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HOD's Message

Dear All,

It's the season for reflection. In fact, reflection is a good habit but we don't practise it frequently and deep enough in these times of rapid developments in the world, Asia-Pacific including Singapore as well as at NUS.

The collection of events found in this Biochemistry Buzz will help refresh our memories. I hope they will stimulate the end-of the year reflection process. I have started my own which is guided by a single question: "How to be most effective in core areas of strengths". I am asking myself this question from the perspectives of the Head of Department, Program Director and Principal Investigator. It's a good exercise in efforts of 'alignment' and 'leverage'. We need to be good at both of these in order to realize the strengths which we bring into our partnerships.

Many thanks once again for all your dedication, hard work and contributions to the Department over throughout 2018. I wish you and your families Happy Holidays and all the best for the New Year 2019.

All the best, Markus



Staff Promotion



Dr Chen Ee Sin

on his promotion to **Associate Professor** with tenure effective 1 January 2019

Staff Awards



Professor Barry Halliwell

for being named in the *global Highly Cited Researchers 2018* list, released by Clarivate Analytics on 27 November 2018.



Professor Jeyakumar Henry

awarded the Grand Prix:

5th Niigata International Food Award, Japan

This award is given to scientist who have made global contribution to food and nutrition.



A/P Too Heng-Phon

is one of the NUS recipients for National Day Awards - The Long Service Medal

Department Award



Click the links to see the videos;

- 1. Lab Safety is everyone's responsibility.
- 2. Office Safety Breathe safety, live safely.



A/P Caroline Lee

\$230,750

Novel Pharmacogenomic Panel for Predicting Response to Anti-Cholesterol Drug Statin - NUS ILO Technology Acceleration Programme (TAP) Grant

A/P Matthew Chang

\$1,498,000

Singapore Consortium for Synthetic Biology

A/P Yew Wen Shan

USD 50,000

Synthetic Remediation Biology: Chromium Upcycling for Environmental Sustainability (AOARD)

Dr Chen Ee Sin

\$680,540

Genome-wide Regulation of histone H3Y41p to Safeguard Genomic Integrity - ARC (MOE) Meeting 2, 2018



Dr Nguyen Nam Long

\$825,228

\$1,250,000

The roles of S1P transporter Mfsd2b in vascular and inflammatory disease - ARC (MOE) Meeting 2, 2018 (Feb 18 call)

Mechanisms of sphingosine-1-phosphate signaling in vascular health and disease (NMRC OFIRG)

Dr Ling Hua

\$1,784,280

Synthetic Biology Research & Development Programme Call 2

Development of Platform Proprietary National Strains



Student Travel Fellowship Award – July 2018 Call

Each graduate student was awarded **\$2,500** to participate in a conference. All recipients have submitted a report on their experiences upon their return.

Geraldine Tu Xue En Supervisor: A/P Too Heng-Phon

2 – 4 December 2018 Cedars-Sinai, Los Angeles, CA, USA

Conference Title:

Cell Symposia : Translation of Stem Cells to the Clinic: Challenges and Opportunities

Wong Wei Jie Garrett Supervisor: A/P Yew Wen Shan

6 – 9 January 2019 New Orleans, LA, USA

Conference Title: 26th Enzyme Mechanism Conference

Chia Ren Hui Derrick Supervisor: A/P Tang Bor Luen

10 - 14 February 2019 Fairmont Banff Springs, Banff, Alberta, Canada

Conference Title:

Keystone Symposia on Molecular and Cellular Biology : Obesity and Adipose Tissue Biology

Lim Lee Jin Supervisor: A/P Caroline Lee

24 - 28 February 2019 Whistler Conference Centre, Whistler, British Columbia, Canada

Conference Title:

Keystone Symposia on Molecular and Cellular Biology: Long Noncoding RNAs: From Molecular Mechanism to Functional Genetics (X2)



Jastrinjan Kaur, PhD
Supervisor:
Professor Hong Wanjin
Conferred Date:
31-05-2018

Lisa Borghini, PhD
Supervisor:
Professor Markus Wenk
Conferred Date:
31-05-2018

Kunde Ramamoorthy Govindarajan, PhD Supervisor: A/P Tan Tin Wee Conferred Date: 31-05-2018 Kwok Wee Chiew, PhD Supervisor: A/P Matthew Wook Chang Conferred Date: 30-06-2018

Liew Wen Chiy, PhD Supervisor: A/P Prabha Sampath Conferred Date: 30-06-2018 Tabaglio Tommaso, PhD Supervisor: A/P Ernesto Guccione Conferred Date: 30-06-2018 Rashmi Rajasabhai, PhD Supervisor: A/P Yew Wen Shan Conferred Date: 30-06-2018 Chua Shu Xian Serene, MSc Supervisor: A/P Marie-Veronique Clement Conferred Date: 30-06-2018

Wisna Novera, MSc Supervisor: A/P Deng Lih Wen Conferred Date: 31-07-2018 Tan Yi Han, MSc Supervisor: A/P Gan Yunn Hwen Conferred Date: 31-07-2018 Pham Hoang Long, PhD Supervisor: A/P Matthew Wook Chang Conferred Date: 31-08-2018

New Student



Loh Yuen Nee Yvonne Degree Programme: PhD

Main Supervisor: A/P Yew Wen Shan

Co-Supervisor(s): A/P Ivan Tham Weng Keong

A/P Poh Chueh Loo

New Staff

Eng Wee Ling Gracie



Research Associate RO: **Dr Cheong Jit Kong** Date Joined: 16-07-2018

Shohei Kitano



RO: A/P Matthew Chang Date Joined: 18-07-2018

Choo Li Shi Kimberly

· 一种



Research Assistant RO: A/P Yew Wen Shan Date Joined: 23-07-2018

Daniel Teh Boon Loong



Senior Research Fellow RO: Professor Brian Kennedy Date Joined: 01-08-2018

Kwok Wee Chiew



Research Fellow

RO: A/P Matthew Chang Date Joined: 06-08-2018

Liow Lu Ting



Research Assistant RO: A/P Yew Wen Shan Date Joined: 06-08-2018

Nguyen Quoc Toan



Research Fellow

RO: Dr Nguyen Nam Long Date Joined: 13-08-2018

Salvador Gomez Carretero



Research Fellow

RO: A/P Yew Wen Shan Date Joined: 03-09-2018

Yong Qian Ying Cheryl



Research Assistant RO: A/P Tang Bor Luen Date Joined: 05-09-2018

Ku Wei Kay, Joanne



Research Assistant RO: A/P Gan Yunn Hwen Date Joined: 06-09-2018

Tan Shu Ting



Research Assistant RO: **Dr Nguyen Nam Long** Date Joined: 17-09-2018

Heng Yu Chyuan



Research Assistant RO: A/P Matthew Chang Date Joined: 26-09-2018



Pazhanichamy Kalailingam



Research Fellow RO: **Dr Nguyen Nam Long** Date Joined: 20-11-2018

Regina Goh Jia Mei



Research Assistant RO: **Dr Jiang Jianming** Date Joined: 20-11-2018

Yeoh Jing Wui



RO: A/P Yew Wen Shan Date Joined: 01-11-2018

Research Fellow

Chandrasekaran Ramya



Research Assistant RO: A/P Yeong Foong May Date Joined: 10-12-2018

Gee Kim Lai, Kim



Assistant Manager RO: Ms Aniza Binte Abdul Wahid Date Joined: 08-10-2018

Aniza Binte Abdul Wahid



Assistant
Director
RO:
A/P Matthew Chang
Date Joined:
01-10-2018

Student Travel Fellowship



DANIEL LIM RUI XIANG

Graduate Study: PhD Name of Supervisor: A/P Gan Yunn Hwen

ASM Microbe 2018, 7-11 June 2018, Atlanta, Georgia, USA

ASM Microbe 2018 was held at the Georgia World Convention Centre (GWCC) in Atlanta from the 7th to the 11th of June 2018. There were many tracks on discussion at the conference which ranged from antimicrobial resistance, host-microbe biology, microbial ecology, public health and even professional talks aimed at helping microbiologists in their careers.

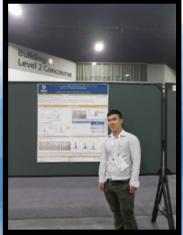
Many interesting talks were held, often concurrently which made it challenging to attend every session. The posters on display were also of new and interesting topics, often unpublished which made it exciting to learn of cutting-edge developments in microbiology. Networking was also an integral part of the conference and there were many workshops and even receptions where one can interact with students, professors and professionals from all over the world.

I gained a deep understanding of the important role that microbiologists play in the world given that almost every part of our lives from the water we drink, food we eat and even what goes on in our bodies is affected by the microbes that live on, in and with us.

Not all was work and Atlanta is a beautiful city with plenty of greenery. It is also home to many large corporations we are familiar with such as Coca-cola and CNN. A wonderful place to visit, it is sure to

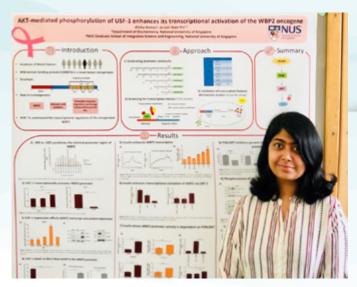
have something for everyone.











The theme of the conference was very relevant to my work. The talks covered diverse topics and

ALISHA F RAMOS

Graduate Study: PhD Name of Supervisor: Dr. Lim Yoon Pin

Mechanisms and Models of Cancer 14th-18th August 2018 Cold Spring Harbor Laboratories, New York, USA.

helped me understand the latest developments in the field of therapy, diagnostics, cancer models and basic science. It also provided opportunities to meet fellow researches from around the globe and share research ideas and advances.

The organizers had also arranged for a career session for graduate students where we could interact with mentors working in different spheres of science and gain insights on how to shape our careers. The poster session gave me an opportunity to present my work to fellow participants and get their inputs on my work.

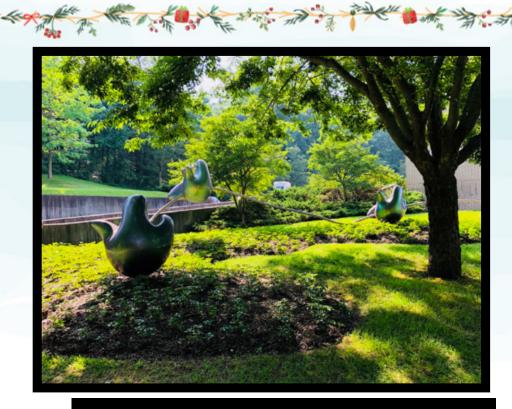
The icing on the cake was meeting the legendary Mr. James Watson, the picturesque landscapes that Cold Spring harbor offers and the history it holds.

Abstract

WW-**D**omain **B**inding **P**rotein **2** (WBP2) a transcriptional co-activator, plays a vital role in breast tumorigenesis. It positively regulates ER, Hippo and Wnt pathways, which subsequently enhance the transcription of downstream target genes contributing to cancer. WBP2 overexpression in breast cancer cells was found to promote cell proliferation, migration, invasion and anchorage-independent growth. Understanding the regulation of the expression and activity of WBP2 oncoprotein has implication in cancer therapy. We have previously reported that WBP2 is regulated at the post translational and post transcriptional level. However, its regulation at the transcriptional level is not known.

In this study, the minimal promoter region of WBP2 and the regulatory motif that is critical for its transcription were identified. **U**pstream **S**timulatory **F**actor **1** (USF-1) was discovered to be a key transcription factor for WBP2 through Yeast-1-Hybrid and validated through reporter, ChIP assays and tandem mass spectrometry, which also suggest that USF-1 acts by regulating a network of genes, in addition to WBP2, associated with cell movement, proliferation, cell cycle and survival cellular processes.USF-1 is overexpressed in majority of the breast cancer cell lines and tissues tested and has profound effects on cancer cell proliferation .USF-1 mediated transcription of WBP2 was demonstrated to be inducible by insulin, which led to AKT-mediated phosphorylation of USF-1 that modulated its ability to bind to the WBP2 promoter and activate its transcription. This study sheds new insights into the regulation of the WBP2 oncogene at the transcriptional level by a novel oncogenic transcription factor USF-1. USF-1 is a potential drug target for treatment of WBP2-positive breast cancer.

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Scenic campus of cold spring harbour laboratories



The James Watson laboratory at CSHL and the man himself





Events

Staff Welfare Event - Perfume Making Workshop: 24 September 2018, Monday





We began our highly anticipated workshop after a hearty buffet lunch at the department. The instructor gave a very engaging presentation on the history of perfume and different fragrances, and we created our own signature scent based on a personality test. Like a scene from a Harry Potter movie, everyone created their 'potions' by adding specific drops of different exotic orchid perfume oils. We ended the workshop with each team performing a skit to promote their perfumes. It is pretty cool to create our own bespoke perfume, either for ourselves or our loved ones. The best part was that everyone got to bring home their special concoction, personalized with their names engraved on the crystal perfume bottle. The workshop is indeed a unique scent-sory experience for everyone!

[Dr Chua Yee Liu, Member of Biochemistry Staff Welfare Committee]















Events

Safety Tea: 27 September 2018, Thursday





The second Safety Tea in 2018 was held on 27th September 2018 in LT35 in MD6, and was attended by more than 160 participants, including academic staff, research staff, postgraduate students, undergraduate students and research collaborators. Deputy Head of Department, A/P Maxey Chung gave the opening speech and congratulated the Safety Video Team on winning the top two awards for Outstanding Safety Videos in NUS Medicine Safety Day 2018. He also reminded everyone to continue to put safety as a top priority when working in the lab. Dr Kenneth Ban, the Safety Chair, shared new safety updates including the newly implemented Laboratory Materials Management System (LMMS), new requirements for Explosive Precursors and updates to NUS Safety & Health Manuals, Standards & Quick Guides. The Safety Tea ended with a delightable spread of afternoon tea snacks.

[Dr Yap Lai Lai, Member of Biochemistry's Safety Committee]





Research Publications

Extracted from NUS Elements; journal articles reporting date from 1 June 2018 to 31 December 2018.

Admasu, T. D., Batchu, K. C., Ng, L. F., **Cazenave-Gassiot, A., Wenk, M. R., & Gruber, J.** (2018). Lipid profiling of C. elegans strains administered pro-longevity drugs and drug combinations. *Scientific Data*, 5. doi:10.1038/sdata.2018.231

Burla, B., Arita, M., Arita, M., Bendt, A. K., **Cazenave-Gassiot, A.**, Dennis, E. A., . . . **Wenk, M. R.** (2018). MS-based lipidomics of human blood plasma - a community-initiated position paper to develop accepted guidelines.. *J Lipid Res.* doi:10.1194/jlr.S087163

Chan, J. P., Wong, B. H., Chin, C. F., Galam, D. L. A., Foo, J. C., Wong, L. C., . . . **Wenk, M. R., Cazenave-Gassiot, A.**, Silver, D. L. (2018). The lysolipid transporter Mfsd2a regulates lipogenesis in the developing brain. *PLOS BIOLOGY*, *16(8)*, 30 pages. doi:10.1371/journal.pbio.2006443

Harel, T., Quek, D. Q. Y., Wong, B. H., **Cazenave-Gassiot, A.**, **Wenk, M. R.**, Fan, H., . . . Edvardson, S. (2018). Homozygous mutation in MFSD2A, encoding a lysolipid transporter for docosahexanoic acid, is associated with microcephaly and hypomyelination. *Neurogenetics*. doi:10.1007/s10048-018-0556-6

Teo, E., Batchu, K. C., Barardo, D., Xiao, L., **Cazenave-Gassiot, A.**, Tolwinski, N., **Wenk, M. R.**, **Halliwell, B., Gruber, J.** (2018). A novel vibration-induced exercise paradigm improves fitness and lipid metabolism of Caenorhabditis elegans. *SCIENTIFIC REPORTS*, 8, 15 pages. doi:10.1038/s41598-018-27330-3

Lim, Y. P., Go, M. K., Raida, M., Inoue, T., **Wenk, M. R.**, Keasling, J. D., . . . **Chang, M. W., Yew, W. S.** (2018). Synthetic Enzymology and the Fountain of Youth: Repurposing Biology for Longevity. *ACS Omega*, 3(9), 11050-11061. doi:10.1021/acsomega.8b01620

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Lee, H. L., Shen, H., Hwang, I. Y., Ling, H., Yew, W. S., Lee, Y. S., & **Chang, M. W.** (2018). Targeted Approaches for In Situ Gut Microbiome Manipulation. *GENES*, 9(7), 12 pages. doi:10.3390/genes9070351

Rahaman, S., Yusop, J., Mohamed-Hussein, Z., Mohd, A., Ho, K. L., Teh, A. -H., . . . **Chen, E. S.**, Ng, C. L. (2018). Crystal structure and functional analysis of human C1ORF123.. PeerJ, 6, e5377.

Ren, B., Sayed, A. M. M., Tan, H. L., Mok, Y. K., & **Chen, E. S.** (2018). Identifying Protein Interactions with Histone Peptides Using Bio-layer Interferometry. *Bio Protocol*, 8(18), e3012.

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Yeo-Teh, N. S. L., Ito, Y., & **Jha, S**. (2018). High-Risk Human Papillomaviral Oncogenes E6 and E7 Target Key Cellular Pathways to Achieve Oncogenesis. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MOLECULAR SCIENCES*, 19(6), 27 pages. doi:10.3390/ijms19061706

Yong, C. Q. Y., & **Tang, B. L.** (2018). Another longin SNARE for autophagosome-lysosome fusion-how does Ykt6 work?. *Autophagy*. doi:10.1080/15548627.2018.1532261

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Sam, Q. H., **Yew, W. S.**, Seneviratne, C. J., **Chang, M. W.**, & Chai, L. Y. A. (2018). Immunomodulation as Therapy for Fungal Infection: Are We Closer?. *FRONTIERS IN MICROBIOLOGY*, 9, 16 pages. doi:10.3389/fmicb.2018.01612

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[Extracted: 10 December 2018]





THE WASHINGTON TO THE WASHINGT

Farewell

Ho Chun Loong

Last Day 9 July 2018

Cheah Wai Yuen

Last Day 10 September 2018

Gaynor Yong Li Li

Last Day 15 October 2018

Mohammad Talaei **Pashiri**

Last Day 9 July 2018

Chen Yanan

Last Day 31 December 2018

Tan Yihan

Last Day 11 January 2019 Chua Niying

Last Day 20 July 2018

Pham Hoang Long

Last Day 26 September 2018

Vidhi Kanaiyalal Patel

Last Day 31 October 2018

Hoh Chu Han

Last Day 30 November 2018

Vu Minh Thiet

Last Day 31 January 2019 Foo Chuan De

Last Day 1 August 2018

Wen Ke Yan

Last Day 28 September 2018

Yim Jian Nam

Last Day 31 October 2018

Maulana Bachtiar

Last Day 30 November 2018

Sim Wenjing

Last Day 10 January 2019

Kemas Aurino Muhammad Last Day 15 August 2018

Xia Pengfei

Last Day 10 October 2018

Lim Si-Hui Jolander

Last Day 6 November 2018

Lee Na Rae

Last Day 31 December 2018

Safia Syaqirin

Last Day 19 November 2018

If we missed any news that you would like to share, please contact:

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