Awards and Recognitions

Dr. Richard Dixon was listed as a 2020 Clarivate™ Web of Science Highly Cited Researcher. The highly anticipated annual list identifies researchers who demonstrated significant influence in their chosen field or fields through the publication of multiple highly cited papers during the last decade. Their names are drawn from the publications that rank in the top 1% by citations for field and publication year in the Web of Science™ citation index.

Dr. Calvin Henard was chosen for a recent publication from his laboratory as a spotlight article of significant interest by the editors of the journal Applied and Environmental Microbiology where UNT researcher transforms biogas into sustainable products using bacteria. Read the full article and find out more about the research at https://news.unt.edu/news-releases/unt-researcher-transforms-biogas-sustainable-products-using-bacteria.

Dr. Lee Hughes was selected as an Academic Affairs Fellow in the UNT Office of Faculty Success for the 2021-2022 academic year.

Graduate Awards and Scholarships

BioDiscovery Institute Summer Research Assistantship: Six graduates working on their Ph.D.’s in the BioDiscovery Institute received the BioDiscovery Summer Research Assistantship. Each student gave formal presentations on their research accomplishments made over the Summer.

- Biochemical properties of recombinant group I and group II FAAHs from the legume Medicago truncatula. BDI Seminar Series (virtual/in-person). September 27, 2021. Talk by Omar Arias Gaguancela (Ph.D. Student-Chapman Laboratory).

Faculty and Staff Appointments

Dr. Timothy Flewelen has joined the Biological Sciences Department as a Lecturer. Dr. Flewelen is an alumnus of the department, Class of 2006. He received his Ph.D. from the Medical College of Wisconsin in 2012. Prior to coming to the University, he was a Faculty member at Carroll University.

Dr. Vanessa Macias has joined the Biological Sciences Department as an Assistant Professor. Dr. Macias grew up in Las Cruces, NM where she started her research training at NMSU as a master's student in a mosquito lab. There she gained an interest in the cellular and genetic mechanics of how mosquitoes can be such potent vectors of human disease. At the University of California, Irvine and at Penn State, Dr. Macias had the opportunity to study under and collaborate with some of the top minds in mosquito genetic engineering and found that there are so many aspects of mosquito and disease biology that are completely unknown. In her new lab, Dr. Macias will pursue discoveries in small RNA biology that will both push the boundary of biotech and in mosquitoes and have impacts on transgenic approaches to disease control.

Dr. Angela Stoeckman is on sabbatical from Bethel University in St. Paul, MN. She is an Associate Professor of Chemistry at Bethel University and has joined the Chapman Lab for the Fall semester. Come by and say hello.
Natasha Gorski has joined the BioDiscovery Institute as a Proposal Manager. In this role, she will help BDI members submit research proposals through editing project narratives, organizing multi-PI submissions, and providing process management support. Natasha joined the University of North Texas in September after spending five years working at a chemical startup in Pittsburgh. She has a background in research, proposal development, and project management, as well as degrees in Biomedical Engineering and Materials Science and Engineering. You can find Natasha in SRB134.

Rusty Hartman has joined the BioAnalytical Facility (BAF) as a Research Assistant. He obtained his Masters in Biomedical Sciences from the University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth, TX. His thesis research involved understanding the seasonal impact of early life stress on a female mouse model of systemic lupus erythematosus and how this may upregulate heat shock protein 90 thus increasing the prevalence and severity of this disease later in life.

Wendy Fisher has joined the BioDiscovery Institute (BDI) in August 2021 as a Research Assistant and Lab Manager for the Alonso Lab. She is currently working on a project aiming to improve the oil content in pennycress, a promising alternative crop for jet fuel. She obtained a MS in Biomedical Engineering from Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio and has experience in both nanoparticle and shape memory alloy powder production.

**Thesis and Dissertation**

Congratulations to our graduate students who successfully defended their thesis/dissertation.

**Ann Price** successfully defended her dissertation on July 27th, 2021 as part of the requirement for her Ph.D. degree in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. The title of her dissertation was “Manipulation of Lipid droplet biogenesis for enhanced lipid storage in Arabidopsis thaliana AND Nicotiana benthamiana.” Ann’s major professor was Dr. Kent D. Chapman

**Brittany Harried** defended her Ph.D. thesis titled “Multiple dimensions of fish functional traits, trait relationships, and associations with community structure and dynamics”. Brittany’s major professor was Dr. David Hoeinghaus. Brittany is now a Postdoc in Dr. Craig Paukert’s lab at the University of Missouri.

**Cole Reeves** defended his MS thesis titled “Flow-recruitment relationships of Smallmouth Buffalo (Ictiobus bubalus) in three Texas river basins”. Cole’s major professor was Dr. David Hoeinghaus. Cole is now leading field crews working with the National Forest Service in the Sierra National Forest in California.

**Stephanie Amack** defended her MS thesis titled “Quantifying the effects of single nucleotide changes in the TATA box of the Cauliflower Mosaic Virus 35S promoter on gene expression in Arabidopsis thaliana” on July 20th, 2021. Stephanie’s advisor was Dr. Mauricio Antunes.

**Extramural Grants and Contracts**

- Community College Transfer Student Success Initiative (CC TSSI), UNT Team Mentoring Grant, Lisa Welch, Jim Bednarz, Ana Hoeinghaus, Hyunjoo Kim, Jessica Moore, and Purnima Neogi. Biology Advising Group has received $4,200.
- Developing Resistance to Fusarium Head Blight in Wheat. USDA-ARS. PI: Jyoti Shah. $80,256; August 1st, 2021-July 31st, 2022
- Spherical nucleic acid nanomaterials as fungicide and FHB resistance-promoting agents. USDA-ARS. PI: Jyoti Shah; Co-PI: Brian Meckes. $41,019; August 1st, 2021-July 31st, 2022
- Towards the Development of High-Yielding Cultivars & Germplasm with Optimum Oil and Protein Content and Innovative Oil Attributes for the Current Market. United Soybean Board ($549,773). PI: McHale; Co-PIs: Alonso (UNT $153,682), Chen, Clemente, Mian, Mozzoni

**Publications**

Poster Presentations


