Hard to believe we are now well into the winter term and have survived Fall exams and a hectic holiday season. The Fall saw us begin to implement the first phase of our new undergraduate curriculum with several new courses, revamped old ones, and a cross-program emphasis on problem solving and communication skills. Early indications from students and faculty show that we are on the right track. Our goal is to be the most innovative and sought after program in the country and we are well on our way. Many thanks to Michelle MacDonald and the members of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee for their enthusiasm and hard work.

On the research front we also had a great term. The early results from the CIHR competition indicated that most of our faculty successfully renewed their grants and importantly, scored among the best in their panels. Furthermore, faculty continue to publish in the best journals in their field and several made covers last year including Justin Nodwell’s work that made the cover of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science USA (Vol 101, issue 31) and recently, Joaquin Ortega’s first paper as an independent researcher made the cover of the Journal of Molecular Biology (Vol 346, issue 5). Eric Brown was also named the winner of this year’s Merck Frosst Prize that recognizes his outstanding research achievements at this early stage of his career. All these accolades are testimony to the depth of our research enterprise and it is a delight to acknowledge them.

This term we face some significant challenges in maintaining our gains in research and in education in the face of the budgetary constraints that permeate the system. We will nonetheless continue to fight the good fight, and hopefully the Rae report will catalyze concrete actions to improve post-secondary funding. I encourage all of you to take every opportunity to inform your MPs, MPPs on the value of your experience here at McMaster and on the importance of continued support for research and education.

Best wishes,

Gerard D. Wright, Chair
Students, faculty and teaching assistants alike are enjoying a short break from the hustle and bustle of the academic year during Reading Week. It is also that time of year again when our level III specialization students are busy selecting supervisors for their senior thesis. Permission forms for 4P03, 4B06 and 4F09 are due by March 1st in the new undergraduate office which is now located in HSC 4H43-44.

There is one new course in the department that has quickly gained popularity this year. BIOCHEM 3A03 "Biochemical Research Practice" is a course that offers students the flexibility to conduct a Biochemistry research project during the fall, winter or summer term at a location of their choice to gain valuable research experience. Please come to the undergraduate office or go to our website for an application package and more information on this new course.

The Science Coop Office will be holding information sessions on March 2 at 11:30am in GS/218, March 10 at 6:30pm in GS/218 or March 15 at 6:30pm in GS/102 for students in level II who may be interested in applying to the coop programme for this fall. For more information on the coop programme, please visit http://www.science.mcmaster.ca/cooped/

The BBS undergraduate student society is also planning this year's formal that will take place on Friday, April 1st at the Liuna Station.

On May 7th, the University will host its annual open house ‘May@Mac’, where prospective students and their families converge on McMaster to gather information about various programmes and see what the University has to offer. The Department of Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences will have displays and interactive demonstrations in the teaching lab where faculty members and graduate students will be present to answer questions about our programmes. We will again be looking for volunteers to assist in this important event!

Lastly, we are very proud of our undergraduate students who were recently the recipients of a number of distinguished university awards. Congratulations to all!

Michelle MacDonald
Undergraduate Coordinator

Millennium Scholarships were awarded to Pamela An and Gillian Watson ($4,000 value).

The Dr. Harry Lyman Hooker Scholarships were awarded to: Pamela An, Menat Attia, Clinton Campbell, Andrew Chuang, Laura Ens, Ryan Foster, Bartlomiej Kalata, Kimberley Kitto, Adeel Mahmood, Mark Maraschiello and Michael Ventresca ($1,500 value).

The Valley City Manufacturing Co. Ltd. Scholarship was awarded to Andrew Brown ($1,500 value).

The University (Senate) Scholarship was awarded to: Julie Bennett, Daniela Damjanovic, Daniel Garden, Mark Germano, Andrew Giacomelli, Derke Ho, Graham Jansz, Adam Jarczyn, Kyung-Wook Kim, Madhanki Kumaresan, Julie Lebert, Sylvie Pillon, Elizabeth Stoesser and Kin Wong ($800 value).

The Elizabeth Mosgrove Scholarship was awarded to Laura Marshal ($800 value).

The Edwin Mazrwin Dalley Memorial Scholarship was awarded to Wing Mok and Lindsay Matthews ($800 value).

The Yates Scholarship was awarded to Kim Blakely ($800 value).

The Science Alumni Scholarship was awarded to Denise Balkissoon ($500 value).

The Canadian Society for Chemistry Prize was awarded to Adell Mahmood (Medal).

The J.L.W. Gill Prize was awarded to Andrew Chuang ($300 value).

The NEW BBS Undergraduate Office is located at HSC 4H43/44. Dr. Michelle MacDonald, BBS Undergraduate Program Coordinator and Mary Margaret Strong, Undergraduate Assistant will be pleased to assist you with all your undergraduate program queries.
Graduate Program Update

Our active graduate student recruiting mechanisms continue. Our third graduate open house (February 12th) was attended by more than 30 prospective graduate students – a record for this event so far. This included students from all of the major universities in Ontario as well as several students from Quebec. The Department has not established a target number for graduate student intake, however, we anticipate that we will recruit at least as many students as last year.

We continue to stress excellence in our graduate student intake. Students entering our program with first class honours in their undergraduate degree will receive $2500 upon entry into the program. Students entering our program with an OGS or NSERC graduate scholarship will receive $4000 and $6500 respectively. These awards supplement those we have for in-program students including the Thomas Neilson award for the top reclassification exam and the Karl Freeman Awards for top student seminars, and our three annual Impact awards of $2000, $3000 and $4000 for high impact publications. To facilitate student travel to scientific meetings, we have twenty travel scholarships valued at up to $500.

The past year has also seen the efforts of numerous MSc and PhD candidates come to fruition. Congratulations to all for successfully defending. Good luck and a bright future to you all!

Justin Nodwell, Graduate Coordinator

GRADUATE AWARDS

PhD Defenses


MSc Defenses


Faculty Highlights

**V. Ananthanarayanan**, Christy Thompson and Helen Atkinson filed a Provisional patent application on ‘Inhibitors of collagen biosynthesis’ on Feb 7, 2005. This is based on the results published in the J Med Chem (Feb 24th issue). Also, Ananth and PhD student Aaron Kermin had a paper published in Biochim. Biophys. Acta (Feb 14 issue).

**Richard Epand** delivered the plenary lecture at the international conference in Belgium on "Motifs for peptide interactions with membranes and their functions". He, along with Raquel, were on the International organizing committee for this conference. He also presented seminars at the Biozentrum of the University of Basel, Switzerland, the Institut National de la Sante et de la Recherche Medicale in the Atomic Energy Centre of Grenoble, France, the Huntsman Cancer Research Centre, Univ. of Utah and at the NIH in Bethesda, MD. Dr. Epand gave a talk at the Biophysical Society Meeting in Long Beach, CA where he and collaborators also presented six posters. He was invited to be a Discussant at the Biophysical Discussions in Asilomar, CA on membrane microdomains, and also at the meeting of the Membrane Structure and Assembly Symposium of the Biophysical Society. Dr. Epand has been appointed Executive Editor of the Biomembranes section of Biochim. Biophys. Acta.

**Jack Gauldie** has been appointed as Director of the Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology (MOBIX) from Jan 1/05-June 30/08.

**Yingfu Li**’s senior graduate student, Razvan Nutiu won the top prize in the poster competition at the Biocontact 2005 conference in Quebec. The prize consisted of a $3,000 check and an all expense paid invitation to present his work at Biovision 2005 conference to be held in April in Lyon, France (http://www.biovision.org).

**Joaquin Ortega** was awarded the New Opportunities Fund grant from CFI/OIT ($275,368) which he is going to use to upgrade the existing Field Emission Gun electron microscope in the Materials Science and Engineering Department to be able to do cryo-electron microscopy with biological samples. It will be the first such microscope in Eastern Canada that is able to image biological samples at liquid nitrogen temperatures. Joaquín also published his first ‘made at McMaster’ paper. The paper reports the 3-dimensional reconstruction of the PA200-20S proteasome complex and will be published in the March issue of the Journal of Molecular Medicine and has also made the cover of the Journal.

**Sujata Persad** received a 3 year CIHR operating grant ($89,613/yr) and she was also successful in the CFI/OIT New Opportunities funding program ($200,162).

**Jeffrey Weitz** contributed to the 80th Anniversary issue of the J. of Clinical Investigation. His paper on clot-bound thrombin and heparin inhibition, from 1990, remains one of the most highly cited papers from the journal’s 80 year history.