Director’s Note

A message from our director, Anna Huttenlocher

It has been a busy time for the program—and I have enjoyed meeting with all of the students (still 10-20 to go!). We welcomed Mark Burkard, MD/PhD as new Associate Director in July. We also welcomed 10 new students into our program this summer. Many of the students did summer rotations and we had a dynamic M1/M2 dinner focused on a discussion of research rotation experiences in late August.

A highlight of this early fall was our retreat at Lake Geneva—and the now famous nighttime bonfire by the lake---I will have to say that I stayed up later than I normally do, and was tired the next day but had great fun! What most impressed me about the retreat this year were the Data Blitz sessions, presented by our graduate students---wow, our students have certainly done amazing work!

The sessions focused on upcoming changes in the program were very helpful for us—and continued input will be important as we change some of the MSTP requirements in the M3 and M4 years. For example, we will need more input about the Clinical translational research rotation that is being developed for the M4 year.

Our first seminar for the year was a great success! Our MSTP graduate Ryan Herringa is now an Assistant Professor at UW—and he spoke about his MD/PhD path—very engaging with a lot of great questions from students. I think his suggestion to see the MSTP as a journey—was a good one—since really as a physician scientists, our whole career is a

MSTP Symposium

The annual MSTP symposium is scheduled for Tuesday, March 19th, 2013, in the Wisconsin Institutes for Discovery Town Center. Our keynote speaker is renowned Dr. Marcus Raichle from Washington University in St. Louis. This event will also feature presentations and posters displaying recent achievements of our program. Further information will follow

Mark your calendar!!!
“journey”.

We are now again into the beginning of the admissions cycle, with even more applications this year than last year at this date. So, there are many applications to review and a new year of recruits to look forward to.

Thank you to all MSTP students for input about the program as we have transitioned to new leadership over the past few months. I look forward to next years with the program.

Anna Huttenlocher
Director

Introducing the First Years! (again)

Because you can never introduce the first years too many times – this time, we ask the hard questions

Anna Barker

If you could flavor anything, what would it be and what flavor? Air. I’d make it smell like grapefruit all the time.

If you weren’t doing MD/PhD, then what? Spend a few years backpacking, trying to learn Chinese and hopefully figuring out what to do next.

If you could start any charity, what would it be? Support schools in rural Cambodia run by a monk that I met near Siem Reap that could use a lot of help.

Sara Berman

What is life? A mystery

What was your best meal? Tapas in Madrid

Who would win/Paul or Chelsea? They would be partners in a three-legged race, so they both would win.

Ryan Denu

How are you feeling? Just look at my face

What was your best meal? A mixed seafood grill with lobster, shrimp, mussels, clams, and scallops; chocolate lava cake for dessert

Describe your perfect day. Sleep in, omelet for breakfast, play tennis, go to the terrace, see a movie, finish off the day with pie and/or ice cream

Chris Gelbmann

If you could start any charity, what would it be? Rescuing bats

Describe your perfect day. Hiking in a park with some pals, box of wine optional but suggested

Who would win, Paul or Chelsea? Chelsea, I bet she fights dirty

Natalie Guerrero

Who was your first kiss? Alberto, a fellow sixth grader. We were youngins.

How does it feel to be loved? Amazing. So I try to make everyone I come across feel loved, without coming across as a creeper.

Describe your perfect day. Getting an early run in on Chicago's lakefront, grabbing breakfast with college friends visiting from the west coast, going with the family to the Baha’i House of Worship north of Chicago, meeting people from all over the world and from different religions there-- Then all of us heading back to the south side for a White Sox World Series game at night, and closing the day having pizza and a movie at home with Owen, my boyfriend.
Cherline Lee

If you could flavor anything, what would it be and what flavor? All food, Mango habenaro

What is life? A journey

If you could start any charity, what would it be? Education for disadvantaged children.

How are you feeling? Pretty good!

Kristen McCabe

Who was your first kiss? Adam Guiragossian. I think he is a professional beach bum now.

What is life? A board game where you drive around this little town centered around a giant pinwheel in a little lego car racking up husbands (or wives) and babies and houses.

How are you feeling? Like this girl http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdylQeg5B9I. This is how I feel when trying to cram 6 weeks of information into my head. it. just. wont. stay.

Benjamin Steyer

What underwear are you wearing now? Hanes with the comfort strap waistband. Just like MJ!

What was your best meal? I know its not PC, but seared foie gras on top of filet mignon.

Describe your perfect day. All day in bed watching movies with a box of snickers candy bars-- Yes, I have done this before and it was excellent.

Andrew Voter

If you weren’t doing MD/PhD, then what? I would be a welder

Who would win, Paul or Chelsea? Paul, mostly because of his rockin' beard and ability to pull shacks out of lakes

What are you most curious about? Where the single fly in my kitchen came from

Meet Chelsea Hanewall

You have probably already met Chelsea Hanewall, who joined the MSTP team as a Student Services Coordinator in April. We asked Chelsea to tell us all a little more about herself and here’s what she had to say:

I grew up in Janesville, WI. In high school (go Craig Cougars!) I was involved in musicals, show choir and cheerleading and my very first job was working as an ice cream guru at Dairy Queen. I have a younger brother and sister and I come from a very large extended family; my dad is one of ten children. In 2009, I earned my BA in physiology at the University of Minnesota. I came to UW Madison to work in the Research Education & Career Development core of ICTR, which then fortuitously led me to be your MSTP Coordinator. I suppose this makes me a Gopher-Badger hybrid.

My husband, BJ, and I just celebrated our second anniversary and we love our life in Madison. If I’m not at home, your best bet would be to find me at the zoo, the farmer’s market, the movie theatre or chasing our mini dachshund, Ainsley, around the dog park. We bought a house last year so a significant portion of our weekends involve trips to the hardware store for DIY home improvement projects and thrift store or rummage sale expeditions to redecorate on the cheap. When I’m not exploring the city or repainting the bathroom, I love curling up with a good book or experimenting with my latest discovery on the Food Network (I’m a major foodie!).

I was also asked to talk about some of my “favorites,” so here they are:

Movie – The Princess Bride
Bands – Red Hot Chili Peppers and Yellowcard
TV Shows – Dancing with the Stars, Modern Family and Iron Chef America
Color – Fuchsia
Sesame Street Character – Ernie (…but not Bert)

Random Fact: I am fiercely competitive. If you’re not prepared to lose friends over a board game, you’re not playing hard enough.
Getting to know the new first years

Kunil Raval, G4, striking a pose at the retreat at Lake Genev

Anna Huttenlocher, Director, addresses the MSTP before grad students present their work at the Data Blitz!

Tailgating at Jon Stefely’s alma mater, Notre Dame. BCS Championship game anyone?
Put That Bonfire in a Cup: Thoughts on Food and Fun at George Williams College

By Brittany Young

After providing sporadic food-related articles for the MSTPost over the past couple years, focusing on the highs and lows of various eateries around Madison, I decided to do something a little different this time. After all, this is the MSTPost, so let’s talk about MSTP food. Let’s talk about the food at George Williams College of Aurora University.

In case you had forgotten, the conference center at George Williams College of Aurora University is where we’ve held the annual MSTP retreat for the past three years. It comprises a cluster of buildings and well-manicured lawn spaces right on the edge of Lake Geneva, and the place deserves points for its rather picturesque location a mere two hours from Madison.

A glance at the “dining” section of the conference center website boasts a number of dining options which seem to range from buffet-style cafeteria food to what I will call “fancy pants” sit-down service. Our program has generally opted for the cafeteria option for most retreat meals. There are usually a reasonable number of things to choose from in the cafeteria -- the real question is whether any of the choices is particularly appealing. In the mornings, a relatively standard cafeteria line-up for hot breakfast is available with scrambled eggs from a mix, potato cubes, floppy pancakes, and mystery tubular meat. Lunch this year included options for chili dogs and pasta in an alfredo-like sauce. Cafeteria dinner in past years has been known to feature entrees such as meat stew and spice-flecked fish. What I’ve learned during the last few retreats is that the real tricks to the cafeteria food are grabbing dessert on your way from the buffet to the dining tables (if you come back for it later, there’s half a chance that whatever tasty thing you were eyeing is long gone) and being wary of the morning oatmeal.

This year, the conference center showed us some new tricks, switching from cafeteria fare and instead catering “homemade pizza” to one of their larger conference rooms for Friday night dinner. The general consensus on this, based on the grumblings of various MSTPers, seems to be that there was perhaps something slightly unsatisfactory about that pizza. But, given the sheer amount of said pizza that was consumed that night, it really doesn’t seem to have been all that bad.

The food service is utilitarian yet effective. Food is generally ready and available when they say it will be. And while we don’t have all that much contact with the food services staff while we are there, the staff seem to be neither hostile nor particularly receptive to contact from us.

All in all, the food is passable but nothing spectacular. There seems to be a deceptive heaviness to almost everything they serve, and while every year I pick up on people complaining about the food, I also watch every year as everyone finds at least something acceptable to eat while they are there. And in the grand scheme of things, none of this really matters. As a program, we head down to George Williams College once a year not for the food but for retreat. And if the conference center food is truly insufficient, there are snacks and s’mores and even various grillables to be found around the bonfire on Friday night.

So far we’ve learned that it’s fine to have drinks around the bonfire, just make sure that everything is kept in cups. Oh, and that the bonfire gets put out promptly at 11pm. Also, make sure that when all of the people staying in the rooms right along the fire pit are up and about and socializing around said fire pit, the noise isn’t such that it might disturb any of the people staying in the rooms right along the fire pit. There’s definitely some sort of logic here, maybe, sort of, not really.

So, all in all, the conference center at George Williams College of Aurora University: the location is amazing, the food and service are nothing spectacular, and the entertainment is priceless in its own special way.
Spotlight: Jason Chiang

Jason Chiang, a 3rd year graduate student and 5th year MSTP, has had an impressive year. His research involves designing more efficient methods to ablate tumors. He has received the prestigious National Institutes of Health National Research Service Award through the National Cancer Institute (NCI). This allows him $153,000 dollars for stipend and expenses for the rest of his time as an MSTP student. Jason, with his astute business sense and passion, has also received 5th place in the G. Steven Burrill Business Plan Prize ($1000). To top of his successful funding streak, he has also procured the prestigious Radiological Society of North American Research Medical Student Grant giving him $6,000 dollars annually.

Getting to know the researcher: Shawn Jackson

My research takes place in the NF-κB signalling universe. For the uninitiated, NF-κB is the most important thing ever, worthy of study by all! I am most interested in how NF-κB activation in cancer plays a role in resistance to chemo- and radiotherapy. Ionizing radiation and many chemotherapeutics function by causing DNA damage, a known potent activator of NF-κB, to induce apoptosis in cancer cells. In other words, many of the treatments frequently used in the clinic result in the up-regulation of pro-survival target genes through NF-κB activation. This is bad!

My goal is to find and isolate molecular targets in the NF-κB signaling cascade that are specific to DNA damage. By specifically inhibiting this pathway, we can sensitize cells to chemo- and radiotherapy while the multitudes of other NF-κB functions in the cell are left unperturbed. To accomplish this, our lab has identified protein-protein interactions specific to the DNA damage pathway. I am screening several small molecule inhibitors as well as numerous peptide-based inhibitors I have designed in the lab. So far, so good!

New MSTP Publications

Jabe Best:

Chris Brown:


Patrick Brown:

(Continued on page 8)
Things to see and do in Madison

By Cherline Lee

Across:
1. There will be no studying at this bar.
2. Popular downtown street.
3. Go Badgers!
7. Slightly smaller body of water.
8. Join this club to really experience the lakes
10. Popular burger place on University Ave near UW Hospital. Hint: you can't use your credit card here.
11. Farming products are brought to the capital.

Down:
1. A raised flat platform.
2. Building on top of a hill.
4. Lions, and tigers and bears!
5. Large body of water.
9. Go to this event in the summer to hear an orchestra play the Harry Potter theme song.
12. Go here to see, Monet, Van Gogh and others.

Answers:

Across:
1. The Terrace
2. State Capitol
3. Foodblogger.com
4. Henry Vilas Zoo
5. Lake Mendota
6. Art Museum
7. Lake Monona
8. Hooper
9. Oscar's
10. Blue Moon
11. Farmers Market

Down:
12. Chazen Museum of Art
Eric Bultman:


Tim Chang:


Peter Chen:


Omar Demerdash:


John Floberg:


Keith Hanson:


Ben Krasity:


Bornali Kundu:


Eric Landsness:


David Manthei


Lisa Maurer:


Kevin McCool:


Chloe McCoy:


Julian Motzkin:


Philip Mudd:


Jonathan Myers


Michael Palte


Kunil Raval:


Rene Roy:


**Aadhavi Sridharan:**


**Taylor Starnes:**


**Heather Taff**


**Andrew Wentland**


**Sarah Wernimont**


**Richard Yang**
