Message from the Director

2016 has been a very successful year for the LSU IMSD Program: our second graduate scholar, Andreas Villalpando, obtained his Ph.D. in Chemistry in May 2016 and 5 IMSD undergraduate scholars obtained their B. Sc. degrees, from LSU. Dr. Villalpando is currently a Research Chemist at the United States Department of Agriculture Laboratory in New Orleans, LA. Two former IMSD undergraduate scholars, Cristina Jones andVyron George, both obtained their Ph.D.s from Georgia Tech this year. Our IMSD scholars continue to be recognized at LSU and around the Nation for their outstanding academic and research achievements, with a number of them winning awards in 2016, including the Forever LSU Ring Award (Vernon Dunn), a 2016 American Chemical Society Scholars Award (Sierra Sterling), a 2016 LSU Leadership Cohort Award (Zachary Murphy), and a poster award at the 2016 Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (Joselyn Knowling). During the past year, Professor Isiah Warner, Co-PI of the LSU IMSD Program received several awards, including being named the 2016 SEC Professor of the Year. Congratulations to all! I am so proud of all our distinguished students, faculty and staff and I can’t wait to hear about their achievements in the coming years! I wish you all a successful 2017 and invite you to visit the IMSD Program website (www.lsu.edu/imsd) and to participate in the online forum to read of the most recent news about our Program, to find new opportunities, and to meet new friends and collaborators. Geaux Tigers!

Graça Vicente, Ph.D.
IMSD Director

IMSD Scholar Wins Poster Awards

IMSD Scholar, Joselyn Knowling won three poster awards during the Fall 2016 semester. She won first place at the Phi Zeta competition at the LSU veterinary school in September, first place in the level I poster category at the LSU Undergraduate Research Conference in October, and top 5% at the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS) in Tampa, Florida in November for her poster titled, “Both Interleukin (IL)-1a and IL-b Contribute to Host Protection Against Pulmonary Klebsiella Pneumoniae Infection”. Joselyn is a junior IMSD scholar conducting research in the laboratory of Dr. Samithamby Jeyaseelan in the Department of Pathobiological Sciences at the School of Veterinary Medicine. Joselyn plans to receive her bachelor’s degree in May 2018 and enroll in an MD/PhD program.
HONORS & AWARDS

Dr. Isiah Warner, Co-PI of the LSU IMSD Program, received the following Awards and Honors in recognition of his many achievements:

2016 National Academy of Inventors Fellow
2016 Named SEC Professor of the year
2016 Member of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences
2016 Men Who Champion Women Honoree

Scholar Awards

Brandon Byrd received a poster award at the National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers (NOBCChE) Regional Meeting in April 2016.

Vernon Dunn received the Forever LSU Ring Award in April 2016.

Asenath Francis received the 2016 Tiger Athletic Foundation Honors Thesis Fellowship, the LSU Department of Chemistry Outstanding Undergraduate Research Achievement Award, the LSU Hypercube Scholar Award, and also received the Best Poster Award on Colloids and Surface Science at the American Chemical Society (ACS) National Meeting that took place in March 2016.

Joselyn Knowling received first place at the Phi Zeta poster competition at LSU VetMed in September 2016, first place at the LSU Undergraduate Research Conference poster competition in October 2016, and top 5% poster award at the ABRCMS Conference in Tampa, Florida in November 2016.

Zackari Murphy was named one of the 2016 LSU Leadership Cohort and he was recipient of the BMLI Kerry Pourciau & Kirk Bennett Scholarship Award.

Danielle Quintero received the 2016 Black Scholars Award.

Sierra Sterling received the 2016 ACS Scholars Program Scholarship.

Hayley Theriot received the Louisiana Association of Student Assistance Program Scholarship.

Chancellor’s list (2016)- Christina Rubio
Dean's list (2016)- Asenath Francis, Brea Manuel, Jonte Ellison, Zackari Murphy, Brandon Byrd

2016 Graduates

Brandon Byrd, B.S. in Biochemistry (Fall 2016)
Taylor Ferguson, B.S. in Petroleum Engineering (Spring 2016)
Asenath Francis, B.S. in Chemistry (Spring 2016)
Zackari Murphy, B.S. in Psychology (Spring 2016)
Craig Richard, B.S. in Biological Engineering (Spring 2016)
Past to Present:
Where are they now?

Paige Chandler
Doctoral Candidate
The Huck Institutes for the Life Sciences
Pennsylvania State University
LSU IMSD Scholar: 2009 – 2011

I was first introduced to research in my junior year (2009) through the IMSD program at LSU. Gretchen Schneider was introduced to me through a mutual contact, and it was Gretchen who encouraged me to attend IMSD meetings. IMSD showcased how important, exciting, and rewarding research could be. During my time as a member of the IMSD program, I worked with 4 research teams, published 1 paper, and attended 2 conferences. It was such a rewarding experience that helped me transition from an undergraduate to a graduate research setting.

Currently, I am completing my doctoral degree in the Integrative and Biomedical Physiology program at The Pennsylvania State University. My research focuses on the role of proteolytic systems in regulating skeletal muscle hypertrophy. Skeletal muscle hypertrophy requires increased rates of protein synthesis which exceed those of protein degradation. However, protein degradation and turnover in skeletal muscle is equally as important during hypertrophy. Inhibition of proteolytic systems, namely the 26S proteasome, leads to defects in skeletal muscle growth and function. My primary research objective is to determine the role of the 26S proteasome in regulating ribosome biogenesis and skeletal muscle hypertrophy.

Post-graduation, I intend to find employment as a scientific advisor in intellectual property law. I was first introduced to this field through the many career workshops hosted by the university. Traditionally, obtaining a PhD meant that you would work as a post-doctoral fellow and eventually hold your own Associate Professorship as an academic research scientist. However, there are many alternative careers, that are equally rewarding, that hire persons with a doctorate. As is the case for intellectual property, applicants with doctoral degrees are important because we have the ability to critically think, problem solve, and because we understand the principles of science. Many research groups have developed technologies that can be used in the diagnosis and/or treatment of disease. These technologies need to be patented and protected. This is where the expertise of a scientific advisor becomes critical. I would encourage every member of the IMSD program to keep an open-mind about potential careers post-graduation.
Community Outreach

IMSD Scholars volunteered at the 29th annual Super Science Saturday on October 29, 2016. The event consisted of 19 stations with activities aimed at children from kindergarten through high school. Super Science Saturday incorporated aspects of National Chemistry Week, which was themed “Chemistry Colors Our World.” Many of the booths provided candy and other materials to participants visiting the booth or taking part in an experiment. The event attracted over 950 K-12 students from the community and promotes excitement and creative thinking in science and technology. Other outreach activities by IMSD scholars include tutoring and demonstrations at Baton Rouge K-12 schools.

Upcoming Seminars

Jan. 20, 2017 at 2:00 PM 210 Choppin Hall
“Mentoring to Diversify the Biomedical Workforce”
Rafael Luna, Ph.D.
PI and Executive Director of the Administrative Core of the National Research Mentoring Network (NRMN)
Welcome Back Meeting
Program Staff

Jan. 27, 2017 at 2:30 PM 210 Choppin Hall
Michael Easson, Ph.D.
Research Chemist
USDA Southern Regional Research Center
New Orleans, Louisiana

Feb. 10, 2017 at 2:30 pm 210 Choppin Hall
Meet & Greet: 1:30-2:15, 212 Choppin
Gladys Alexandre, Ph.D.
Professor and Associate head
Department of Biochemistry, Cellular and Molecular Biology
Program for Excellence and Equity in Research (PEER), PI
University of Tennessee

March 3, 2017 at 2:30 PM in 210 Choppin
Meet & Greet: 1:30-2:15, 212 Choppin
David A. Colby, Pharm.D., Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Medicinal Chemistry
Department of BioMolecular Science
University of Mississippi

March 10, 2017 at 2:30 PM 210 Choppin Hall
Meet & Greet: 1:30-2:15, 212 Choppin
Laura Ackerman, Ph.D.
Postdoctoral Fellow
Department of Chemistry
Princeton University

Friday, March 31, 2017 at 2:30 PM 210 Choppin Hall
Paige Chandler (former LSU IMSD Scholar)
Doctoral Candidate
The Huck Institutes of the Life Sciences
Pennsylvania State University

Friday, April 21, 2017 at 2:30 pm 210 Choppin Hall
IMSD Program goals, outcomes and evaluation
Eugene Kennedy, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
LSU School of Education

2016 Publications by IMSD Scholars


For more event information, visit the on-line forum: lsuimsd.forumotion.net