

**APRIL 2018**

## **2018 BOYCE AWARD WINNERS**



Congratulations to graduate students, Carrie Lomelino, Melissa Hale and Jana Jenquin on receiving the 2018 Wanda and Richard Boyce Awards for their outstanding graduate research in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology.

Carrie will present at the upcoming [44th annual Medical Guild](#) sponsored graduate student research competition which will be held Monday, April 9th, starting at 1:30 pm, in the auditorium of the Cancer and Genetics Research building (the CGRC) where she will give a 15-minute presentation and respond to a 5-minute Q&A session on her topic, "*Structure-Guided Drug Design of CA IX Selective Inhibitors for Breast Cancer Treatment*".

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## **2018 UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM**

The UF Center for Undergraduate Research sponsored this year's undergraduate research symposium on Thursday, March 22. There was a morning and



afternoon poster session held in the Grand Ballroom of the Reitz Union, which was open to the public, students, faculty and staff.

Several students working in the labs of our Biochemistry and Molecular Biology faculty participated in this event.

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## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

### [Bala Venkatakrishnan](#)

A graduate from Drs. [Mavis Agbandje-McKenna](#) and [Robert McKenna's](#) lab in 2012, Bala Venkatakrishnan went on to do a 5-year postdoc at Indiana University with Dr. Adam Zlotnick on Hepatitis B virus structure and assembly biophysics and now works at [Syngene International Limited](#), a contract research organization in Bangalore, India. Although he has only been with this organization for less than a year, he loves the challenge that his work brings. As principal investigator, he runs his own lab with a focus on protein purification, characterization and structure determination. His team works on a large variety of proteins and their primary challenge is to get projects done as efficiently as possible with a healthy pace. They are constantly looking to upgrade their skills and understanding to keep up with this challenge.



When asked how his education and experience in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology helped prepare him for his career track, Bala described it as being extremely useful. He went on to say that “structure determination is an ability that requires a full apprenticeship, and I learned all of it from the best (Drs. Mavis and Robert McKenna). I have carved my own niche here because of my past work on a number of viruses during my time at UF. Most of all my thought process, approach and attitude towards my science is most entirely a product of the years of effort that my mentors, committee members and other members of the department (both faculty and administration) put into it. I still reach out to my mentors for advice regularly.”

Bala and his wife (and their cat, Capt. Murugan) braved an intercontinental journey back to India in 2017 and have settled into a good life there. He continues to represent the Gator nation in all that he does!



Diversity and inclusion are core values at the UF College of Medicine. The [Celebration of Diversity Week](#) was designed to honor those values and explore opportunities to work within our community to promote cross-cultural understanding and address health-care disparities!

Our faculty member, [Dr. Mavis Agbandje-McKenna](#), will be participating in the Dean's Grand Rounds Panel Discussion, **Today's Challenge: Building and Sustaining a Culture of Diversity, Inclusion and Equity** from Noon – 1:30 p.m. in the Harrell Medical Education Building North Learning Studio. Please RSVP to [RSVP@hsc.ufl.edu](mailto:RSVP@hsc.ufl.edu) or 352-294-8452 and indicate your reservation is for the Dean's Grand Rounds.

## Save The Date!

### BMB UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH POSTER SESSION

To highlight the work of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology's undergraduates, there will be a poster session in which the undergraduate research students will present their work. Posters will be judged, and five students will receive a cash prize of \$100. Light refreshments will be provided.

**Tuesday, April 10th**  
**4:00pm - 6:00pm**  
**Academic Research Building**  
**3rd Floor**

### GRADUATE STUDENT INFO CORNER

#### [2018 Graduate Student Appreciation Week](#)

Graduate Student Appreciation Week is a chance for the university to give back

to our amazing graduate student body for all of the work they do teaching, researching, and serving.

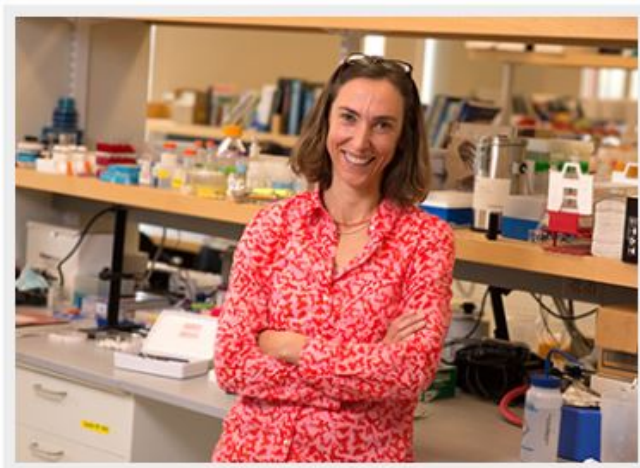
[SCHEDULE OF EVENTS »](#)



## SEMINAR ANNOUNCEMENTS

### CENTER FOR STRUCTURAL BIOLOGY

#### Seminar Series



#### Felicitas Bidlack, Ph.D.

Associate Member of the Staff of

The Forsyth Institute  
Instructor, Department of  
Developmental Biology  
Harvard School of Dental  
Medicine, Cambridge, MA

**Monday, April 16 4:00 pm**  
**McKnight Brain Institute LG-101A DeWeese Auditorium**

### FACULTY RESEARCH DISCUSSIONS

**Wednesdays 4:00pm ARB R3-265**

April 4	Dr. Thomas Yang
April 11	Dr. Linda Bloom
April 18	Dr. Matthew Merritt

### DEPARTMENTAL JOURNAL CLUBS

## Structural Biology

**Mondays, 3:00pm, ARB R3-265**

April 2	Jacob Andring
April 9	Judit Penzes
April 16	Anusha Kota
April 23	Justin Kurian

## Biochemistry & Molecular Biology

**Tuesdays, 4:00pm, ARB R3-265**

April 3	Akilah Murray
April 10	Nivetha Ramesh Babu
April 17	Yasmin Ali
April 24	Andrea Ramirez

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Make a gift to the Molecular Biology Fund to support faculty and students involved in teaching and research at the forefront of biochemistry and molecular biology. Your gift directly impacts instructional programs for our undergraduate and graduate students in the molecular biosciences. Use the "Make a Gift" button below for donating to the Molecular Biology Fund, and thank you for your investment in the future of medicine.



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