

Cancer Biology Program News

Volume I, August 2008

Director's vision: a signature education program

Dear faculty and students:

I'm delighted to present the inaugural issue of the Cancer Biology Program News. I hope this will be a platform for our students and faculty to share our vision for building a strong CBP, to document our educational achievements and to communicate valuable information about our program.

I'm happy to report that since I became the CBP director in August 2005, the program has grown to a record 63 students — double our size in 2004 — to become the largest graduate training program affiliated with M. D. Anderson and The University of Texas Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences.

We have an active faculty and student body, and our various activities (program orientation, annual retreat, student seminar series, barbecue cookout) have been very successful. Importantly, the program offers outstanding educational content in a competitive research environment, and applies interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary teaching approaches. The next challenge for the CBP is to recruit the best students in the country and in the world.

Once again, M. D. Anderson is ranked No. 1 in cancer care in U.S. News and World Report's "America's Best Hospitals" annual survey, and many of the CBP faculty members are world leaders in their fields of cancer research. Given the outstanding education and research environment, and the strong faculty body, ours is an exceptional program designed to prepare graduate students for leading positions in cancer research, teaching and bio-industry.

My vision is that the Cancer Biology Program, with a focus in cancer biology education, will be the signature education program affiliated with M. D. Anderson/GSBS. This will provide a unique competitive edge for building the very best cancer biology training program in the country and in the world, and to attract the highest caliber students to the program.

I would like to convey my sincere thanks to all our faculty and students who devote time, energy and resources to the CBP. I'm asking for your continued support in all of our activities. Let's work together!

Dihua Yu, M.D., Ph.D.
Director, Cancer Biology Program



CBP at a glance

Established

1984

Faculty (2007-2008)

63 faculty from 26 basic and clinical departments at M. D. Anderson

Students (2007-2008)

63 graduate students

Program Director

Dihua Yu, M.D., Ph.D.

2009 CBP Retreat

Chairs: Christina Pichot
Jeremy Tchaicha

CBP Student Seminar Series

Chairs: Nancy Nabilsli
Angela Webb

CBP student contacts

Kristen M. Holmes
kmholmes@mdanderson.org

Jeremy Tchaicha
jtchaicha@mdanderson.org

CBP New Student Orientation

Wednesday, Aug. 27
9:15 a.m.–noon
Onstead Auditorium

2009 CBP Retreat

February 2009
Keynote speaker:
Joan Brugge, Ph.D.
National Academy of
Sciences member



THE UNIVERSITY
of TEXAS
HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER
AT HOUSTON
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

Online resources:

Cancer Biology Program faculty research interests, degree requirements and program information: www.mdanderson.org/departments/canbioprogram/

UT Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences: gsbs.uth.tmc.edu/

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
MD ANDERSON
CANCER CENTER
Making Cancer History[®]

What makes the Cancer Biology Program unique?

According to George Stancel, Ph.D., dean of The University of Texas Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, here are some key reasons why the Cancer Biology Program shines:

- Training focuses on what the students call “real hard science” applied to the study of “real live cancers.”
- The participation of clinical fellows in CBP courses is very educational and broadens students’ perspectives.
- It’s one of the most “interdisciplinary” graduate programs related to cancer at the GSBS.
- It enables students to get a good grounding in many different aspects of this area, yet allows them the flexibility to specialize in other more traditional disciplines.
- A real strength of the program is the willingness of the large, diverse group of CBP faculty with expertise in virtually any of the contemporary biomedical sciences to support students in their thesis research.
- CBP brings together a diverse set of faculty to focus on a specific area.

What some of our students have to say

Brian Grabiner, Ph.D.
Graduate, 2008
Lab of Xin Lin, Ph.D.

When I first joined the GSBS, I didn’t know any of my fellow students or faculty. I looked to the GSBS programs to help me find my way, and the reputation of the Cancer Biology Program was renowned before I arrived. Thus, I joined the program and feel this was the best decision I made in graduate school.



The classes give both a broad understanding of cancer, as well as the mechanisms behind cancer formation and therapy. The faculty were welcoming and highly knowledgeable, and always took time to help me if I had questions. Also, I found that the students were far above par. We were all driven to succeed, and the research being conducted by my classmates was truly incredible.

Additionally, our monthly Student Seminar Series gave us a chance to practice presentations without faculty involvement. This sense of community is further reflected in our annual CBP Retreat, where we can win cash awards, and receive critical feedback from the CBP faculty/students as a whole. By joining the CBP, I have made valuable connections that have helped me and will continue throughout my academic career.

Finally, I feel that the CBP is not only the best program within the GSBS, but the best in the country. CBP students publish in top journals, move on to tremendous academic careers and become leaders in the field of cancer research. If I had not

joined the CBP, I doubt that I could have achieved my past accomplishments or been as well prepared for my future as a research scientist.

Sarah Dunlap, Ph.D.
Graduate, 2007
Lab of Wei Zhang, Ph.D.



As a recent graduate of the GSBS and the Cancer Biology Program, I contemplate what prompted me to choose this program over others. In orientation, I learned the CBP had outstanding faculty, a comprehensive classroom component, and active and enthusiastic students. Upon matriculation, I found that the CBP also has programs, such as the monthly Student Seminar Series, that provide an opportunity to hone presentation skills. Students are able to gain leadership experience as organizers of the annual CBP Retreat. The CBP candidacy exam is consistently updated to test students on current topics, and strikes an excellent balance between brevity and fairness.

My CBP involvement, in conjunction with my publication record, resulted in a full stipend fellowship, three M. D. Anderson trainee awards, two American Legion Auxiliary Fellowships, an AACR Scholar-in-Training award, multiple travel awards, and eight platform talks at both local and national meetings. I highly recommend the CBP to all new students to make their experience at GSBS more fulfilling and better prepare them for a career in science.

Jeremy Tchaicha
Third year
Lab of Joseph McCarty, Ph.D.



Currently, I’m a post-candidacy graduate student in the Cancer Biology Program. From previous post-undergraduate experiences, I had my heart set on finding a program affiliated with cancer that would provide me with the necessary instruments to become an effective academic researcher. Without any reservation, I can honestly say that I’m proud to be part of the CBP because of its vast array of scientific knowledge that one may attain.

Prior to graduate school, I was involved in cancer research as an undergraduate student and three years thereafter in the industry setting. This program has been most beneficial to me due to the increased support of different faculty members and the ability to establish many collaborations, which have been critical to the success of my project.

Not only has the CBP provided a setting to reach my scientific goals, but it also has presented me with a unique experience that I will forever hold close to my heart.

CBP students see their work in print, 2007-2008

Here's a partial list of CBP student publications from the past year. Names in bold are CBP students.

+ Hot publication of the year

+Lee DF, Kuo HP, Chen CT, Hsu JM, Chou CK ... Yang JY ... Hung M-C. IKK beta suppression of TSC1 links inflammation and tumor angiogenesis via the mTOR pathway. *Cell*. 2007 Aug 10;130(3):440-55.

Grabiner BC ... Lin X. *Genes Dev* 2007;21(8):984-96.

Miller C, Ban K, Dujka M, McConkey D, Munsell M, Palladino M, and Chandra J. *Blood*. 2007;110(1):267-77.

Dunlap SM, Celestino J ... Zhang W. *Proc Natl Acad. Sci. USA* 2007;104(28):11736-41.

Lee DF, Hung M-C. *Cell Cycle* 2007;6(24):3011-4.

Kadara H, Lacroix L, Lotan D, and Lotan R. *Cancer Biol Ther*. 2007; 6(5):705-11.

Ding Q, He X, Xia W, **Hsu JM, Chen CT**, Li LY, **Lee DF, Yang JY** ... Hung M-C. *Cancer Res* 2007;67(10):4564-71.

Landen CN Jr, Lin YG, **Armaiz Pena GN** ... Sood Ak. *Cancer Res*. 2007 Nov 1;67(21):10389-96.

Ding Q*, Huo L*, **Yang JY***... Hung M-C. *Cancer Research*, 2008. In press. (* equally contribution)

Kim HJ, Litzenger BC, Cui X, Delgado DA, **Grabiner BC**, Lin X, et al. *Mol Cell Biol* 2007;27(8):3165-75.

Ding Q, He X, **Hsu JM**, Xia W, **Chen CT**, Li LY, **Lee DF**... Hung M-C. *Mol Cell Biol* 2007;27(11):4006-17.

Lin YG ... **Armaiz-Pena GN**...Sood AK. *Clin Cancer Res*. 2007 1;13(11):3423-30.

Lu C-H, Wyszomierski SL, Sun MH, **Lan K-H**, Neal C, Mills GB, Esteva FJ, Yu D. *Clin. Can. Res*. 2007;13: 5883-5888.

Nilsson MB*, **Armaiz-Pena GN*** ... Sood AK. *J Biol Chem*. 2007 Oct 12;282(41):29919-26. *(Authors shared first authorship)

Balasubramanian K, **Mirnikjoo B**, Schroit AJ. *J Biol Chem* 2007, 282:18357-18364.

Tsai KL, Sun YJ, Huang CY, **Yang JY**, Hung M-C, Hsiao CD. *Nuclear Acid Research*. 2007;35(20):6984-94.

Shah AN, Summy JM, Zhang J, **Park SI**, Parikh NU, Gallick GE. *Ann Surg Oncol*. 2007 Dec;14(12):3629-37.

Zhang J, **Park SI** ... Gallick GE. *J Clin Invest*. 2007 Oct;117(10):2962-73.

Xie X, Xia W, Li Z, **Kuo HP** ... Chiao PJ, Abbruzzese JL, Hung M-C. *Cancer Cell*. 2007;12(1):52-65.

Park SI, Zhang J ... Gallick GE. *Cancer Res*. 2008; 68(9):3323-33. (Featured in the Highlights)

Armaiz-Pena GN, Lutgendorf SK, Cole SW, Sood AK. *Brain Behav Immun*. 2008. In Press.

Kadara H, Tahara E, Kim HJ, Lotan D, Myers JM, and Lotan R. *Cancer Res*. 2008, 68(11):4416-23.

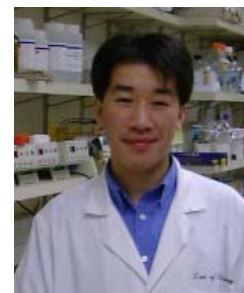
Danes C, Wyszomierski S, **Lu J**, Neal C, Yang W, Yu D. *Cancer Res* 2008; 68(6): 1760-7.

Yen CJ, Izzo JG, **Lee DF** ... **Chen CT, Kuo HP, Hsu JM**...Hung M-C. *Cancer Res*. 2008;68(8):2632-40.

Yang JY ... **Kuo HP, Lee DF** ... Yu D, Hortobagyi GN, Hung M-C. *Nat Cell Biol*. 2008 Feb;10(2):138-48.

CBP students receive awards in 2007-2008

Congratulations to new Cancer Biology Program graduate Dung-Fang Lee, Ph.D. (mentor: Mien-Chie Hung, Ph.D.), on winning the 2008 Alfred G. Knudson Jr. Outstanding Dissertation Award.



Other students who received awards include the following:

Guillermo N. Armaiz-Pena (Lab of Anil Sood, M.D.)

- NIH/NCI Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award
- AACR Minority Scholar Award
- GSBS Student Travel Award

Chun-Te Chen (Lab of Mien-Chie Hung, Ph.D.)

- GSBS Student Travel Award

Chao-Kai Chou (Lab of Mien-Chie Hung, Ph.D.)

- Department of Defense Predoctoral Traineeship Award
- GSBS Student Travel Award

Sarah Dunlap (Lab of Wei Zhang, Ph.D.)

- NIH Training Grant Pharmacoinformatics Fellowship
- American Legion Auxiliary Fellow in Cancer Research
- M. D. Anderson Trainee Excellence Award
- M. D. Anderson Trainee Recognition Day, first place
- GSBS Student Travel Award

Mylinh Duong (Lab of Khandan Keyomarsi, Ph.D.)

- Department of Defense Predoctoral Traineeship Award
- GSBS Poster Contest Contest, third place

Jheri Dupart (Lab of Wei Zhang, Ph.D.)

- Andrew Sowell-Wade Huggins Scholarship

Brian Grabiner (Lab of Xin Lin, Ph.D.)

- American Legion Auxiliary Fellow in Cancer Research
- Andrew Sowell-Wade Huggins Scholarship
- AACR Mini-Symposium Award
- GSBS 2007 Student Travel Award
- M. D. Anderson Trainee Excellence Award
- Rosalie B. Hite Fellowship
- T.C. Hsu Endowed Memorial Scholarship
- Keystone Symposia Travel Award
- GSBS 2008 Student Travel Award

Kristen Holmes (Lab of Wei Zhang, Ph.D.)

- NIH Training Grant Pharmacoinformatics Fellowship

Hsu-Ping Kuo (Lab of Mien-Chie Hung, Ph.D.)

- Department of Defense Predoctoral Traineeship Award
- Andrew Sowell-Wade Huggins Scholarship
- GSBS Student Travel Award

Dung-Fang Lee (Lab of Mien-Chie Hung, Ph.D.)

- 2008 Presidents' Research Scholar Award
- Alfred Knudson Jr. Outstanding Dissertation Award

- Department of Defense Predoctoral Traineeship Award
- GSBS Student Travel Award

Jing Lu (Lab of Dihua Yu, M.D., Ph.D.)

- SCBA Annual Scientific Symposium Oral Presentation Award

Claudia P. Miller (Lab of Joya Chandra, Ph.D.)

- NIH NRSA (individual fellowship)
- AACR Minority Scholar in Cancer Research Award
- R.W. Butcher Achievement Award
- Sylvan Rodriguez/Cancer Answers Scholarship
- Keystone Symposia Scholarship

Banafsheh S. Mirnikjoo (Lab of Alan Schroit, Ph.D.)

- Department of Defense Breast Cancer Research Program grant

Serk In Park (Lab of Gary Gallick, Ph.D.)

- Department of Defense Prostate Cancer Training Award
- M. D. Anderson Trainee Research Day, second place

Christina Pichot (Lab of Seth Corey, Ph.D.)

- Department of Defense Breast Cancer Research Predoctoral Fellowship

Jer-Yen Yang (Lab of Mien-Chie Hung, Ph.D.)

- SCBA Oral Presentation Award, first place
- GSBS Student Travel Award

- Ji-Hyun Shin (mentor: Ja Seok Koo, Ph.D.)
- Huijuan Song (mentor: Kwong-Kwok Wong, Ph.D.)
- Ying-Wen Su (mentor: Jeffrey Myers, M.D., Ph.D.)
- Jer-Yen Yang (mentor: Mien-Chie Hung, Ph.D.)

Nearly 300 attend 2008 CBP Retreat

The Cancer Biology Program Retreat, together with the program orientation, student seminar series and barbecue cookout, are the major student activities within the program.

This year's CBP Retreat was held on Feb. 15 at M. D. Anderson's South Campus. Nearly 300 faculty, postdoctoral fellows and students enjoyed keynote speaker Harvey Lodish, Ph.D., a world leader National Academy of Sciences member in the field of membrane biology. The retreat included platform and poster presentations by both CBP pre-candidacy and post-candidacy students, as well as recreational activities.

This annual event is part of the program's efforts to increase interaction between students and faculty in a friendly and informal environment. Thanks to Dr. Isaiah Fidler and Dr. Mien-Chie Hung for thier continued generous support and thanks to the 2008 Retreat Planning Committee. The 2008 Retreat was a great success.

Congratulations to the nine presentation competition winners:

Oral presentations*

- Jer-Yen Yang (Lab of Mien-Chie Hung, Ph.D.), first place
- Banafsheh Mirnikjoo (Lab of Alan Schroit, Ph.D.), second place
- Jing Lu (Lab of Dihua Yu, M.D., Ph.D.), second place
- Chao-Kai Chou (Lab of Mien-Chie Hung, Ph.D.), third place
- Yasmine Haddad (Lab of David McConkey, Ph.D.), third place
- Christina Pichot (Lab of Seth Corey, Ph.D.), third place

Poster presentations*

- Kristen Holmes (Lab of Wei Zhang, Ph.D.), first place
- Aaron Mobley (Lab of Joseph McCarty, Ph.D.), second place
- Jeremy Tchaicha (Lab of Joseph McCarty, Ph.D.), third place

* each winner received a cash reward

Welcome new CBP students, 2007-2008

- Chantale Charo (mentor: Craig Logsdon, Ph.D.)
- Mylinh Duong (mentor: Khandan Keyomarsi, Ph.D.)
- Shaoyi Huang (mentor: Xiangwei Wu, Ph.D.)
- Johanna James (mentor: Lin Ji, Ph.D.)
- Heng-Huan Lee (mentor: Mien-Chie Hung, Ph.D.)
- Hong-Jen Lee (mentor: Mien-Chie Hung, Ph.D.)
- Nancy Nabilsi (mentor: David Loose, Ph.D.)
- Marcia Ogasawara (mentor: Peng Huang, M.D., Ph.D.)
- Brian Pickering (mentor: Michael Van Dyke, Ph.D.)
- Krithi Rao (mentor: Eugenie Kleinerman, M.D.)
- Sumaiyah Rehman (mentor: Dihua Yu, M.D., Ph.D.)
- Marta L. Rojas (mentor: Oliver Bogler, Ph.D.)
- Jia Shen (mentor: Mien-Chie Hung, Ph.D.)



CBP Retreat, 2008

Photo by: Robert Yu