in Neuroscience, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ
February 2015—Interviewed by Kathy Cline of Phoenix radio station KFYI-AM to discuss his paper “B-Lymphocyte mediated delayed cognitive impairment following stroke”
February 2015—Interviewed by Corbin Carson of Phoenix radio station KTAR-FM to discuss his paper “B-Lymphocyte mediated delayed cognitive impairment following stroke”

Dr. Jeffrey Frelinger, IMB Professor
January 2015—Reverse site visit for UNC CETR Grant, UNC Advisory Committee Meeting
January 2015—Attended Midwinter Immunology Conference, Pacific Grove, CA
March 2015—University of Florida T32 External Advisory Committee, Gainesville, FL
May 2015—Attended the American Association of Immunologists Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA
June 2015—NIH CSR IHD Study Section Bethesda, MD
June 2015—American Association of Immunologists Laboratory Travel Award (Funding for Frelinger and Daniel Powell) to attend Immunology 2015, New Orleans, LA
Other Accomplishments Continued...

Dr. Felicia Goodrum, IMB Associate Professor
July 2015—Invited to be a permanent study section member for NIH VIRA Study Section Panel, Center for Scientific Review, NIH in Bethesda, MD

Omar Hussain, Undergraduate Research Assistant, Doyle Lab
March 2015—Received the Excellence in Undergraduate Research Award for the NSCS Program
March 2015—Undergraduate Research Assistant Omar Hussain accepted into medical school at the University of Arizona College of Medicine (Accepted March 2015, Enrolling August 2015), Phoenix, AZ
May 2015—Graduated from the U of A Neuroscience Program

Dr. Vivian Nguyen, Research Scientist, Doyle Lab
March 2015—Dr. Vivian Nguyen became an Assistant Professor in the Department of Neurology

Dr. Janko Nikolich-Žugich, Bowman Professor and IMB Department Head
April 2015—Accepted a position on the Editorial Board of “Nutrition and Aging”
May 2015—Elected Fellow of the Gerontological Society of America (GSA). He was also elected Chair-Elect of the GSA Biological Sciences Section for 2017, the year where he will help organize and chair the Biological Sciences program at the International Association of Gerontologists and Geriatricians in San Francisco.

Department Outreach

Carla Cabral, Research Specialist, Koshy Lab
April 2015—Attended “Inspiring young women about science” a Networking Event at Desert View High School, organized by Adam Buntzman, Tucson, AZ

Dr. Kristian Doyle, IMB Assistant Professor

Dr. Megan Smithey, IMB Research Assistant Professor
April 2015—Smithey MJ. Attended “Young Women in STEM” outreach evening at Desert View High School

Shraddha Tuladhar, IMB Graduate Student, Koshy Lab
April 2015—Attended “Inspiring young women about science” a Networking Event at Desert View High School, organized by Adam Buntzman, Tucson, AZ