Dear faculty and fellow students,

I hope your fall semester is treating you well. For the BGSA, fall means welcoming new students to the University of Pittsburgh with our annual orientation picnic. The event has past and a good time was had by all. We are looking forward to next year. Fall also means BGSA elections. We have recently selected our new BGSA board, which you can find attached on the last page of this newsletter. If you would like to get involved with the BGSA, it's not too late! Come to our next meeting on October 5th at 1:30 in BST 995. We would love to see you at the next meeting. Finally, save the date for the BGSA symposium, which will be November 4th. Abstract deadlines are coming up soon. We encourage all BGSA members to participate. Here's to a great fall semester!

Greg Logan
BGSA President
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Comprehensive Exam Panel Helps Students Prep for Qualifying Season

Second year graduate students are beginning to prepare for a huge milestone of their graduate school careers, passing the comprehensive exam. On March 25, representatives from all of the IBGP programs formed a panel for first and second year students to hear advice and ask questions about the upcoming exams. After offering general advice, small groups were formed based on program specific comprehensive exam guidelines. For those who may have missed the event, here is some great advice that was given: 1) Take the exam seriously, being over-prepared is better than being under-prepared 2) Practice makes perfect, practice with anyone you can 3) Know your committee and premeditate questions they might ask and 4) Do not panic. Keep calm and comprehensive exam on! - Abby Stahl

Dave & Buster's Night

On March 18, graduate students from the School of Medicine took a night off of lab to enjoy comradery, food, and games at the arcade for "grown-ups", Dave & Buster's, located at the Waterfront. The BGSA advertised the event through departmental emails and disseminated tickets through Eventbrite. The social event included $30 of free game play and a smorgasbord of appetizers, including loaded tots where $1 of every purchase benefitted the Make-A-Wish foundation. Over 30 attendees were present at the event from programs including Pathology, Pharmacology, Molecular Virology and Microbiology, Immunology, Cell Biology, IBGP First Year, Bioinformatics, and Neuroscience. Attendees mingled with students from different programs, shared appetizers family style, and competed in skee-ball for hundreds of tickets. This event strengthened bonds between graduate students and programs in the School of Medicine. - Abby Stahl

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Save the date!

- September 25th: BGSA Symposium Abstract Deadline
- September (TBD): BGSA elections
- November 4th: BGSA Symposium
This January, the BGSA and WSMA led an inter-departmental Student Writing Seminar Series for pre-doctoral trainees. Drs. Jennifer Bomberger and Donald DeFranco introduced tips on manuscript organization and the editor review process. Faculty and post-doctoral volunteers worked one-on-one with pre-doctoral students to edit written samples and provide constructive feedback. — Nyla Naim

BGSA & WSMA Host Third Annual

Doctoral Directions Conference

The University of Pittsburgh’s Women in Science and Medicine Association (WSMA) was excited to collaborate with the Biomedical Graduate Student Association to sponsor its third annual conference: “Doctoral Directions: Learning to Lead in Biomedicine.” This forward-looking program, held March 5-6, 2015, opened on Thursday evening featuring two exciting keynote talks. Joanne Kamens, PhD, Executive Director at Addgene, spoke about active networking and how to practice networking throughout training. Wiley “Chip” Souba, MD, Dean Emeritus of The Geisel School of Medicine, delivered a compelling speech on how to “Level the Playing Field” in the arena of leadership! Students were seated in multidisciplinary groups over dinner to encourage the exchange of ideas. Students were also able to interact with local faculty leaders who graciously volunteered their time to facilitate active mentoring. Thursday evening culminated in a panel discussion with local biomedical experts on work-balance and leadership in the workplace. Our panelists were Denise Charron-Prochownik, PhD (Department Chair of Health Promotion and Development), Kacey Mara, PhD (Associate Professor in the Departments of Plastic Surgery and Bioengineering), David Permuter, MD (Physician-in-Chief and Scientific Director of Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC), and Nathan Urban, PhD (Dr. Frederick A. Schwartz Distinguished Professor of Life Sciences, Interim Provost, Carnegie Mellon University). Students engaged the panelists in a range of questions regarding career trajectory, leadership and balance.

Friday’s day-long program featured leadership development activities beginning with a dynamic keynote address from Joanne Kamens, PhD on practical ways to achieve Work Life Balance. This was followed by an interactive leadership session from Wiley “Chip” Souba, MD who discussed how to look at leadership training and development outside of traditional leadership methods in a talk entitled “Flipping the Leadership Paradigm”. Following the keynote addresses, students engaged in an interactive communication lunch with table topics relevant to their training and prepared for afternoon breakout sessions. Breakout sessions were hosted by Ora Weisz, PhD, Professor and Vice Chair of Faculty Development, Department of Medicine, Marion Skalweit, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor of Medicine and Biochemistry, Case Western Reserve University, and Angela M. Gronenborn, PhD, UPMC Rosalind Franklin Professor and Chair, Department of Structural Biology, who spoke about Effective Interviewing Strategies, Time Management Techniques, and Transdisciplinary Research, respectively. The afternoon concluded with a Mentorship workshop entitled, “How to be and Effective Mentee” lead by Doris Rubio, PhD, Professor of Medicine, Biostatistics, Nursing, and Clinical and Translational Science and Linda McAllister-Lucas, MD PhD, Chief of Hematology/Oncology and Associate Professor of Pediatrics, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. Finally, students had the opportunity to share their scholarly work at the Doctoral Directions Poster Session and Abstract competition!

Altogether Doctoral Directions is an evolving trainee-focused experience that aims to facilitate long-term career accomplishment and satisfaction, - Rachel Gordon

BGSA & WSMA Writing Seminar

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Student Publications & Presentations

**CMP:**


**MBSB:**

**Mol Pharm:**
Mutchler SM, Straub AC. Compartmentalized nitric oxide signaling in the resistance vasculature. Nitric Oxide. 2015 May 28. PMID: 26028569


2015-2016 BGSA Executive Board

Executive Board

President: Aliyah Weinstein (Imm)
VP of Records: Abby Stahl (CMP)
VP of Finance: Jennifer Boatz (MBSB)
VP of Communications: Gregory Logan (CMP)
VP of University Outreach: Elizabeth Dahlburg (MBSB)
VP of Programming: (Vacant position)

Representatives

First Year representatives: Sarah Dremel and Benjamin Warner

Biomedical Informatics: Amie Draper

Cellular Biology and Molecular Physiology: Ademayowa Balogun

Cellular and Molecular Pathology: Morgan Preziosi

Clinical and Translational Science: Alyce Anderson

Computational Biology: Kristina Buschur

Immunology: Agustin Cruz and Adolfo Frias

Molecular Biophysics and Structural Biology: Lisa Clark

Molecular Genetics, Developmental Biology: Adetunji Fayomi

Molecular Virology and Microbiology: Mondraya Howard, Justin Wendzicki, and Eileen Wong

Neuroscience Puja Parekh

Pharmacology: Nyla Naim and Shireen Attaran

Integrated Systems Biology: (Vacant position)