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<td>Welcome Message from Dr. Cato Laurencin</td>
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<td>Welcome Message from Dr. Linda Barry</td>
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It is my pleasure and privilege to welcome you as our 2014 scholars to the Young Innovative Investigator Program (YIIP). The Connecticut Institute for Clinical and Translational Science (CICATS) at the University of Connecticut (UConn) focuses on the advancement of clinical and translational research; community engagement; health disparities; and education, training and career development especially in increasing the pipeline of minority students who have a passion for science and research.

Many of you entering YIIP have an idea of the type of research or career path that you intend to focus on. I suggest that you keep an open mind and embrace the research experience, curriculum, and mentorship that you will encounter during your time at UConn. You will be learning from and working with top scientists who are pioneers in their field and be engaged in a number of transformative research projects that may incite interest in another discipline. I strongly believe that the YIIP program, coupled with your commitment and drive, will give you the opportunity to make footprints towards your future in becoming the next generation of scientists and physicians in your communities.

I wish you much success in all of your endeavors at UConn and beyond.

Sincerely,

Cato T. Laurencin, M.D., Ph.D.
University Professor
Albert and Wilda Van Dusen Distinguished Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery Professor of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering
Professor of Materials Science and Engineering
Chief Executive Officer, Connecticut Institute for Clinical and Translational Science
Director, The Raymond and Beverly Sackler Center for Biomedical, Biological, Physical and Engineering Sciences
Director, The Institute for Regenerative Engineering
Hello YIIP Scholars,

As Director of the Young Innovative Investigator Program (YIIP) sponsored by the Connecticut Institute of Clinical and Translational Science (CICATS) at the University of Connecticut (UConn), I am pleased to welcome you as a member of the inaugural class. You all have distinguished yourselves amongst an extremely competitive pool of applicants. We have designed an exciting curriculum and experience for you. This program is focused on facilitating your professional and personal enrichment that will set you on the path to becoming the next leader in medicine and research. The laboratory you select will be the setting in which you will master the basics of research while envisioning what your future holds in terms of your own lab and research. We will provide you with a personalized mentorship network that will form a supportive environment for you to reach your highest potential.

At CICATS, we are focused on promoting translational research and the work of scientists at various levels in their careers. Therefore, it is fitting that CICATS spearheads an innovative initiative like YIIP; since, we are invested in developing the next generation of academic research scientists, particularly from the underrepresented community. We are here to encourage, support and promote you in your efforts to succeed not only at UConn, but in securing a position in medical or graduate school. We hope our YIIP scholars will become the next Einstein and leaders in the field of research. You all have the potential to become influential leaders as future academic professors who will inspire those to follow you. Make the most of this opportunity and enjoy!

Sincerely,

Linda Barry, M.D., FACS  
Director, Young Innovative Investigator Program  
Assistant Professor, Department of Surgery  
Chief Operating Officer and Assistant Director, Connecticut Institute for Clinical and Translational Science  
University of Connecticut
The Connecticut Institute for Clinical and Translational Science (CICATS) at the University of Connecticut’s vision is to develop an interdisciplinary research environment that extends the reach of our programs and initiatives through collaborative partnerships and/or affiliations with national community-based organizations, communities, governmental agencies, patients, foundations, hospitals, and academic centers with the intent to advance clinical and translational research across all disciplines and eliminate disparities in health care and services.

Formed in 2009 through a partnership of regional hospitals, state agencies, and community health care organizations, CICATS was built on four core principles: Education, Innovation, Collaboration, and Integration.

1. Education

Striving to educate and mentor new, emerging and future scientists;

2. Innovation

Increasing the number of innovative clinical and translational research projects and moving discoveries into the community quickly and effectively;

3. Collaboration

Working together with regional and national stakeholders to eliminate health disparities; and

4. Integration

Forging new partnerships to create a platform for integration of services and initiatives between the University, community, and national organizations.
THE CONNECTICUT INSTITUTE FOR CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE
YOUNG INNOVATIVE INVESTIGATOR PROGRAM

PURPOSE

The aim of the Young Innovative Investigator Program (YIIP) sponsored by the Connecticut Institute of Clinical and Translational Science (CICATS) is to provide academic training at the University of Connecticut (UConn) to individuals dedicated to pursuing careers as scientists and academics in biological and biomedical science in order to develop the next generation of innovative biomedical scientists.

The YIIP is specifically focused on recruiting under-represented minority students to contribute to the development of a sustainable academic pipeline that increases diversity among the pool of academic scientists. The program will provide tools for students to conduct research, succeed in an academic environment, and become competitive candidates for medical school or graduate school. Scholarships are available to students accepted into the program.

OVERVIEW

The YIIP is a one to two year, full-time program at UConn for college graduates. Scholars will conduct research in basic science biomedical laboratories under the supervision of a mentor. The program also provides students with individualized mentorship, academic support, and career guidance. In the first year, the curriculum consists of a minimum of 6 course credits per semester.

Upon successful completion of first year coursework, a student will obtain a Graduate Certificate of Research Experience in Biomedical Science from UConn. In year two, students who meet the academic qualifications may have the opportunity to pursue a master’s degree. By fulfilling the program requirements, YIIP scholars will acquire the expertise necessary to enter a M.D., M.D.-Ph.D., or Ph.D. program.
YIIP FOUNDER
Cato Laurencin, M.D., Ph.D.
University Professor
Albert and Wilda Van Dusen Distinguished Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery
Professor of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering
Professor of Materials Science and Engineering
Chief Executive Officer, Connecticut Institute for Clinical and Translational Science
Director, The Raymond and Beverly Sackler Center for Biomedical, Biological, Physical and Engineering Sciences
Director, The Institute for Regenerative Engineering

YIIP DIRECTOR
Linda Barry, M.D., FACS
Assistant Professor, Department of Surgery
Chief Operating Officer and Assistant Director
Connecticut Institute for Clinical and Translational Science, University of Connecticut

YIIP COMMITTEE
Lori Bastian, M.D., MPH
Professor, Department of Medicine
Division Chief, General Internal Medicine
Associate Dean for Career Development

Caroline N. Dealy, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Center for Regenerative Medicine and Skeletal Development
Department of Reconstructive Sciences
Director, Skeletal Craniofacial and Oral Biology Graduate Program

Kimberly Dodge-Kafka, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Department of Cell Biology
Calhoun Cardiology Center
Chair, Graduate Programs Committee

Victor Hesselbrock, Ph.D.
Senior Associate Dean of Research
Professor and Vice Chair, Dept. of Psychiatry
Physicians Health Services Professor of Addiction Studies
Associate Director and Chief Scientific Officer, Connecticut Institute for Clinical and Translational Science

Marja Hurley, M.D.
Professor of Medicine and Orthopaedic Surgery
Institutional Designee, AAMC, Group Women in Medicine and Science
Associate Dean & Director
Health Career Opportunity Programs

Anne Kenny, M.D.
Professor, Department of Medicine
UConn Center on Aging

Barbara Kream, Ph.D.
Associate Dean of the Graduate School, UConn Health Center
Professor, Department of Medicine and Genetics and Developmental Biology

Carol C. Pilbeam, M.D., Ph.D.
Professor of Medicine and Orthopaedics
Director, M.D./Ph.D. Combined Degree Program

Granville Wrensford, Ph.D.
Assistant Dean & Associate Director
Health Career Opportunity Programs

YIIP ADMINISTRATOR
Lana Angelo
Administrative Program Coordinator, Connecticut Institute for Clinical and Translational Science
## GRADUATE CERTIFICATE OF RESEARCH EXPERIENCE IN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE CURRICULUM (12 CREDITS) *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEMESTER ONE/FALL 2014: 6 credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lab Rotation (MEDS 6496-F40)</strong> (2 or 3) <strong>Required</strong></td>
<td>Minimum 20 hours per week with mentor and stipend. This course can be taken for 2 or 3 credits. If the lab rotation course is taken for 2 credits, you must take the independent study course for 1 credit. Forms: <a href="http://studentservices.uchc.edu/registrar/gradschool/forms/form_labrotation.pdf">http://studentservices.uchc.edu/registrar/gradschool/forms/form_labrotation.pdf</a></td>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Journal Club - Graduate Seminar** (1) **Required** | The journal club selected should align with the research conducted and the research focus of the Lab Mentor.  
A. Molecular Biology & Biochemistry Journal Club (MEDS 6497-F41)  
B. Cell Biology Journal Club (MEDS 6497-F42)  
C. Skeletal, Craniofacial and Oral Biology Journal Club (MEDS 6497-F43)  
D. Immunology Journal Club (MEDS 6497-F44)  
E. Neuroscience Journal Club (MEDS 6497-F45)  
F. Cell Analysis and Modeling Journal Club (MEDS 6497-F46)  
G. Genetics and Developmental Biology Journal Club (MEDS 5323-F40) |
| **Molecular Basis of Disease (MEDS 5309-F40)**, Kimberly Dodge-Kafka, PhD (2) **Required** | This course investigates the molecular basis of a broad range of human diseases, starting with fundamental biological concepts and covering current controversies in disease mechanisms. The format is lecture, discussion, and group debate. The final exam is a news and views topic paper on one of the diseases covered in the course. |
| **Independent Study (MEDS 6495-F40)** (1) | A reading course for those wishing to review special topics and research papers related to the research focus of the lab rotation under the supervision of the lab mentor. This option is only available if the lab rotation is taken concurrently for 2 credits. |

---

* Bi-Monthly YIIP Seminar Series
## GRADUATE CERTIFICATE OF RESEARCH EXPERIENCE IN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE CURRICULUM (12 CREDITS)*

**SEMMESTER TWO/FALL 2015**: 6 credits

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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lab Rotation (MEDS)</strong> (1 or 2) Required</td>
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<td>Minimum 20 hours per week with mentor and stipend: if 1 Lab credit, then another 2 credit course is required. Forms: studentservices.uchc.edu/registrar/gradschool/forms/form_labrotation.pdf</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Journal Club</strong> (1) Required</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A. Molecular Biology &amp; Biochemistry Journal Club (MEDS 6497-F41)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Cell Biology Journal Club (MEDS 6497-F42)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>C. Skeletal, Craniofacial and Oral Biology Journal Club(MEDS 6497-F43)</td>
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<td>D. Immunology Journal Club (MEDS 6497-F44)</td>
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<td>E. Neuroscience Journal Club (MEDS 6497-F45)</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. Cell Analysis and Modeling Journal Club (MEDS 6497-F46)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>G. Genetics and Developmental Biology Journal Club (MEDS 5323-F40)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tool Kit for Scientific Communication (MEDS 6447-F40)</strong>, Caroline Dealy, PhD (1) Required</td>
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<td>Through a series of weekly lectures, workshops and assignments, this course will develop a skill set in scientific communication in oral and written formats including seminar presentation, posters, manuscripts and grants. Basics of critical thinking will be emphasized including development of hypotheses, rationale and specific aims; clarity and logical sequence of presentation. Students will provide and critique oral and written material throughout the course and will receive feedback from faculty as well as peers.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Responsible Conduct in Research (MEDS 5310-F40)</strong> (1) Required</td>
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<td>This course introduces the student to ethical and legal issues associated with the practice and reporting of science. The course uses a case study approach and requires in class participation.</td>
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<td><strong>Select A or B</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Independent Study (MEDS 6495-F40)</strong> (1) Required</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. Elective Graduate School Course (1 or 2)</td>
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<td>A reading course for those wishing to pursue special topics in the biomedical sciences under faculty supervision. Forms: studentservices.uchc.edu/registrar/gradschool/forms/form_indstudy.pdf</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bi-Monthly YIIP Seminar Series</strong></td>
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YOUNG INNOVATIVE INVESTIGATOR PROGRAM (YIIP) ORIENTATION SCHEDULE
AUGUST 12 – 13, 2014

TUESDAY, AUGUST 12

CICATS, Dowling South
Conference Room

8:00 am  Welcome Breakfast Reception

8:45 am  Welcome Message
Dr. Linda Barry
CICATS Chief Operating Officer and YIIP Program Director

9:15 am  Welcome and Graduate School Overview
- Dr. Barbara Kream
  Associate Dean of the Graduate School
- Dr. David Henderson
  Associate Dean, Medical Student Affairs, UConn Medical School

9:30 am  M1 Mentors Introductions and General Information
- Dr. Anne Delany
- Dr. Elaine C. Lee
- Dr. Syam Nukavarapu

10:00 am  Break

10:15 am  CICATS Overview
Dr. Linda Barry

10:30 am  Curriculum Overview
Dr. Linda Barry

11:00 am  Questions and Open Discussion

1:00 pm  Photographs of YIIP Scholars
Janine Gelineau
Multimedia Specialist - Photographer/ Video Graphic Artist
Biomedical Media Communications

UConn Health Center, CG081
## YOUNG INNOVATIVE INVESTIGATOR PROGRAM (YIIP) ORIENTATION SCHEDULE
### AUGUST 12 – 13, 2014

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13**

CICATS, Dowling South
Conference Room

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 am</td>
<td><strong>Orientation Review and Open Discussion</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30 am</td>
<td><strong>Presentations / Overviews</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>– 10:30 am</td>
<td>- Dr. Julian Ford: IRB and Human Subjects Research</td>
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<td>- Dr. James Grady: Biostatistics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Lana Angelo: Core Interest Groups (CIGs)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Biomedical Informatics (BMI)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Health Career Opportunities Program (HCOP)</td>
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<td>- Peer Mentorship</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30 am</td>
<td><strong>Break</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 am</td>
<td><strong>Program Expectations: Bi-Monthly Seminars,</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>– 12:00 pm</td>
<td>- Mentors, Shadowing, Publishing</td>
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<td>Dr. Linda Barry</td>
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BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE ORIENTATION SCHEDULE, AUGUST 14 - 22, 2014

THURSDAY, AUGUST 14

8:30 am  Report to Student Lounge -
          GSO Hosted Breakfast  Academic Entrance
          AG-037

9:00 am  Picture I.D.’s  Public Safety Lobby

9:45 am  Health Center Tour

10:15 am  Welcome to UConn Health
          General Information Part I and Introductions:
          - Dr. Barbara Kream, Associate Dean of the Graduate School
          - Dr. Lynn Puddington, Chair, Graduate Programs Committee
          - Robin Frank, Director of Student Services
          - Lisa Francini, Student Affairs Officer
          - Barbara Ricketts, Registrar
          - Carrie Berlepsch, Graduate School Bursar
          - Cory Brennick, Graduate Student Organization President
          - Advisory Committee: Drs. L. Aguila, S. Crocker, K. Claffey,
            C. Heinen, P. Maye & B. Mohler

11:30 am  Lunch with Current Students, Faculty, and Staff  Keller Auditorium

12:45 pm  Library Cards & Computer Resources/Databases  PC Classroom
          – 2:00 pm  Wendy Urcioli

2:15 pm  Area of Concentration Program/Course Overview  ARB Room EG-013
          Program Directors – Drs. L. Aguila, J. Carson,
          A. Delany, G. Fong, C. Heinen, B. Rogina, Z. Wang
BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE ORIENTATION SCHEDULE, AUGUST 14 - 22, 2014

FRIDAY, AUGUST 15

8:30 am  Public Safety Presentation  ARB Room EG-013
         – 9:15 am Chief Joseph Curreri

9:15 am  General Information Part II:  ARB Room EG-013
         – 9:45am - CHIPS Program
         – Spenser Smith, Student Representative
         - Employee Assistance Program
         – Elizabeth Robinson
         - Office of Audit, Compliance and Ethics
         – Virginia Pack

9:45 am  Professionalism in Graduate School  ARB Room EG-013
         – 10:15 am Dr. Barbara Kream

10:15 am Break

10:30 am Intro to Responsible Conduct in Research  ARB Room EG-013
         – 11:30 am Dr. Barbara Kream, Dr. Gerald Maxwell,
         Dr. Leonardo Aguila

11:45 am Pizza Party with Big Brothers/Big Sisters  ARB Room EG-013

1:00 pm  Blackboard Presentation  ARB Room EG-013
         – 1:45 pm Nancy Mainelli

1:45pm  Lab Safety & Blood Borne Pathogens  ARB Room EG-013
         – 3:45 pm Mr. Steve Jacobs

5:30 pm  GSO Sponsored Happy Hour!
         Come meet the rest of the UCHC Graduate School community!
## BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE ORIENTATION SCHEDULE, AUGUST 14 - 22, 2014

### MONDAY, AUGUST 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 am</td>
<td><strong>Radiation Safety</strong></td>
<td>ARB Room EG-013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– 12:00 pm</td>
<td>James Fomenko</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 pm</td>
<td><strong>Luncheon with First Year Advisors (Group Mtgs):</strong></td>
<td>ARB Room EG-013</td>
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<tr>
<td>– 1:15 pm</td>
<td>Drs. L. Aguila, S. Crocker, K. Claffey, C. Heinen, P. Maye, &amp; B. Mohler</td>
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<td>1:30 pm</td>
<td><strong>Human Resources Sign-Up</strong></td>
<td>16 Munson Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>– 4:15 pm</td>
<td>Lori Grant, Kelly Pitkin, Alyxandra Kapchan and Jaishree Duggal</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
</tr>
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### TUESDAY, AUGUST 19

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30 am</td>
<td><strong>Center for Comparative Medicine (CCM)</strong></td>
<td>ARB Room EG-013</td>
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<tr>
<td>– 10:30 am</td>
<td>Animal Care Training</td>
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<td>Lisa Chuba, Alison Pohl, and Dr. Ron Wallace</td>
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<td>11:30 am</td>
<td><strong>Lunch on own</strong></td>
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<td>– 12:30 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30 pm</td>
<td><strong>Meet with First Year Advisors (Individual Meetings)</strong></td>
<td>ARB Room EG-052 or ARB Room EG-013</td>
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<tr>
<td>– 2:30 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:30 pm</td>
<td><strong>Incoming International Student Peer Session</strong></td>
<td>ARB Room EG-013</td>
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<tr>
<td>– 3:30 pm</td>
<td>Helpful information from your peers</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE ORIENTATION SCHEDULE, AUGUST 14 - 22, 2014

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20

9:00 am  Registration Workshop in Library
– 10:30 am  Barbara Ricketts and Swapna Das
           PC Classroom-Library CEC #1
           Students must complete registration by Fri., Aug 22nd
           Classes start on Mon., August 25th

10:30 am  Health Insurance Information/Enrollment Session
– 11:15 am  Carrie Berlepsch and Katie Kruszewski
           ARB Room EG-013

11:15 am’  Graduate Student Organization Crash Course
– 12:45 pm

12:45 pm  Free time (Lunch on your own)

3:00 pm  GSO Sponsored Picnic at Winding Trails
– 7:00 pm  Hiawatha Pavilion
           50 Winding Trails Dr.
           Farmington, CT

THURSDAY, AUGUST 21

9:00 am  Summer Laboratory Rotation Talks Part 1
– 12:30 pm
           ARB Room EG-052

12:30 pm  Lunch (on your own)
– 1:15 pm

1:15 pm  Diversity and Sexual Harassment Session
– 4:15pm  Robert Camilleri/Al Lizana-Diversity & Equity
           ARB Room EG-052

FRIDAY, AUGUST 22

9:00 am  Summer Laboratory Rotation Talks Part 2
– 12:30 pm
           ARB Room EG-052

12:30 pm  Free time

8:00 pm  Orientation Celebration Party
           DJ, food, and more!!
           The Tavern at the Exchange
M1 MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The aim of the Mentoring Awards is to develop a cadre of accomplished investigators who will participate in developing an academic environment, elevating mentorship to a universally accepted discipline with high standards and practices. M1 awards provide support to successfully funded research faculty to serve as mentors in developing the next generation of research scientists. Besides individual mentorship, the M1 Investigator will be involved in activities to develop programs at the University of Connecticut that encompass each level of educational training - middle school, high school, undergraduate, and graduate levels as well as junior faculty. The M1 award is specifically targeted towards developing a sustainable academic pipeline of under-represented minority students among the pool of academic scientists.

M1 Awardees

Ann M. Delany, Ph.D.
Dr. Delany obtained her doctoral degree from the Dartmouth Medical School and currently is an Associate Professor of Medicine in the Center for Molecular Medicine at UConn Health. Dr. Delany has served as a mentor primarily in laboratory settings training students at various levels including high school, undergraduate and graduate school, and medical and dental school. She will expose mentees to current findings through attendance at national meetings, enhance students’ fundamentals by encouraging molecular biology workshops, and facilitate networking for underrepresented minority students to pursue fellowship opportunities.

Elaine Choung-Hee Lee, Ph.D.
Dr. Lee obtained her doctoral degree from the University of Connecticut and is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Kinesiology at UConn. Dr. Lee is a very experienced mentor who considers mentoring as one of her highest professional priorities. She aims to instill a sense of optimism and independence in every mentee focusing on individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. She plans to lead students in activities including a science café, educational outreach to urban high school students, and modular courses on biochemical/molecular biology techniques in exercise physiology and human research.

Syam Nukavarapu, Ph.D.
Dr. Nukavarapu obtained his doctoral degree from the Indian Institute of Science and is currently an Assistant Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery at UConn Health. Dr. Nukavarapu has a substantial amount of experience leading a Research and Experience Mentoring (REM) program in which students are exposed to group-mentoring from both their primary mentor and their peers. He has planned a program in which mentees will gain research experience in biomaterials and tissue engineering, enhance collaboration skills, and receive training in scientific writing and professional development.
Choosing a research laboratory can be a time consuming process, but not a hard one. The primary investigator (PI), whose laboratory you will select, will also serve as your advisor. Thus, the manner in which you choose your mentor should be methodological and thoughtful. Identify the PI’s labs and research activities that align with your research interests. To read the grants a PI has written or to see NIH funded projects they have participated in, visit http://projectreporter.nih.gov/reporter.cfm; for publications visit http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed.

Once you have identified your list of mentors, make the initial contact by email. Include in the email that you are a CICATS’ YIIP Scholar, express your interest in their labs and why you selected them, and ask if they are available to meet with you during the week of August 12th. If you have not already chosen a lab upon arriving for the YIIP Orientation, we expect that you will have narrowed your selection of labs to a few mentors.

There is a support network available to assist you with the process. As Director of the program, I am here to assist and guide you through this process and provide support throughout the year. In addition, we have a specific network of mentors outside of the lab setting who will assist you by providing individual counsel in selecting a lab as well as providing mentorship as part of the mentorship network that we have established for the YIIP Scholars. These faculties, chosen specifically for their dedication to mentorship, are known as the CICATS M1 Mentors.

I have prepared a guideline and included two articles that offer good advice about selecting a lab. The information in these articles is relevant to the process you are currently undergoing and can be applied to a variety of research environments.

If you have any questions or issues, please contact Lana at langelo@uchc.edu. She will be able to guide you to the correct resources or assist in addressing your concerns.

Linda Barry, M.D., FACS
Director, Young Innovative Investigator Program
Assistant Professor, Department of Surgery
Chief Operating Officer and Assistant Director
Connecticut Institute for Clinical and Translational Science
University of Connecticut
GUIDELINES FOR CHOOSING THE BEST LAB FOR YOU

1. Look at the focus of the research conducted in the lab to see if it aligns with your area of interest. You may not find your exact area of interest but it may have relevance to your interest, or you may learn skills that are transferable. For example, if neuroscience research is an area you want to learn more about, someone conducting basic science research in epilepsy could be a possible option.

2. Check out the faculty profiles of the Lab Mentors on the University of Connecticut Health Center Faculty Directory. You can access the CVs for most of the faculty and obtain information about their research and publications. Keep in mind that some of the info may be outdated as the directory relies on each individual to maintain their entry.

3. Look for evidence of a productive lab so that you have an increased chance of being productive in terms of conducting research which will result in opportunities to write papers and make scientific presentations. This includes:
   • Number of publications and recent publications (with the past 2 years)
   • Number of research grants and amount, particularly from NIH
   • Track record of former student who have rotated through their lab
     - How productive were the students?

4. Regarding publications:
   • Check out to see which publications are reflective of novel research rather than reviews.
   • How often does a student appear as first author?
   • What is their policy for authorship?
   • Check to see if affiliations of other authors is reflective of collaborations with other labs.
   • Read some of the publications to get a sense of the research

5. Conduct your own research on the lab and the work they do. A few good places to start are Google, Google Scholar, PubMed, and the UConn Health website. Under each mentor, we listed keywords that help to characterize their research and assist in conducting online searches.

6. Talk with other graduate students (former and current) to get their perspective and insight on their experience. (Lana can provide you with the names of some students in some of the labs.)

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7. The Research project
   - How are projects assigned?
   - What will you be working on?
   - What are the Lab Mentor’s expectations of you?
   - Is there an alternative option or multiple paths the research can take in case your project does not work out in the first round? The goal is to work on a project that has a high probability of success.
   - Are the lab mentors available to consult with you during the course of the project and able to give you feedback and guidance?
   - Can the project be successfully completed within one year? This is particularly important if you have chosen to pursue a Graduate Certificate in Biomedical Research or if you are unsure at this time whether to pursue the Masters.

8. Contact the Lab Mentors and start narrowing down your choices.
   - It is important for you to do your preliminary research and obtain as much information as possible on the Lab Mentor and the lab before contacting him or her.
   - Whomever you choose to be your Lab Mentor will also serve as your official graduate school advisor. So, it is important that you feel comfortable with that person since you will need to consult with them. They will be involved in giving feedback on course selection, etc.
   - Find out about their time commitments. How often will he or she be able to meet with you one-on-one? Do they have an “open door policy” or do you have to make appointments in advance?
   - Will you be fully integrated into the lab, i.e., attend lab meetings and other lab related activities?
   - If you have the opportunity to attend any of the lab meetings beforehand, take advantage or ask if you could attend. It is an opportunity to see how the lab team members interact and to understand how the lab runs.

It is important to have a list of the few Mentors from which you are going to choose prior to your arrival. I recommend first reaching out to them via email. When you arrive, we expect you to have already coordinated with the people you are considering to meet so that you have the opportunity to sit and talk with them one-on-one. This needs to be done prior to the deadline of 8/22/14 since we need to know the name of the mentor and which lab you selected on that day. For many of you, this will only be a year long program so it is important to get you settled in a lab as soon as possible.