Awards and Recognitions

**Dr. Ruthanne “Rudi” Thompson**, Associate Professor in Biological Sciences, is the recipient of the 2015 President’s Council Teaching Award. This award was established to recognize a full-time, tenure/tenure-track faculty member for a record of teaching excellence at the University of North Texas for at least a five-year period.

**Tushar Sirsat**, a graduate student in Associate Professor Ed Dzialowski’s lab received 2nd place in the Scholander Award presented by the Comparative & Evolutionary Physiology Section of the American Physiological Society for his presentation at the Experimental Biology meeting, which was held in Boston in April 2015.

**Laci Adolfo**, graduate student in University Distinguished Research Professor Richard Dixon’s lab, received a Graduate Student Support Grant to attend the Plant Metabolic Engineering Gordon Research Conference in Waterville Valley, New Hampshire, July 2015.


**Dr. Lina Gallego-Giraldo**, postdoctoral fellow in Dr. Richard Dixon’s lab, received a UNT Postdoc Travel Award to attend the Plant Cell Walls Gordon Research Conference at Bentley University, Waltham, Massachusetts, July 12-17, 2015.

The Department of Biological Sciences held its annual Honors Reception at The Greenhouse Restaurant on April 20th, 2015. The undergraduate scholarship awardees for the 2015/16 academic year were recognized as well as our Outstanding Senior recipients and our Outstanding TAs for the 2014/15 academic year. The Department of Biological Sciences has made the following awards of undergraduate scholarships for the 2015/16 academic year:

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<th>Scholarship</th>
<th>Student</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tadd Lott Memorial Scholarship</td>
<td>Namgel Sherpa</td>
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<td>Eugene Medford Scholarship</td>
<td>Pinky Gurung</td>
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<td>Rollie and Sue Schafer Award</td>
<td>Zina Fang</td>
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<td>Blair Scholarship</td>
<td>Lauryn Williams</td>
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<td>Tracy Quay Memorial Scholarship</td>
<td>Stephanie Samuel</td>
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<td>Gladys Crawford Scholarship</td>
<td>Lauryn Williams</td>
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<td>Gladys Crawford Scholarship</td>
<td>Sumbul Shaikh</td>
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<td>David Redden Pre-Professional Award</td>
<td>Bradley Osemwengie</td>
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<td>David Redden Pre-Professional Award</td>
<td>Matthew Grey</td>
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<td>David Redden Pre-Professional Award</td>
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<td>David Redden Pre-Professional Award</td>
<td>Pedro Pacheco</td>
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<td>David Redden Pre-Professional Award</td>
<td>Sarah Manning</td>
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<td>David Redden Pre-Professional Award</td>
<td>Duong Anh Dang</td>
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<td>David Redden Pre-Professional Award</td>
<td>Sol Svensson</td>
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Also awarded at the Honors Reception were Outstanding Senior Scholarships to Delaram Mostafavi and Duong Anh Dang, and the Outstanding Teaching Assistant awards to Jessica Beckham, Richard Hale, and Thomas (Ty) Curran.
**Other News**

The Biology Graduate Student Association (BGSA) hosted the Biology Graduate Student Research Day on April 17th, 2015. Dr. John R Dorgan, Professor and Director, Institute for Advanced Composite Manufacturing Innovation, Chemical & Biological Engineering, Colorado School of Mines, delivered the keynote lecture “Advancement of the Science and Technology of Biobased Polymers, Polymer Membranes, and the Computer Simulation of Polymeric Materials” at this event, which was sponsored by the Department of Biological Sciences, the Graduate Student Council, and the Eagle Nest Funding. Biological Sciences graduate students presented their research in the form of oral and poster presentations. In the oral competition, Hemalatha Sundaramoorthi and Amy Wynia, were placed first and second, respectively. In the posters competition, Mearaj Shaikh finished at the top, the team of Shaun Jones and Rohan Batlanki were placed second, and Garima Saxena placed third.

Dr. Ruthanne “Rudi” Thompson, Associate Professor in Biological Sciences, was appointed Co-director of the Teach North Texas program at UNT.

Dr. Kent Chapman, Regents Professor, was appointed as Executive Editor for the journal “Progress in Lipid Research”- An Elsevier review-oriented journal featuring topics in biochemistry, molecular biology, biophysics and chemistry of lipids with a 5-y impact factor of 12.20. [http://www.journals.elsevier.com/progress-in-lipid-research/](http://www.journals.elsevier.com/progress-in-lipid-research/)

Dr. Jeff Johnson, Associate Professor in Biological Sciences, was awarded a Visiting Erskine Fellowship at University of Canterbury in New Zealand during May and June. This fellowship allowed Dr. Johnson to interact and develop collaborations with researchers at University of Canterbury and also teach an undergraduate course focused on Evolution.

UNT Biological Sciences alumnus Dr. Nicole Palenske (PhD 2011; Advisor: Dr. Ed Dzialowski) was promoted to Associate Professor with Tenure at Central College in Pella, IA

**Thesis and Dissertations**

Jantana Keereetaweep defended her Ph.D. dissertation in April 2015. Dissertation title: Metabolism and action of polyunsaturated N-acyl ethanolamines in Arabidopsis thaliana seedlings. Jantana’s major professor was Dr. Kent Chapman. In June 2015, Jantana moved to Long Island, NY where she is now a postdoctoral associate with Dr. John Shanklin at the US Department of Energy’s Brookhaven National Laboratory.


Jessica Treviño successfully defended her MS thesis in June 2015. Thesis title: Effects of macrophyte functional diversity on taxonomic and functional diversity and stability of tropical floodplain fish assemblages. Dr. David J. Hoeinghaus, Assistant Professor in Biological Sciences was her advisor. Jessica was a U.S. Fulbright Scholar, and is now working for the US Geological Survey in Fort Worth, Texas.

**New Faculty/ Staff Appointments and Visiting Scientists**

Dr. Ratnesh Chaturvedi joined Dr. Richard Dixon’s lab as a Postdoctoral Research Associate and is working on plant-based sesquiterpene biofuels through a grant with Chromatin, Inc. (DOE-APRAe). Dr. Chaturvedi received his PhD in Plant Molecular Biology and Biochemistry from the National Botanical Research Institute, Lucknow, UP, India.

Dr. Desalegn Serba joined Dr. Richard Dixon’s lab as a Postdoctoral Research Associate. Dr. Serba received his PhD in Plant Breeding and Genetics from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in Nebraska, his MSc from the University of Agriculture Sciences in Bangalore, India and his BSc from Alemaya University of Agriculture in Ethiopia.

**Recent Publications**


Extramural Grants and Contracts

Investigating the effect of oil spills on the environment and public health. Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative. PI: D. Crossley; Co-PI: W. Burggren and A. Roberts; $2,700,000

Quantification of Alligator Gar recruitment dynamics using a river-stage specific floodplain inundation model. Gulf Coastal Prairie Landscape Conservation Cooperative. PI: D.J. Hoeinghaus (UNT), Co-PIs: T. Hardy and J. Jensen (TX State), K.O. Winemiller (TAMU), A.A. Pease (TX Tech); $199,973.

The UNT-UAEM Consortium to provide novel information and student training on the maturation of cardiovascular function in a marine sea turtle with implications for species conservation. University of North Texas- Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México Joint Seed Fund For Innovation. PI: D. Crossley, Co-PI: Paz, $18,428.

Targeting host defense mechanisms for enhancing FHB resistance in wheat. US Department of Agriculture-ARS, PI: Shah (UNT); Co-PI: Trick (Kansas State University), $43,732.

Seminars/ Talks

Effects of a water conservation education program on water use in single-family homes in Dallas, TX, Mind the Gap! Moving from Awareness to Action session. The World Environmental Education Conference (WEEC), Gothenburg, Sweden, June 28th. Invited presentation by Dr. Ruthanne (Rudi) Thompson; Co-author, Victoria Faubion (Ph.D. graduate).


The effects of probiotics on growth, gastrointestinal morphology and metabolism in juvenile Mozambique tilapia Oreochromis mossambicus. World Aquaculture Society conference, Orleans. Talk by Michael Anderson, graduate student in Dr. Ione Hunt von Herbing lab


Conference Presentations


