

Chair Newsletter | Ali Shilatifard
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Quote

“I never dreamed my research would take the direction it has... It’s a great, emotional privilege to meet cancer patients who’ve been successfully treated with immune checkpoint blockade. They are living proof of the power of basic science, of following our urge to learn and to understand how things work.”

Dr. Jim Allison, 2018 Nobel Laureate in Medicine

On this day of the October newsletter publication, we woke up to the news of Dr. Jim Allison of the United States and Dr. Tasuku Honjo of Japan winning the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for their fundamental discovery in unleashing the immune system to attack cancer. Their groundbreaking molecular findings have led to an entirely new class of drugs and has brought hope and extended time for many patients who previously had no other options. And these extraordinary outcomes are the result of dedication and hard work with the relentless pursuit of basic molecular and biochemical research. Congratulations to them both!

I would like to thank all of you whom were able to join us for the 3rd Annual Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics Retreat, and especially our colleagues Marc Mendillo, Jae Choi, Clara Peek, Beverly Kirk, Vanessa Hughes and Jenny Gallo whom organized it. The retreat was well attended with about eighty percent of the department attending. The invited keynote speaker, Dr. Alice Ting of Stanford University, shared with us a fantastic method for identifying molecular interactors within a given pathway and brought many new ideas and experiments that I see being implemented in our department. At the same time, we were all very impressed with the accomplishments of our own BMG faculty, fellows, students and technical team from both the talks and superb poster presentations. I am grateful to those whom attended and contributed to the success of this retreat. Keep up your great work as you never know what lies ahead for your relentless pursuit of basic molecular and biochemical research.

Ali Shilatifard
 Professor and Chairman

New Department Members

Eagen Lab

- Aalaa Abdallah, DGP rotation student, rotating in lab for the Fall Quarter

Mendillo Lab

- Sitaram Gayatri, postdoctoral fellow
- Roger Smith, MSTP student

Nztiachristos Lab

- Yalu Zhou, bioinformatician scientist

Recently received Grants and Awards

Li and Mendillo Labs

Drs. Mendillo and Li were the recipients of the Liz and Eric Lefkofsky Family Foundation Innovation Research Award for their proposal *Elucidating the Role of Protein Aggregation and Amyloidogenesis in BAF-linked Tumorigenesis*.

Nztiachristos Lab

Radhika Rawat, MSTP Student, accepted to the Carcinogenesis T32 Program.

Shilatifard Lab

Ali Shilatifard and Marc Morgan in collaboration with colleagues Hao Zhang of Northwestern University and Juan de Pablo at the University of Chicago were able to obtain a major program project grant from NSF titled, “*Epigenomic Regulation Over Multiple Length Scales: Understanding Chromatin Modifications Through Label Free Imaging and Multi-Scale Modeling.*”

Publications

Eagen Lab

Eagen, K.P. Principles of Chromosome Architecture Revealed by Hi-C. *Trends in Biochemical Science* (2018) 43(6) 469-478.

Dr. Eagen’s paper was featured on the cover of TiBS.



Nztiachristos Lab

Jin et al., Nztiachristos P. USP7 cooperates with NOTCH1 to drive the oncogenic transcriptional program in **T cell leukemia.** (2018) *Clin Cancer Res* Sept 17.pii: clincanres.1740.2018.