HAPPY NEW YEAR

FACULTY NEWS and NOTES

Promotions
Wilfredo (Freddy) Colón to Full Professor in the Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology.
K. V. Lakshmi to Associate Professor with Tenure in the Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology.

Lee Ligon, Associate Professor of Biology, and two of her graduate students, Josh McLane and Syeda Zaki, attended the 2012 Annual Meeting of the American Society for Cell Biology in San Francisco in December. Josh McLane presented a poster entitled "A fibrous model of the tumor stromal microenvironnent promotes mesenchymal morphology but not EMT in epithelial cells," which represents a collaboration between the Ligon lab in Biology and Ryan Gilbert's lab in Biomedical Engineering. Syeda Zaki presented a poster entitled, "Changes in the post-translational modification of tubulin in response to ATP-depletion," which represents a collaboration between the Ligon lab and Barbara Danowski of Union College. Dr. Ligon is a member of the Public Information Committee of the ASCB, and in that guise, she participated in press briefings and communications and the annual Cell Dance Video contest. In addition, she spearheaded a new venture by the Public Information Committee -- an Elevator Speech Contest. Over thirty contestants vied for prizes (iPad minis!) and glory to "sell their science" to a lay audience in less than two minutes!

Joyce McLaughlin Named Inaugural Fellow of American Mathematical Society
Nonlinear analysis expert Joyce McLaughlin, Ford Foundation Professor in the Department of Mathematical Sciences, has been named an inaugural fellow of the American Mathematical Society (AMS).
http://www.rpi.edu/about/inside/issue/v6n19/math.html?utm_source=ipost&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=bulletin

George Plopper, Professor of Biology, is a member of the Education Committee in the American Society for Cell Biology, and at its annual meeting in December 2012, the committee ran nine education-based activities, including a workshop on career preparation in teaching, a training session for K-12 teachers, two education initiative forums, and three roundtable discussions in career advancement. George led two breakout sessions for the workshop on "Packing Yourself for College Teaching in Your Career;" and one roundtable discussion on accessing online teaching resources.

Donald W. Schwendeman, Professor of Mathematics, was appointed Head of the Department of Mathematical Sciences.
**RESEARCH NEWS and NOTES**

Dr. Daniel Ruscitto, Laboratory Manager in the Department of Earth and Environmental Science, was awarded a NSF EAR Instrumentation and Facilities grant to upgrade the Earth and Environmental Sciences Electron Microprobe Laboratory. This upgrade will include some of the most sophisticated software currently available to the electron beam microanalytical community and greatly benefit both the larger Rensselaer community and the broader Upstate New York/New England region by enhancing our current capabilities as a regional facility.

**STUDENT NEWS and NOTES**

Rensselaer Awarded Gift to Establish Fellowship in Astrobiology

Grant From Emily Landecker Foundation Advances Interdisciplinary Study

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute announced a $480,000 gift from the Emily Landecker Foundation. The gift will establish the James P. Ferris Fellowship in Astrobiology, which will support graduate students in the School of Science pursuing research in the interdisciplinary field of astrobiology. The fellowship is named in honor of Ferris, an emeritus professor of chemistry and chemical biology, currently a senior research professor, and a member of the New York Center for Astrobiology at Rensselaer.

http://news.rpi.edu/update.do?artcenterkey=3121

**STAFF NEWS and NOTES**

Lynn Radlick, Laboratory Manager in the Department of Biology recently placed first in her division in the Troy Turkey Trot 10K Race on Thanksgiving Day, November 22, 2012. Congratulations Lynn!

**ALUMNI/AE NEWS and NOTES**

First Two Graduates of the Accelerated BS/PhD Program

Amanda Wait Lund, Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, says: “Things are going well here in Switzerland, last year I published a paper in Cell Reports (Lund et al Cell Reports 2011 VEGF-C promotes immune tolerance in B16 melanomas and cross-presentation of tumor antigen by lymph node lymphatics) and a review in Nature Reviews Cancer (Swartz and Lund 2011 Nat Rev Cancer Lymphatic and interstitial flow in the tumor microenvironment: linking mechanobiology with immunity).”

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Jordan Mader

“Hi Prof. Siegmann,”

I wanted to write with some good news. I know that Amanda Lund and I were sort of your trial cases for the 7 year program, and after just checking the website, I see that is alive and well, and that is fantastic
news. I’m writing because I told you way back in the day that I wanted to go into academia, and now I’m officially here, and I wouldn’t be without the 7 year program! After I finished my PhD with Brian Benicewicz (now at University of South Carolina), and completed a short post-doc at USC, I spent two wonderful years at Georgia Southern University as a temporary instructor, getting the teaching experience we just didn’t have time to squeeze in with the accelerated program. Through the kindness of my department head and another faculty member there, I was also able to obtain a little lab space, a little money, and one phenomenal undergraduate student to do research with on two projects. Though GSU offered me a Lecturer position, I knew my passion for research had been sparked back in the early days of undergrad at RPI, and I am pleased to say that I have been a tenure-track assistant professor at Shepherd University in WV since August, where I am the Organic Chemistry Guru (as I like to call it). It has been a very smooth transition for me to set up labs for both teaching and research, as well as move to the front of the classroom, because the education and experiences I was provided at RPI were so solid and well-rounded. I cannot thank you enough for the opportunity to be a part of this program, and I want you to know that it has been essential in getting me to my career goals and also addressing my passion for chemistry and teaching. Additionally, I just received a $20,000 grant to buy a TGA (Thermogravimetric Analyzer) for both research and teaching use, and most of the reviewers comments spoke to my strong, prestigious background and education, and excellent publication record, which would not have been possible without the opportunity provided by this program and without your and Brian’s support.”

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Harry Wiedemeier, Professor Emeritus of Chemistry, notes that one of his former students, Frank J. Csillag, has recently been promoted to Vice President of Research and Development of Saint Gobain, France. Frank's thesis was entitled: The Chemical Vapor Transport, Crystal Growth and Thermodynamic Properties of Selected Tin Chalcogenides. He submitted his thesis in July 1979, for graduation in May 1980. He and Professor Wiedemeier had numerous joint publications that indicate his outstanding contributions to Rensselaer’s crystal growth activities over many years. His contributions to science in general are reflected in his promotion to VP of R&D. Saint-Gobain, S. A. is a multinational corporation, founded in 1665 in Paris with headquarters on the outskirts of Paris, at La Defense and in Courbevoie. Frank lives in Hopkinton, MA, with his wife Angie, and he is responsible for the activities of some 28 Gobain companies in 26 different countries.

This newsletter is prepared monthly during the academic year and distributed to School of Science faculty, staff, students and alumni to highlight accomplishments and events within the school. Please submit news items for the next newsletter to Samuel Wait, Associate Dean Emeritus of Science, at waitsc@rpi.edu