Attracting the best to achieve
DEGREES OF DISCOVERY
Mr. Corbin (Corby) Robertson, Jr. and his wife Barbara are shown here with the first two Cullen Trust for Higher Education MD/PhD Fellowship recipients at the 2008 Cullen Trust for Higher Education Symposium on Translational Research. Mr. Robertson shared words of encouragement and philosophy (he quoted his UT-football coach, Darrell Royal) with a rapt audience of 22 top-achieving undergraduates from around the country as well as UT-Health Science Center, UT-M. D. Anderson Cancer Center and Baylor College of Medicine faculty and Symposium guest speakers. He noted the great spirit of energy and philanthropy alive in Houston, and with hard work and a little luck you will be able to accomplish your dreams no matter what your interest.

Cullen Trust for Higher Education, under Mr. Robertson’s chairmanship, made a gift of $1.115M over five years to support, strengthen, augment and grow the MD/PhD program at The University of Texas Health Science Center and M. D. Anderson Cancer Center and Baylor College of Medicine. Organized by GSBS this collaborative effort enables both Baylor College of Medicine and UT to admit one additional exceptional student annually, providing their full stipend for five years, plus giving students the opportunity to achieve the PhD portion of their degrees with faculty experts at any of these three institutions. This level of collaborative effort accomplished through Cullen Trust for Higher Education support is unlike anything heretofore organized in the Texas Medical Center, and guarantees an unprecedented level of intellectual resource at the fingertips of those students selected as Cullen Trust for Higher Education Fellows.

To attract top caliber undergraduates to the MD/PhD programs and to Houston, each year a research symposium will be organized jointly to feature the brightest minds in translational medicine and research speaking to potential applicants from across the country. In this first year speakers from Rice University, University of Houston, Baylor College of Medicine, UT-Houston and M. D. Anderson Cancer Center were highlighted to showcase the renowned physician/scientists in the Texas Medical Center.

The first two Cullen Trust for Higher Education Fellows are Ryan Ash, from Baylor College of Medicine who is interested in the neuroscience of intelligence which will provide help for neurological disorders, and Maren Yvnge at UT-Health Science Center whose research focus is the emerging field of neuroimmunology which may ultimately lead to treatments for diseases such as multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s.

With deepest appreciation to
The Cullen Trust for Higher Education.
Two key milestones in obtaining the Ph.D. are the final defense and the candidacy examination. The final oral defense and original dissertation research findings are the sine qua non (indispensable elements) of the Ph.D., a degree of discovery that requires a student to make an independent, unique contribution to the biomedical sciences. The candidacy exam occurs first in the process and determines if the student is prepared to be a “candidate”, i.e., to begin his or her independent dissertation research project.

There is a unanimous consensus that the candidacy examination be given by a faculty committee; be based on a research proposal; and involve an oral component in which the student has an opportunity to display his/her critical thinking and problem solving skills, and the examining faculty have an opportunity to assess them. There are, however, several other issues that are less clear.

When is the appropriate time to take the candidacy exam, i.e., how long does it take to develop the background, skills, and judgment to begin an independent research study? Two opposing concepts factor into this decision: (1) students mature at different rates so some who might eventually develop into excellent scientists may fail if examined too early, and (2) a small percentage of students, no matter how carefully selected or how hard they work, will never become effective independent researchers no matter how long they are given to prepare, and it is a great disservice to them and the institution to delay this difficult decision.

How do we balance these two realities? I am not aware of any definitive studies, but most experienced faculty members with whom I have spoken, at GSBS and elsewhere, feel that we err by waiting too long to make a decision about a student who is unlikely to succeed far more often than examining too soon and making a wrong decision about a student likely to develop into a good scientist if given more time. For everyone’s benefit we need a timeline, and many faculty members and students I have spoken to feel that two years might be the best target for taking the candidacy exam if we allow appropriate requests for exceptions (e.g., health, prior experience, family issues, etc.). Based on my 36 years of experience in graduate education, I agree with the general opinion as well as the two year timeline.

A second major issue is how best to evaluate a student’s readiness to begin an independent project? What should be the topic(s) and format of the exam? How much flexibility should there be in constructing the exam and allowing the exam committee to administer it? Should there be a written as well as oral portion? These are challenging questions, but it is important that we periodically assess them. It has been five years since we last did so, and the time is right to revisit these issues. I have asked the appropriate standing committees to begin this process in preparation for a general Faculty discussion. It is essential that we discuss these issues with a shared understanding of the purpose of the candidacy exam and focus our arguments on how best to achieve that purpose.

Finally, there are two other key responsibilities: graduate students have to accept the primary responsibility for their own education; and faculty members have the obligation to mentor, guide, and help prepare them for success. Accepting both responsibilities is essential for GSBS to achieve its goal of “Degrees of Discovery” - no matter what we decide about exam specifics.

Best regards,
GSBS Commitment
The mission of The University of Texas Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS) at Houston is to train scientists, to generate new knowledge in the biomedical sciences, and to increase public understanding of science. The GSBS is committed to maintaining the highest standards of training and to providing a program for the graduate student to learn to function independently as a scientific professional. GSBS Office of Academic Affairs provides oversight for terms of appointment, grievance procedures, and other matters relevant to the support of its graduate students.

Quality Training
Individuals should be trained to independently formulate meaningful hypotheses, design and conduct interpretable experiments, adhere to good laboratory practices, analyze results critically, understand the broad significance of their research findings, and uphold the highest ethical standards in research. The development of additional skills—including oral and written communication, grant writing, and laboratory management—are considered integral to this training.

Importance of Mentoring
Effective mentoring is critical for graduate education and requires that the primary mentor dedicate time to ensure personal and professional development. A good mentor builds a relationship with the student that is characterized by mutual respect and understanding. Attributes of a good mentor include being approachable, available, and willing to share his/her knowledge; listening effectively; providing encouragement and constructive criticism; and offering expertise and guidance.

Commitments of Faculty Advisors

I acknowledge that the training and educating of graduate students is intended for them to develop the skills needed to become an independent research scientist and/or scientist educator.

I will ensure that a mutually agreed upon set of expectations and goals are in place at the outset of the training period and assessed periodically, and I will work with the graduate student to create an individual project and training plan.

I will strive to maintain a relationship with the graduate student that is based on trust and mutual respect.
I acknowledge that open communication and periodic formal performance reviews, conducted at least semi-annually, will help provide that expectations of both parties are met.

I will promote all ethical standards for conducting research including compliance with all institutional and federal regulations as they relate to responsible conduct in research, privacy and human subjects research, animal care and use, laboratory safety, and use of radioisotopes. I will clearly define expectations for conduct of research in my lab and make myself available to discuss ethical concerns as they arise.

I will ensure that the graduate student has sufficient opportunities to acquire the skills necessary to become an expert in an agreed upon area of investigation.

I will provide the graduate student with the required guidance and mentoring and will seek the assistance of other faculty and GSBS resources when necessary to support the student’s career development.

I will provide a training environment that is suited to the individual needs of the graduate student for his/her personal and professional growth. I will encourage a progressive increase in the level of responsibility and independence to facilitate the completion of their degree.

I will encourage the interaction of the graduate student with fellow scientists both intra- and extramurally and provide the student the opportunity to present research findings.

I will acknowledge appropriately the contributions that the graduate student may make in intellectual developments, research, and scholarship. If I deem the graduate student’s research as meriting publishing, I will work with the student to publish the student’s work in a timely manner to support their career development.

Michael Andreeff, M.D., Ph.D., and Jorge Cortes, M.D., authored a study that was included in the January 29 edition of the Journal of the National Cancer Institute. The study highlighted a drug used to treat kidney cancer that also targets a genetic mutation in patients with acute myeloid leukemia.

John Byrne, Ph.D., has received the Association for Neuroscience Departments and Programs (ANDP) Award for Neuroscience Education.

Raymond DuBois, M.D., Ph.D., provost and executive vice president of UT M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, has been voted president-elect of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR).

Isaiah Fidler, D.V.M., Ph. D., and Jack Roth, M.D., were both nominated as American Association for the Advancement of Science Fellows.

Samuel Kaplan, Ph. D., has been elected a fellow in the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Guillermina (Gigi) Lozano, Ph.D., has been appointed chair ad interim of the Molecular Genetics department at UT M. D. Anderson Cancer Center.

Beng Ho, Ph.D., has been praised by the Houston Chronicle for his dedication to helping senior citizens. Ho is involved in several programs, including the Health Education for the Asians League of Houston, Retired & Senior Volunteer Program, and Houston Mayor’s Seniors Advisory Group.

Hope Northrup, Ph.D., co-authored the study, “Genes in Glucose Metabolism and Association with Spina Bifida,” that was published in the January 2008 issue of the journal Reproductive Sciences.

Maria Schumacher, Ph. D., led a team that solved the structure of a DNA-protein complex that is crucial in the spread of antibiotic resistance among bacteria. In addition, Schumacher has been highlighted in the Houston Chronicle for her new detailed images which capture a key step in the process of cell division.

Anil Sood, M.D., Menashe Bar-Eli, Ph.D., and Gabriel Lopez-Berestein, M.D., Ph.D., led a research team responsible for identifying a protein that stimulates blood vessel growth and slows ovarian cancer. A report on their research was published in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute.

Dihua Yu, M.D., Ph.D., co-authored a paper on FOXO3a and MDM2 that was published in the February 10 issue of Nature Cell Biology.
MEMBERS REAPPOINTED WITH COMMENDATION

Ralph Arlinghaus
Varsha Gandhi
Roger Janz
David Johnson
Lovell Jones
Heidi Kaplan
Rodney Kellems
Mong-Hong Lee
Jill Schumacher
R. Jason Stafford
Rick Wetsel

NEW REGULAR MEMBERS

Michael Beierlein
Assistant Professor
UT-Houston Medical School
Neurobiology and Anatomy
Ph.D., Brown University, 2000
Research interests: short-term synaptic plasticity; regulation of synaptic strength by endocannabinoids; structure and function of neocortical circuits; neuro-glia interactions

George A. Calin
Associate Professor
M. D. Anderson Cancer Center
Experimental Therapeutics
M.D., Ph.D., “Carol Davila” University of Medicine and Pharmacy (Romania), 1992 and 2000
Research interests: the roles of non-coding RNAs in human diseases; cancer genetics; oncology

Candelaria Gomez-Manzano
Assistant Professor
M. D. Anderson Cancer Center
Neuro-Oncology
M.D., Central University of Barcelona, 1988
Research interests: cancer stem cells; brain tumors; Tie2-multi-compartmental role; E2F pathway

Chung How Kau
Associate Professor
UT-Houston Dental Branch
Orthodontics
D.D.S., National University of Singapore, 1998
Ph.D., Cardiff University, 2006
Research interests: 3D facial imaging; orthodontic applications; growth and development; randomized controlled trials

Nobuhide Kobori
Assistant Professor
UT-Houston Medical School
Neurosurgery
M.D., Kyoto Prefectural University of Medicine, 1985
Ph.D., Kyoto Prefectural University of Medicine, 1994
Research interests: working memory deficit; cognitive function deficit; traumatic brain injury; neurochemical mechanism; neurotransmitter; intracellular signaling; treatment

Ju-Seog Lee
Assistant Professor
M. D. Anderson Cancer Center
Systems Biology
Ph.D., The University of Texas at Dallas, 1999
Research interests: systems biology; gene expression profile; cancer genomics; integromics; DNA microarray

Jun Liu
Assistant Professor
UT-Houston Medical School
Pathology & Laboratory Medicine
Ph.D., Chinese Academy of Sciences, 1998
Research interests: 3-D structure/function of macromolecular assemblies, intact bacteria and enveloped viruses; AIDS virus; viral entry and antibody neutralization; signal transduction; muscle motility

Yin Liu
Assistant Professor
UT-Houston Medical School
Neurobiology & Anatomy
Ph.D., Yale University, 2007
Research interests: computational biology; protein interaction; signal transduction; Bayesian methodology in bioinformatics; data analysis and integration
Gregory A. Lizée  
Assistant Professor  
M. D. Anderson Cancer Center  
Melanoma Medical Oncology & Immunology  
Ph.D., University of British Columbia  
Research interests: tumor immunology; immunosuppression; dendritic cells; antigen cross-presentation; cancer vaccines

Angel M. Paredes  
Assistant Professor  
UT-Houston Medical School  
Pathology & Laboratory Medicine  
Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin, 1993  
Research interests: high resolution electron cryomicroscopy to explore the biology of alphavirus replication including assembly and the host-virus interactions necessary for infection

Garth Powis  
Professor and Chair  
M. D. Anderson Cancer Center  
Experimental Therapeutics  
D.Phil., Oxford University, 1970  
Research interests: drug development; signaling mechanism; hypoxia; redox; cell survival; translational research

Lajos Pusztai  
Associate Professor  
M. D. Anderson Cancer Center  
Breast Medical Oncology  
M.D., Semmelweis School of Medicine, 1987  
D.Phil., University of Oxford, 1993  
Research interests: gene expression profiling with DNA microarrays; molecular biology of breast cancer; clinical trials with new drugs

Fredika M. Robertson  
Professor  
M. D. Anderson Cancer Center  
Experimental Therapeutics  
Ph.D., State University of New York at Buffalo, Roswell Cancer Institute, 1986  
Research interests: human breast tumor development, invasion and metastasis; ductal carcinoma in situ; inflammatory breast cancer; skin carcinogenesis and inflammation; wound repair and skin carcinogenesis; tumor-associated angiogenesis; tumor cell survival; targeted therapies; proteomics

Shao-Cong Sun  
Professor  
M. D. Anderson Cancer Center  
Immunology  
Ph.D., Stockholm University, 1992  
Research interests: signal transduction; protein ubiquitination and deubiquitination; NF-κB activation; lymphocyte development and activation; autoimmunity and inflammation; antiviral and antibacterial innate immunity; cancer biology

Karen S. Uray  
Assistant Professor  
UT-Houston Medical School  
Pediatric Surgery  
Ph.D., UT-Houston GSBS, 1997  
Research interests: gut; STAT3; cadherin; intestinal contractile activity

Oleg N. Vassiliev  
Assistant Professor  
M. D. Anderson Cancer Center  
Radiation Physics  
Ph.D., The University of Western Ontario, 2001  
Research interests: medical physics; external beam radiation therapy; dose calculation methods

Huamin Wang  
Assistant Professor  
M. D. Anderson Cancer Center  
Pathology  
M.D., Tongji Medical University, 1987  
Ph.D., UT-Houston GSBS, 1999  
Research interests: signal transduction; tumor markers; molecular genetics and genomics of pancreatic cancer; therapeutic targets

Wendy A. Woodward  
Assistant Professor  
M. D. Anderson Cancer Center  
Radiation Oncology  
M.D., Ph.D., Thomas Jefferson University, 2000  
Research interests: radiation resistance; breast cancer stem cells; mammosphere; Wnt/beta-catenin signaling; inflammatory breast cancer
Xiangwei Wu
Associate Professor
M. D. Anderson Cancer Center
Head and Neck Surgery
Ph.D., Baylor College of Medicine, 1991
Research interests: mechanisms of p53 and death receptor-mediated apoptosis and applications in chemoprevention and cancer therapy

Shuxing Zhang
Assistant Professor
M. D. Anderson Cancer Center
Experimental Therapeutics
Ph.D., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2005
Research interests: ligand/structure-based drug design; QSAR; molecular docking; in silico ADME/Toxicity; cheminformatics; protein structure bioinformatics; machine learning and statistical modeling

Wenhong Zhang
Assistant Professor
UT-Houston Medical School
Internal Medicine
Ph.D., UT-Houston GSBS, 1998
Research interests: regulation of gene expression; renal development and function; action of steroid hormones; tumorigenesis

Lei Zheng
Assistant Professor
UT-Houston Medical School
Biochemistry & Molecular Biology
Ph.D., University of Bern, 2003
Research interests: structural biology of membrane proteins; x-ray crystallography; ion transport and regulation; pathogenic recognition; recombinant antibody technology

Jennifer Czerwinski
Clinical Instructor/Genetic Counselor
UT-Houston Medical School
Obstetrics, Gynecology & Reproductive Sciences
M.S., UT-Houston GSBS, 2006
Research interests: prenatal genetic counseling

Dongchuan Guo
Assistant Professor
UT-Houston Medical School
Internal Medicine
Ph.D., Institute of Microbiology, Chinese Academy of Science, 1993
Research interests: genetic basis of vascular disease, including thoracic aortic aneurysms and aortic dissections; genetic basis of other human disease, including traveler diarrhea and molar oligodontia; medical treatment of cocaine dependence

Marianna Hörz
Genetic Counselor
UT-Houston Medical School
Pediatrics/Medical Genetics
M.S., UT-Houston GSBS, 2006
Research interests: pediatrics; genetic counseling; metabolic genetics; hemophilia; arthrogyryposis

S. Cheenu Kappadath
Assistant Professor
M. D. Anderson Cancer Center
Imaging Physics
Ph.D., University of New Hampshire, 1998
Research interests: Quantitative SPECT/CT; radiopharmaceutical dosimetry and therapy planning; optimization of clinical SPECT/CT protocols; Monte-Carlo simulation studies; iterative reconstruction and volumetric image analysis

Stephen F. Kry
Instructor
M. D. Anderson Cancer Center
Radiation Physics
Ph.D., UT-Houston GSBS, 2007
Research interests: out-of-field dose; peripheral radiation; neutrons; late effects; secondary malignancies; risk models
Charles A. Koller  
Professor  
M. D. Anderson Cancer Center  
Leukemia  
M.D., Ohio State University, 1973  
Research interests: acute and chronic leukemia; myelodysplasia; myeloproliferative diseases; aplastic anemia; clinical trials; correlative studies

Valerie C. Moore  
Assistant Professor  
UT-Houston Medical School  
Internal Medicine, Cardiology  
Ph.D., Rice University, 2005  
Research interests: carbon-based biomedical nanotechnology; targeted delivery of contrast and therapeutic agents; radioprotection agents; tissue engineering; atomic force microscopy

Donna M. Reeve  
Senior Medical Physicist  
Imaging Physics  
M. D. Anderson Cancer Center  
M.S., Colorado School of Mines, 1986  
M.S., UT-Houston GSBS, 1997  
Research interests: medical imaging physics; magnetic resonance imaging; mammography; ultrasound; computed radiography

Keri C. Smith  
Assistant Professor  
UT-Houston Medical School  
Pathology and Laboratory Medicine  
Ph.D., Montana State University, 2001  
Research interests: B cell tolerance induction; mucosal immunization; induction of catalytic antibody response; cellular immunology

Christine M. Stellrecht  
Instructor  
M. D. Anderson Cancer Center  
Experimental Therapeutics  
Ph.D., UT-Houston GSBS, 1991  
Research interests: transcription inhibition; gene expression; experimental therapeutics; cancer biology; molecular oncology; signal transduction

Scott E. Wenderfer  
Assistant Professor  
UT-Houston Medical School  
Pediatrics  
IMM/Center for Immunology and Autoimmune Diseases  
M.D., Ph.D., University of Cincinnati, 2001  
Research interests: immune complex glomerulonephritis; lupus nephritis; autoimmunity; mouse models of disease; molecular nephrology; confocal microscopy

Lawrence E. Williams  
Associate Professor  
M. D. Anderson Cancer Center  
Veterinary Sciences  
Ph.D., University of Georgia, 1982  
Research interests: socialization of neonatal primates; development of the behavioral aspects of animal models; demographic analysis of populations and computer modeling of populations using stochastic techniques

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T. C. Hsu Faculty Research Award

Margaret Hsu, in a model of ‘giving back to society,’ has committed to funding a new annual research award of approximately $10,000 for 10 years in memory of her father, noted researcher T. C. Hsu, Ph.D., and an unnamed early mentor who helped their family. The intention of this gift is to honor and support an exceptional junior faculty member on tenure track but not yet tenured who has the rank of assistant professor at The University of Texas Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences at Houston, and whose research is in the area of genetics or cell biology.

The very first recipient of the T. C. Hsu Research Award is Angabin Matin, Ph.D., nominated by several GSBS Program directors. They noted that her recent publication in the scientific journal *Nature* discussed the importance of her work with the dead-end or *ter* gene, and the discovery that it has an RNA recognition motif is significant and will open many new perspectives in cancer research. This Award is renewable for up to three years, and is to be used to supplement her current research or develop a new area of that research.
The GSBS Advisory Council, chaired by Mrs. Diana Hawkins, has been quite active in the last year building new friendships for the Graduate School. Diana and Russell Hawkins, along with the Council, hosted a wonderful Evening of Discovery at their home. Over 30 individuals from the greater Houston community whom Council members personally invited, had the opportunity to meet some of our exceptional graduate students, gather information about the students’ latest scientific breakthroughs, and learn about the vision of the Graduate School (i.e., cutting-edge research accomplishments, meeting the ranks of our chief competitors, bringing the best students and faculty to Houston)—and of course, what it will take to accomplish these lofty ambitions. This first Evening of Discovery emphasized that in the Graduate School, no matter how many A’s you make and courses you take—"No discovery – No Degree!" Thanks to the Hawkins and the Council for this energetic catalyst to move the School forward.

While following up with these new friends to get to know them better, the plan is to enlist our loyal Council to help us. One example of a GSBS Advisory Council member in action comes through Beth Robertson, who was instrumental in helping us with our MD/PhD program proposal and several others made significant annual gifts (p.11) that help reward excellence and increase top recruitment potential.

GSBS Advisory Council member Britt Schmidt, as chair of the Leaders of Tomorrow group of Houstonians, arranged for over 20 members to visit the Graduate School and learn firsthand the latest information about breast cancer, brain tumors, vision disease, stem cell research and more through our students’ projects.

Council member Harry Gee and his wife Antje provided a wonderful ‘first Thanksgiving feast’ in their home to ten of our international students. The Gees have been doing this for several years—a very personal show of support.
Special Thanks and Gratitude
September 2007 - February 2008

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Jorge Del-Aguila - Ph.D. Human and Molecular Genetics, M.S., 8/1/2006, Stephen F. Austin State University
John Delmonte - M.S. Cancer Biology, M.D., 6/1/2002, University of California, San Francisco
Alessandra Di Lorenzo - Ph.D. Cancer Biology, M.S., 7/1/2000, University Federico II
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Javier Figueroa - M.D./Ph.D. Biochemistry, M.S., 5/1/2006, University of Colorado-Colorado Springs
Jennifer Fowler - M.S. Genetic Counseling, B.S., 12/1/2004, University of California, Davis
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Georgi Georgiev - M.S. Medical Physics, M.S., 5/1/2007, Sofia University
Hillary Gibbons - Ph.D. Cancer Biology, B.S., 5/1/2007, Texas Christian University
Annelise Giebeler - Ph.D. Medical Physics, B.S., 3/1/2000, California State University, San Bernardino
Sara Gorjestani - Ph.D. Immunology, M.S., 12/1/2006, Pittsburgh State University
Timothy Graham - Ph.D. Neuroscience, B.S., 5/1/2007, Texas Christian University
Ryan Grant - M.S. Medical Physics, B.S., 5/1/2007, University of Texas at Austin
Naima Hammoudi - Ph.D. Cancer Biology, B.S., 9/1/2005, University Des Sciences Et De La Techn Houari Boumendienne
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Jessica Hernandez - M.S. Immunology, B.S., 5/1/2007, University of Texas at El Paso
Heather Highland - Ph.D. Human and Molecular Genetics, B.S., 5/1/2007, Trinity University
Julia Hill - Ph.D. Neuroscience, B.A., 5/1/2006, Sarah Lawrence College
Ruozhen Hu - Ph.D. Cancer Biology, M.S., 6/1/2005, Zhejiang University
Cheukkai Hui - Ph.D. Medical Physics, M.S., 8/1/2007, University of Texas at Austin
Daisy Izaguirre - M.S. Biochemistry, B.S., 5/1/2006, St. Edward’s University
Tamara Jatoba - Ph.D. Molecular Pathology, B.S., 8/1/2003, Baylor University
Sarah Jenkins - M.S. Molecular Pathology, B.A., 5/1/2007, Texas A&M International University
Jennifer Juarez - Ph.D. Microbiology and Molecular Genetics, B.S., 5/1/2007, Louisiana State University-Baton Rouge
Tapan Kadia - M.S. Cancer Biology, M.D., 5/1/2001, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey
Denise Kellar - Ph.D. Immunology, B.S., 5/1/2007, Stephen F Austin State University
Diem Kha - M.S. Molecular Carcinogenesis, B.S., 5/1/2005, University of Texas at Austin
Daehoon Kim - Ph.D. Molecular Carcinogenesis, M.S., 2/1/1997, Chonnam National University
FALL 2007 INCOMING STUDENTS

Eun Ah Kim- Ph.D. Genes and Development, M.S., 9/1/2004, Hanyang University
Ana Klauer- Ph.D. Molecular Biology, B.S., 5/1/2007, Texas A&M University-College Station
Irfan Lalani- M.S. Biomathematics and Biostatistics, M.B.B.S., 11/1/1999, Aga Khan University Medical College
Natalia Lazcano- M.S. Neuroscience, B.S., 12/1/2006, University of Texas at El Paso
Heng-Huan Lee- Ph.D. Cancer Biology, M.S., 6/1/2004, National Taiwan University
Hong-Jen Lee- Ph.D. Cancer Biology, M.S., 7/1/2004, National Taiwan University
Szu-Wei Lee- Ph.D. Cancer Biology, , 6/1/2005, National Taiwan University
Qin Li- Ph.D. Cancer Biology, M.S., 5/1/2007, University of Saskatchewan
Yanhui Li- Ph.D. Genes and Development, M.S., 7/1/2007, Peking University Health Science
Jing Lin- Ph.D. Genes and Development, M.S., 3/1/2007, Ningbo University
Gonzalo Lopez- Ph.D. Cancer Biology, M.S., 8/1/2006, Texas A&M University-Kingsville
Li Lu- Ph.D. Genes and Development, M.S., 7/1/2005, Nanjing Medical University
Ming Lu- Ph.D. Genes and Development, M.S., 8/1/2006, University of Texas-Houston GSBS
Marc Macaluso- Ph.D. Molecular Carcinogenesis, B.S., 8/1/2006, Texas Tech University
Lorena Maili- Ph.D. Neuroscience, B.S., 5/1/2007, Baylor University
Jonathan Martinez- Ph.D. Cell Biology, B.S., 5/1/2007, Rice University
Sarah May- Ph.D. Cancer Biology, B.S., 8/1/2006, University of Texas at Arlington
Justin Mikell- Ph.D. Medical Physics, B.S., 5/1/2002, University of Illinois/Urbana-Champaign
Travis Morgan- M.S. Genetic Counseling, B.S., 12/1/2006, Texas A&M University-College Station
William Munoz- Ph.D. Genes and Development, B.S., 5/1/2007, University of Texas at Austin
Lauren Murphy- M.S. Genetic Counseling, B.A., 5/1/2005, Barnard College
Nancy Nabilsi- Ph.D. Cancer Biology, M.S., 12/1/2006, University of Texas HSC-Houston GSBS
Alpa Nick- M.S. Cancer Biology, M.D., 5/1/2003, Louisiana State University Medical Center
Petros Nikolainakos- M.S. Immunology, M.D., 9/1/1996, University of Debregen
LaGina Nosavanh- Ph.D. Genes and Development, B.S., 5/1/2007, Delaware State University
Kacie Nyholt- Ph.D. Human and Molecular Genetics, B.S., 12/1/2006, University of Houston - Clear Lake
William O'Brien- M.S. Biochemistry, B.S., 5/1/2007, University of Miami
Steven Olree- Ph.D. Cancer Biology, B.S., 5/1/2007, Truman State University
Antony Passaro- Ph.D. Neuroscience, B.A., 7/1/2005, Rice University
Mesias Pedroza- Ph.D. Biochemistry, B.S., 5/1/2007, University of Houston - Downtown
Brian Pickering- Ph.D. Cancer Biology, Ph.D., 12/1/2006, George Mason University
Sarina Piha-Paul- M.S. Cancer Biology, M.D., 5/1/2002, Louisiana State University Medical Center
Elizabeth Plimack- M.S. Cancer Biology, M.D., 5/1/2002, New York University
Xia Pu- Ph.D. Cancer Biology, M.S., 6/1/2007, China Pharmaceutical University
Dharanija Rao- Ph.D. Molecular Carcinogenesis, M.S., 6/1/2006, University of Hyderabad
Krithi Rao- Ph.D. Cancer Biology, M.S., 5/1/2007, University of North Texas Health Sciences Center at Ft. Worth
Alina Raza- Ph.D. Cancer Biology, B.S., 5/1/2007, University of Houston - Main
Sumaiyah Rehman- Ph.D. Cancer Biology, B.S., 5/1/2006, University of Texas at Austin
Rachel Reith- Ph.D. Human and Molecular Genetics, B.S., 5/1/2007, Rice University
Nilsa Rivera Del Valle- Ph.D. Toxicology, M.S., 5/1/2007, University of Texas-Houston GSBS
Marta Rojas- Ph.D. Genes and Development, M.S., 11/1/1988, Pontifica Universidad Javeriana
Chawarat Rotejanaprasert- Ph.D. Biomathematics and Biostatistics, B.S., 3/1/2006, Chiang Mai University
Joshua Rother- Ph.D. Cancer Biology, M.S., 5/1/2007, University of Texas-Houston GSBS
David Rushworth- M.D./Ph.D. Biochemistry, B.S., 5/1/2006, University of Texas at Austin
Rebecca Sample- M.S. Genetic Counseling, B.A., 5/1/2006, University of Virginia
Laura Sandifer- Ph.D. Molecular Carcinogenesis, B.S., 5/1/2007, Centenary College
Andria Schibler- Ph.D. Genes and Development, B.S., 5/1/2006, Suffolk University
Alison Schwein- Ph.D. Cancer Biology, B.S., 12/1/2005, University of Florida
Jia Shen- Ph.D. Cancer Biology, B.S., 6/1/2006, Zhejiang University
Ji-Hyun Shin- Ph.D. Cancer Biology, B.S., 2/1/2005, Kyung Hee University
Akanksha Singh- Ph.D. Neuroscience, B.A., 5/1/2007, University of St. Thomas
Huijuan Song- Ph.D. Cancer Biology, M.S., 9/1/2007, Hebei Medical College
Krista Swanson- Ph.D. Molecular Pathology, B.S., 5/1/2006, Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University
FALL 2007 INCOMING STUDENTS

Ning Tsao- Ph.D. Pharmacology, M.S., 6/1/2002, National Taiwan University
Diogo Veiga- Ph.D. Biomathematics and Biostatistics, M.S., 2/1/2006, Federal University of Pernambuco
Deborah Vela- M.S. Cell Biology, M.D., 6/1/1996, Universidad De Guayaquil
Guermarie Velazquez Torres- Ph.D. Cancer Biology, M.S., 7/1/2006, University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences Campus
Marisa Vineyard- M.S. Genetic Counseling, B.S., 5/1/2007, University of Missouri-St. Louis
Deeksha Vishwamitra- M.S. Pharmacology, B.S., 6/1/2007, Ohio State University
Yucai Wang- Ph.D. Cancer Biology, M.S., 8/1/2007, Nanjing University
Katie West- M.S. Medical Physics, B.S., 5/1/2007, Duke University
Matthew White- Ph.D. Toxicology, B.S., 5/1/2007, Texas A&M University-College Station
Jillian Wise- Ph.D. Cancer Biology, B.S., 5/1/2007, Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Hanjing Wu- Ph.D. Cancer Biology, M.S., 7/1/2006, Hunan Medical University
Wei-Lei Yang- Ph.D. Cancer Biology, M.S., 6/1/2001, National Tsing Hua University
Sriram Yennurajalingam- M.S. Cancer Biology, M.B.B.S., 4/1/1995, Osmania Medical College
Bingnan Yin- Ph.D. Virology and Gene Therapy, M.S., 7/1/2004, Tianjin Medical College
Maren Yngve- M.D./Ph.D. Cancer Biology, B.S., 8/1/2006, University of Texas at Austin
Joshua Yung- Ph.D. Medical Physics, B.E., 5/1/2005, Duke University
Fanmao Zhang- Ph.D. Cancer Biology, B.S., 6/1/2006, Wuhan University-PRC
Rui Zhang- Ph.D. Medical Physics, M.S., 12/1/2006, Rice University
John Zullo- M.S. Medical Physics, Crt., 12/19/2003, University of Texas HSC-Houston MDA
Omid Tavana- Ph.D. Immunology, B.S., 6/1/2007, University of Washington
Mai Tran- Ph.D. Regulatory Biology, B.E., 10/1/2005, University of Agricultural and Forestry

FRIDAY
I acknowledge that I have the primary responsibility for the completion of my degree. I recognize that I must realistically consider training opportunities and my career goals to help me identify a path that matches my individual skills, values, and interests.

I will develop a mutually defined research project with my mentor that includes well-defined goals and timelines. Ideally, this project should be outlined and agreed upon at the time of the initial appointment.

I will perform my research activities conscientiously, maintain good research records, and catalog and maintain all tangible research materials that result from the research project. This includes ensuring that my advisor and colleagues can readily access and comprehend my research records and materials.

I will respect all ethical standards when conducting my research including compliance with all institutional and governmental regulations as they relate to responsible conduct in research, privacy and human subjects research, animal care and use, laboratory safety, and use of radioisotopes. I recognize that this commitment includes asking my advisor for guidance when presented with ethical or compliance uncertainties and when reporting on breeches of ethical or compliance standards by me and/or others.

I will show respect for and will work collegially with my coworkers, support staff, and other individuals with whom I interact. I recognize that this includes being a ‘team player’ with all involved in our research group.

I will endeavor to assume progressive responsibility and management of my research project(s) as it matures. I recognize that assuming responsibility for the conduct of research projects is a critical step on the path to independence.

I will seek regular feedback on my performance from my advisor as well as seek a formal evaluation from members of my advisory/supervisory committees.

I recognize that I have embarked on a career requiring “lifelong learning.” To meet this obligation I must stay abreast of the latest developments in my specialized field through reading the literature, regular attendance at relevant seminar series, and attendance at scientific meetings.

I will actively seek opportunities outside the laboratory (e.g. professional development seminars and workshops in oral communication, scientific writing, and teaching) to develop the full set of professional skills necessary to be successful in my graduate training.

At the end of my appointment, in accordance with institutional policy, I will leave behind all original notebooks, computerized files, and tangible research materials so that other individuals can carry on related research.

I will also work with my mentor to submit the research results for publication in a timely manner. I can make copies of my notebooks and computerized files, and have access to tangible research materials which I helped to generate during my graduate training according to institutional policy.
American Legion Auxiliary Scholarship Awards

Since 1971 the American Legion Auxiliary has provided scholarships for GSBS students involved in cancer research. The money for this funding is raised through a wide range of Auxiliary activities. To date the Auxiliary has raised over $1,100,000 to present over 80 renewable scholarships of $5,000 each. The recipients for 2007-2008 are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Advisor</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Advisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kendra S. Carmon</td>
<td>Dr. David S. Loose</td>
<td>Sabine Lange</td>
<td>Dr. Karen Vasquez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn Christianson</td>
<td>Dr. Renata Pasqualini</td>
<td>John Latham</td>
<td>Dr. Sharon Dent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah M. Dunlap</td>
<td>Dr. Wei Zhang</td>
<td>Nicole Pinaire</td>
<td>Dr. Timothy McDonnell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Grabiner</td>
<td>Dr. Xin Lin</td>
<td>Joseph Taube</td>
<td>Dr. Michelle Barton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon Kidd</td>
<td>Dr. Paul Simmons</td>
<td>Regina Weaks</td>
<td>Dr. David Johnson</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Dr. David Johnson</td>
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</table>

The R. W. (Bill) Butcher Awards

Established in 1977, the R. W. (Bill) Butcher Fund provides an annual award of $2,500 for students who demonstrate excellence in research, have a commitment to a career in biomedical research, and make a professional contribution to the community or have faced a particular challenge. This year’s recipients are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Advisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claudia Miller</td>
<td>Dr. Joya Chandra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Gibney</td>
<td>Dr. Kevin Morano</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The City Federation of Women’s Clubs Endowed Scholarship in the Biomedical Sciences

Established in 2005, this $2,000 scholarship rewards an exceptional GSBS student who is working in an area vital to the biomedical sciences and of particular current significance in that year's national research perspective. For 2007-2008 The City Federation of Women’s Clubs Scholarship recognizes research in the area of developmental biology. This year’s recipient is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Advisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cameron Jeter</td>
<td>Dr. Anne Sereno</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Harry S. & Isabel C. Cameron Foundation Fellowship**

The Cameron Foundation provides a fellowship to an exceptional post-candidacy student working in research fields related to Alzheimer’s or cardiovascular diseases. The Foundation gift of $15,000 is matched by GSBS and Faculty. The 2007-2008 recipient is:

**Student**  
Patrick Gibney  
**Advisor**  
Dr. Kevin Morano

**The Cullen Trust for Higher Education Physician/Scientist Fellowship Program**

The $1.115 million grant from the Cullen Trust for Higher Education provides dramatic growth opportunities for M.D./Ph.D. students at UT-Houston, UT-M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, and Baylor College of Medicine (see page 2). The first recipients are:

**Maren Yngve**, UT-GSBS and UT-Medical School at Houston  
**Ryan Ash**, Baylor College of Medicine

**The T. C. Hsu Endowed Memorial Scholarship**

To remember Dr. Hsu and his remarkable research work, his daughter Margaret, M. D. Anderson Cancer Center Foundation, colleagues, faculty, friends and former students of Dr. Hsu established this memorial scholarship in 2003. The endowment is a living testimony and serves to acknowledge the stellar research accomplishments of graduate students focusing on Dr. Hsu’s areas of research, genetics and cell biology. The 2007-2008 recipient is:

**Student**  
Brian Grabiner  
**Advisor**  
Dr. Xin Lin

**Barbara L. Kennedy Memorial Scholarship**

This $1,000 scholarship was established in 2002 for a student in the Specialized Masters Program in Genetic Counseling. The winner is selected by a review committee appointed by the WINGS Chapter of the American Business Women’s Association. The recipient for 2007-2008 is:

**Student**  
Lauren Ann McNair  
**Advisor**  
Dr. Michael Gambello
The Ralph H. and Ruth J. McCullough Foundation Scholarship

This new scholarship has been made possible by a $10,000 gift from the Ralph H. and Ruth J. McCullough Foundation. The endowment in part supports a stipend for a student whose scientific excellence and novel research will have a high potential to impact biomedical science. The 2007-2008 recipient is:

Student
Violeta Chavez

Advisor
Dr. Danielle Garsin

Marilyn & Frederick R. Lummis, Jr., M.D., Fellowship in the Biomedical Sciences

* Dr. and Mrs. Lummis have made a generous gift to GSBS to create this award given for scientific excellence and innovation in any area of biomedical research. A $25,000 stipend given each year is intended to encourage novel research with a high potential to impact the particular field of study and ultimately human health. The first recipient’s outstanding research focuses on developing an innovative treatment strategy that may achieve both therapeutic selectivity and removal of cancer cells that are resistant to conventional drugs.

Student
Dunyaporn Trachootham

Advisor
Dr. Peng Huang

* We are saddened to note that Dr. Lummis died in December 2007. Dr. Lummis was a native Houstonian, with private practice in internal medicine and gastroenterology at Diagnostic Clinic. During his career, he served as president of the Harris County Medical Society, board chair of the Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center, and was trustee emeritus of the Museum of Natural Science, the Museum of Health and Medical Science and Rice University. Mrs. Lummis, also a native Houstonian and early UT-Houston Development Board member and GSBS supporter, created this award with her husband and joined us for the presentation, above, left.

The Medical School Dean’s Research Award

This new scholarship has been made possible by a $10,000 gift from the Ralph H. and Ruth J. McCullough Foundation. The endowment in part supports a stipend for a student whose scientific excellence and novel research will have a high potential to impact biomedical science. The 2007-2008 recipient is:

Student
Dunyaporn Trachootham

Advisor
Dr. Peng Huang

Medical School Dean’s Research Award

The Dean’s Research Award is given to a group of outstanding GSBS students once a year who have progressed to Ph.D. candidacy and whose advisers are faculty at the UT Medical School at Houston. This $2,500 award is meant to recognize those students who have achieved significant academic distinction during their time as GSBS students. The 2007-2008 winners are left to right:

Student
Violeta Chavez

Advisor
Dr. Danielle Garsin

Medical School Dean’s Research Award

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Student
Violeta Chavez

Advisor
Dr. Danielle Garsin

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Student
Dunyaporn Trachootham

Advisor
Dr. Peng Huang

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Student
Dunyaporn Trachootham

Advisor
Dr. Peng Huang

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Medical School Dean’s Research Award

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Student
Xi Mo
Hanyin Cheng
Kim Mankiewicz
Kendra Carmon
Shelly Babin Fontenot
Brian Phillips

Advisor
Dr. Renhao Li
Dr. Robert Kirken and Dr. Jeffrey Frost
Dr. Vasanthi Jayaraman
Dr. David Loose
Dr. Anne Sereno
Drs. John Spudich
Research Day Symposium Poster Contest

The UT-Houston Research Day Symposium Poster Contest was split to reflect both clinical and translational research. Six student prizes were awarded from the basic sciences that demonstrated innovative research: First Prize - $400; Second Prize - $300; Third Prize - $200 were presented to the first author of the top three posters in each of the two areas. The winners were all GSBS students:

**CLINICAL/TRANSLATIONAL STUDENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Advisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>Roxanna Irani</td>
<td>Dr. Yang Xia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Raymund Yong</td>
<td>Dr. Frederick Lang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Shannon Kidd</td>
<td>Dr. Paul Simmons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BASIC SCIENCE STUDENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Advisor</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>Corina Rosales</td>
<td>Dr. Yong-Jian Geng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Sharon Way</td>
<td>Dr. Michael Gambello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Elena Barbu</td>
<td>Dr. Magnus Hook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Chris Singh</td>
<td>Dr. Chinnaswamy Jagannath</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Schissler Foundation Fellowships

This dynamic family foundation has been a major benefactor to the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences for over ten years and has sincere commitment to graduate education. The Schissler Foundation Fellowships foster collaboration with the emphasis on basic science projects with the greatest likelihood of translational application to human health. The Fellowship requires that all students receive a broad exposure to the biomedical sciences and ethical concepts that underlie their research. These prestigious awards give significant help to research studies that will seek to make major contributions to the therapies and cures of common human disease through genetics. In 2007-2008 The Schissler Foudantion provides full tuition and stipend funding for four Schissler Foundation Fellowships with at least one expressly designated for a student working on cancer research with faculty at M. D. Anderson Cancer Center.

The 2007-2008 recipients are:

Schissler Foundation Fellows in the Genetics of Common Human Diseases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Advisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catherine Spellicy</td>
<td>Dr. Stephen Daiger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christina Papke</td>
<td>Dr. Dianna Milewicz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Schissler Foundation Fellows in Cancer Research at M. D. Anderson Cancer Center

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Advisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dong-Joo Cheon</td>
<td>Dr. Richard Behringer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam Riegel</td>
<td>Dr. Tinsu Pan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

William and Madeline Welder Smith Foundation Scholarship

The William and Madeline Welder Smith Foundation’s gift of $10,000 has allowed us to create a new scholarship this year to encourage and strengthen student interest in the field of stem cell research that has the potential to ultimately impact human health in a significant way. This year’s scholar is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Advisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brandi Baird</td>
<td>Dr. Paul Simmons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Robert M. & Jean M. Worsham Endowed Scholarship in the Behavioral and Neurosciences

Formally presented during Brain Awareness Week this endowed scholarship of $1,000 fosters exceptional students working in the fields of the behavioral sciences or neurosciences particularly in the areas of addiction or obsessive/compulsive behavior. The recipient for 2007-2008 is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Advisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Katherine Barker</td>
<td>Dr. Howard Gutstein</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STUDENT OUTREACH

In October 2007, GSBS graduate students Joshua Gowin and Ann Ketek led a demonstration entitled, “State of Matter” at Northbrook Middle School in Houston. A group of 100 sixth graders participated interactively to learn the science of plasma television. Sigma Xi Research Science Society-Rice University Chapter, Texas Medical Center, initiated the event.
James R. Gum, Jr., Ph.D.  1950-2007
Originally from Cleveland, Ohio, Dr. Gum earned a Ph.D. in biochemistry in 1980. He was a creative and talented researcher and an effective teacher. Earlier Dr. Gum served as an adjunct associate professor of anatomy at the University of California, San Francisco, as well as an associate director of the Gastrointestinal Research Laboratory at the San Francisco VA Medical Center.

Melva S. Ramsay  1929-2007
Melva Ramsay was employed at GSBS for 33 years as an assistant to the dean and chief administrative officer, and assumed many responsibilities during her tenure including financial and personnel management, public affairs and development, and faculty affairs. Beginning in February 1966 she served the administrations of deans Sumter Arnim, Alfred Knudson, R.W. (Bill) Butcher, and George Stancel. Melva was highly respected for her managerial skills, her mentoring and concern for others, and her sense of humor.
Dr. Suzanne Fuqua, professor at Baylor College of Medicine, is widely recognized for her pioneering work on hormonal resistance in breast cancer, identifying variant estrogen receptors in breast cancer tissue and linking these mutations to hormone resistance and breast cancer progression by demonstrating their consequences in altering estrogen binding and cell responsiveness in model systems. Dr. Fuqua has also made seminal observations of the role of heat shock proteins in breast cancer progression. She has correlated heat shock protein expression with breast cancer outcome and functional consequences on breast cancer cell proliferation and invasiveness, findings that suggest potential new therapeutic directions by adding appropriate modulators of chemotherapy to enhance effectiveness of treatment.

Dr. Fuqua has published over 140 papers in peer-reviewed journals, and has authored over 30 books/chapters. She has served on numerous federal study sections and site visits, and is on the editorial boards of Cancer Research, Breast Cancer Research and Treatment, Molecular Cancer Therapeutics and the Journal of Steroid Biochemistry and Molecular Biology.

Dr. Fuqua is project director for a SPORE grant in breast cancer from the National Institutes of Health/National Cancer Institute (NIH/NCI); Principle Investigator for an R01 Grant from NIH/NCI, Principle Investigator for a T32 Grant from NIH/NCI; Project Director of a P01 Grant from NIH/NCI; Principle Investigator for Grant from the Dan L. Duncan Cancer Center; Principle Investigator on a grant from the Susan G. Komen Foundation; and Co-Principle Investigator on a grant from the United States Department of Defense.

Dr. Fuqua addressed alumni and staff at the Alumni Reunion that was held in October 2007 at the Cockrell Butterfly Center inside the Houston Museum of Natural Science.
ALUMNI REUNION 2007

Finding my way to GSBS...

There is a traditional Quaker principle that says something like, “have faith and way will open.” I’m not a Quaker, but for me, “way” has opened, including several incredible opportunities that have been presented to me in my vocational life. Most of those opportunities, over nearly two decades, have been right here in the Texas Medical Center.

After a short time managing community health programs for the North Dakota State Department of Health, I found my way to Baylor College of Medicine where I served as the executive director of the national, physician-led, health-advocacy organization DOC (Doctors Ought to Care, founded in 1977 by Alan Blum, MD). DOC was best known for its work in engaging physicians and other health professionals in counteracting unhealthy lifestyles, especially tobacco and alcohol use. The decade-long experience was incredible, and involved developing programs, curriculum and educational strategies for medical schools, residency programs and medical societies throughout the country. I had the opportunity to collaborate with faculty and students not just at Baylor, but at sister schools and residency programs throughout the U.S. and abroad where we had established collaborative relationships.

During the 1990’s, I also served as a consultant and expert witness in tobacco litigation, including two landmark cases in Miami, Florida, won by the husband-and-wife legal team of Stanley and Susan Rosenblatt. In August of 2000, at their invitation, I accepted the position (commuting from Houston to Miami) to direct a new $300 million biomedical institute established through a class-action lawsuit on behalf of 60,000 non-smoking flight attendants who were made ill from their exposure to second-hand smoke on airplanes. The new foundation funds research on diseases caused by tobacco smoke.

I joined M. D. Anderson Cancer Center in 2002 – first as program director in cancer genetics (which provided my first introduction to both faculty and students at GSBS) and later as the administrative director for the cancer center support grant (funded by NCI). The 19 multidisciplinary research programs and the 26 core laboratories funded under the grant make up much of the research infrastructure at M. D. Anderson, and I was privileged to work and collaborate with people across the institution and throughout the Texas Medical Center.

In 2006, I was offered a position with Lexicon Genetics (now Lexicon Pharmaceuticals) as its associate director for business development. It was an opportunity to explore the biopharmaceutical industry and uniquely combine my experience in academic administration with the business sector (part of my role at Lexicon included overseeing academic collaborations, government contracts and sublicensing agreements).

When I was encouraged to apply for the associate dean position at GSBS, I was already familiar with the Graduate School and certainly knew many of its faculty. I have always liked the way the school is organized. The fact that there are both defined programs, and the opportunity for students to forge individual programs (I had done this myself in graduate school) that cross departmental and disciplinary boundaries, is invaluable.

As for any specific aspirations or plans at GSBS, I told Dean George Stancel that my primary goal is to help make sure that the Graduate School – its programs, students, faculty, and resources – do not get lost among the many other challenges facing the University of Texas Health Science Center, M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, and the academic partners that make up GSBS. I plan to draw on my own experiences and philosophy – to contribute beyond the day-to-day processes and to strive for transparency and accountability. I believe that when more people have more information, chances are better that they will work well together. My experience so far is that it helps to draw people into the conversation and possible resolution.

There are a great many things that the School does well, and I promised Dr. Paul Darlington before he retired that I will not “fix” any of those things. I will do my best to assist the GSBS deans, faculty, students, and parent institutions as we look to the future. I am happy and honored to be here.
New GSBS Staff

Patricia Cruz Bruesch has joined the GSBS staff as grants administrator and works specifically with the Center for Clinical and Translational Science T32 Program. She earned a B.A. in Political Science and Masters in Public Administration from Cal Poly Pomona, California. A certified scuba diver, Patricia enjoys traveling and outdoor activities, especially cycling with her husband. She has adopted Socrates’ philosophy, “The unexamined life is not worth living.”

Laura Sanders has joined the GSBS team in the Public Affairs and Development office where she assists with alumni and contributor events. She also updates the website and produces graphics for the newsletter. On the weekends she enjoys sailing, hanging out with friends and running. Laura earned a B.A. in Communication and English from Texas A&M University.

Tikeshlia (Ty) Williams has joined the Office of Admissions staff, where she coordinates all recruitment functions and events and is a part of the team that maintains the GSBS website. Ty grew up in Baytown and earned a B.S. in Hotel and Restaurant Management from the University of Houston. Before joining GSBS, she spent several years in catering and hotel convention management. Ty enjoys spending time with her partner, Paul, their children, concerts, shopping, traveling, sports, movies, cooking and The Onion.

Farewell, Goodbye, Aufweidersein, Adieu....

Best Wishes Go Out to Paul Darlington

Many Health Science Center faculty, students, and employees attended a reception honoring Paul E. Darlington, Ph.D., for twenty-five years of exceptional service as Associate Dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences at Houston. His unique blend of academic, educational, and business skills brought indelible contributions to all facets of the GSBS. He is especially remembered for his ‘open door’ policy whereby many students, faculty, staff and colleagues would seek out his advice, direction, and encouragement. As a result, and in his honor, the Paul E. Darlington Mentor Award for Faculty has been established. This monetary award will be given each year to a GSBS faculty member to recognize him or her for being a Mentor in the great tradition of Paul Darlington.

Paul, and his wife Gretchen, will soon take up retirement in the foothills of the Rockies near Colorado Springs. They plan to take up biking, hiking, cooking, and lots of traveling. Although his professionalism, effectiveness, and warmth will be greatly missed, we all wish him many years of good health and good times!

Anyone wishing to contribute in his honor to The Paul E. Darlington Mentoring Award for Faculty may do so by responding with the enclosed envelope. A letter of acknowledgment will be sent to Paul informing him of your recognition.
Hello Alumni,

Greetings from Houston and GSBS! As the current president of the GSBS Alumni Association, I want to take a moment to give you an update about what’s going on here, and to ask for your ideas for the future. Let me start by saying that Suzanne Fuqua, Ph.D. (1982) was a terrific choice for our 2007 Distinguished Alumna. As you would expect, she made a sterling technical presentation to our faculty, students, and alumni; then she gave a more personal speech at the reunion dinner in which she acknowledged that the biggest factor in her success has been the unfailing support and encouragement of her family (12 of them came to the reunion to see her receive the award)! I also want to congratulate and thank Vicky Estrera, Ph.D. (2001) who was elected to be the new vice president of the Alumni Association. Well deserved thanks to Linda Carter and my hard-working colleagues on the Steering Committee, and to Beth Lynn Maxwell, Ph.D. (1980) and Deidre Vedder, Ph.D. (1980) for hosting the mini ‘happy hour and a half’ in Austin.

Several events are now scheduled for 2008. On May 1, the Alumni Association will host a Graduation Celebration (5-7 p.m., GSBS building foyer) for our new graduates and their families. Existing alumni are invited of course, and we hope you will join us in welcoming these newly minted members into our organization. On June 7, we will hold the alumni-sponsored Career Day for current graduate students (some of you will be called upon soon to share your career-path secrets). Finally, we are making plans for another out-of-state reunion on June 21—more about this later.

While much of our focus is on the graduate students at GSBS, one of my goals as your president is to identify ways that the Alumni Association can better serve you and other alumni. Possibilities might include an on-line lecture series via our updated alumni website, or perhaps using such lectures as a theme for organizing regularly scheduled regional get-togethers to mix and discuss "science" at a local restaurant. Should the Alumni Association facilitate the creation of local chapters? I would welcome your thoughts and suggestions as to what you’d like to have from your graduate school, and we’ll see what we can do. In the meantime, hope to see you at one of these events in the near future!

Best regards,

Ben Thomas, Ph.D. (1973)
GSBS Alumni Association President
2007-2008