Asimakopoulos Receives $150,000 ASH Grant to Work on Multiple Myeloma

The American Society of Hematology (ASH) has awarded Dr. Fotis Asimakopoulos a $150,000 grant to study experimental therapies for multiple myeloma. Dr. Asimakopoulos is assistant professor of medicine in the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. His research focuses on the genetics of multiple myeloma, myeloma stem cells and the development of genetically engineered models for multiple myeloma. Multiple myeloma is a cancer that forms in white blood cells and invades the bone marrow.

The society gives bridge grants to provide interim support for promising hematology research proposals that, despite earning high scores, could not be funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) amid severe funding reductions. “My situation is typical among many new investigators: I’m entering a zone of uncertainty between dwindling start-up funds and the need for additional investment,” said Asimakopoulos. “This is a critical time that will determine my ability to launch into a sustainable, productive, and independent career in science and I am grateful to ASH for helping to support me through this period.”

Chen Elected President-Elect of Society of Clinical Surgery

In the month of November, 2014, Herb Chen, M.D. was elected President-Elect of the Society of Clinical Surgery. Chen specializes in endocrine surgery (thyroid surgery, minimally invasive parathyroidectomy, and laparoscopic adrenalectomy); minimally invasive endocrine surgery, surgical oncology and adult general surgery.

Dr. Chen is also the leader of the endocrine cancer group at the University of Wisconsin Carbone Cancer Center. His research program investigates the development, progression, and treatment of endocrine tumors including gastrointestinal carcinoids, thyroid cancer, adrenal cancer, and pancreatic islet cell tumors.

Researchers Receive New Investigator Grants

The Wisconsin Partnership recently awarded five New Investigator grants totaling nearly $500,000. The competitive New Investigator Program supports innovative research and/or educational approaches that address Wisconsin’s public health issues and benefit state residents. Recipients are:

Aparna Lakkaraju, PhD, assistant professor, Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, Repurposing FDA-approved Drugs as Therapeutics for Age-related Macular Degeneration

Caitlin Pepperell, MD, assistant professor, Division of Infectious Disease, Department of Medicine, Understanding M. Tuberculosis Evolution Within and Between Hosts

John-Demian Sauer, PhD, assistant professor, Department of Medical Microbiology & Immunology, Characterization of the Role of PASTA Kinases in Beta-lactam Resistance

Miriam Shelef, MD, PhD, assistant professor, Division of Rheumatology, Department of Medicine, Genetic Variants, Immune Dysregulation and Rheumatoid Arthritis
Christian Capitini to test ‘breakthrough’ pediatric leukemia treatment

A promising method of immunotherapy to treat children with relapsed acute lymphocytic leukemia (ALL) is opening at the University of Wisconsin Carbone Cancer Center and American Family Children's Hospital. The trial is open to relapsed/refractory pediatric ALL patients who have limited treatment options. The UW Carbone Cancer Center is among several centers participating in a multi-site trial to test this immunotherapy, named CTL019, which was developed by a research team at the University of Pennsylvania. The therapy received the Food and Drug Administration's Breakthrough Therapy designation on July 7, 2014. In this experimental treatment, T-cells are reprogrammed to express the CAR receptor, which may detect the leukemia and potentially destroy the cells.

"Once the T-cells are reprogrammed, the modified cells are shipped back with the special cells,” says Christian Capitini, the UW pediatric hematology oncologist who is principal investigator of the clinical trial. The therapy has been accelerated through the work of a "dream team" of academic institutions granted $14.5 million from Stand Up to Cancer and the St. Baldrick's Foundation. The Carbone Cancer Center and American Family Children’s Hospital will join in a Phase II clinical trial to study the efficacy of the CTL019 therapy in pediatric patients with relapsed/refractory ALL.

Assistant Professor Rupa Sridharah and her work on “increasing reprogramming efficiency to get pluripotent stem cells” featured on WID website

In a paper published in Nature Communications, researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, led by Rupa Sridharan at the Wisconsin Institute for Discovery, have unveiled two distinct, yet interconnected mechanisms that work together to greatly increase the efficiency with which differentiated cells are reprogrammed into iPS cells. Full article: http://wid.wisc.edu/featured-science/flipping-the-switch-on-pluripotent-stem-cells/

Coon's Paper Makes Cover of Analytical Chemistry

During the month of November, 2014, work done by Joshua Coon, PhD, was featured on the cover of Analytical Chemistry.

Trainers Alan Attie and Deane Mosher elected fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science

Two IPiB faculty members are among four from the UW-Madison that have been elected fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the society announced today.

Alan D. Attie, professor of biochemistry, “for distinguished contributions to genetics and endocrinology, particularly through characterization of the genetics of diabetes in mouse model systems.”

Deane Mosher, professor of biomolecular chemistry, “for illuminating the roles of fibronectin, vitronectin, and thrombospondins in cell adhesion and migration, the assembly of the extracellular matrix, and human disease.”
Recap of the CMP Program Wide Meeting

National Research Mentoring Network, Speaker Janet Branchaw, Associate Director of Mentor Training Core, Director of WISCIENCE

Ms. Branchaw spoke to our CMP students and trainers about the recently funded NIH National Research Mentoring Network (NRMN) which provides a cadre of individuals across the nation, including a group at UW-Madison, the funds necessary to work on the development of programs that will focus on mentoring, professional development and diversity. We look forward to becoming a participating program in their upcoming initiatives.

CMP Committee Updates:
The program recently reviewed and updated our CMP Committee members. Please visit our web site to view a listing of our current committees. A big thanks to everyone that participates in these groups!

T32 Update:
Our T32 renewal application, submitted in January 2014, received a very good score. We have just received word that the T32 renewal has been awarded, starting July 2015, for a period of five years!

Congratulations to our Fall 2014 Thesis Defenders!

Holly Hung
November 20, 2014
“Epigenetic regulation of peripheral nerve myelination in development and injury”
Research conducted in the lab of John Svaren, PhD, Department of Comparative Biosciences

Natalie Greco
December 11, 2014
“Investigating Hepadnaviral Capsid Envelopment and Viron Production”
Research conducted in the lab of Dan Loeb, PhD, Department of Oncology

Mike Khan
American Association of Immunologists Annual Meeting
New Orleans, May 8-12, 2015

Jose Molina
2014 Society for Neuroscience Meeting

Erin Theisen
Keystone Symposium on Molecular and Cellular Biology Conference
Sao Paulo, Brazil, Oct 28 - Nov 2, 2014
CMP STUDENTS LAB SELECTIONS

Class of 2014
- Ryan Donahue WITH Rob Nickells
- Nicole Lane WITH Ying Ge
- Nicholas Van Sciver WITH Shannon Kenney
- Bryce Wolfe WITH Ted Golos

Sarmila Basnet WITH David Evans
- Aisha Mergaert WITH Zsuzsa Fabry
- Matthew Sutton WITH Shelby O’Connor
- Mengxue Zhang WITH Lianwang Gao
- Fen Zhu WITH Lixin Rui

Mirnal Chaudhary WITH Craig Kent
- Eli Wallace WITH Matt Jones
- Shannon Kenney WITH Matt Jones
- Craig Kent

2014 CMP STUDENT BOWLING PARTY!
Assistant Professor | Infectious Disease

Dr. Nett’s research focuses on the host response to biofilm infections, with the goal of devising new approaches for diagnosis and treatment of these infections. In patients with indwelling medical devices, organisms may adhere to the device surface and proliferate as a biofilm of resilient cells encased in an extracellular matrix. The host immune system and conventional anti-infectives are often not capable of eradicating biofilms. Dr. Nett’s laboratory studies Candida and how the transition to the biofilm lifestyle protects Candida from immune clearance.

Assistant Professor | Biomolecular Chemistry

The main goal of Dr. Engin’s research is to understand the role of organelle stress in the pathogenesis of diabetes. The laboratory uses novel genetic mouse models, cellular and biochemical tools to further investigate the role of organelle stress and adaptive responses in T1D pathogenesis. The Engin Lab recently identified defects in the expression of UPR mediators ATF6 and XBP1 in b-cells from two different T1D mouse models and then demonstrated similar defects in pancreatic b-cells from T1D patients.

Professor | Oncology

Professor Xu’s laboratory is focused on the transcriptional regulation of estrogen receptor (ER) signaling pathways by nuclear receptor co-factors. The lab has discovered that some ER co-regulatory proteins regulate ER-mediated growth inhibition rather than proliferation, and is also attempting to develop novel chemotherapy strategies to treat ER-positive breast cancer. The second focus of the lab is to explore the functional roles of histone arginine methylation in the epigenetic control of cancer cells.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Speaker Name</th>
<th>Title and Affiliation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, Jan. 21</td>
<td>12:00pm</td>
<td>G5/113</td>
<td>Federico Rey, PhD</td>
<td>Department of Bacteriology, UW-Madison</td>
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<td>Wednesday, Jan. 28</td>
<td>12:00pm</td>
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<td>Matthew Jones, PhD</td>
<td>Department of Neuroscience, UW-Madison</td>
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<td>Wednesday, Feb. 4</td>
<td>12:00pm</td>
<td>G5/113</td>
<td>Pathology Grand Rounds</td>
<td>John Sinard, MD, PhD, Director, Pathology Informatics; Associate Director, Anatomic Pathology, Yale School of Medicine</td>
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<td>Friday, Feb. 6</td>
<td>8:00am</td>
<td>G5/113</td>
<td>Paula North, MD, PhD</td>
<td>Director, Children’s Research Institute Histology and Imaging Cores, Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin, Medical College of Wisconsin</td>
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<td>Lian-Wang Guo, PhD</td>
<td>Department of Surgery, UW-Madison</td>
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<td>Wednesday, Feb. 18</td>
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<td>Avtar Roopra, PhD</td>
<td>Department of Neuroscience, UW-Madison</td>
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<td>Wednesday, Mar. 4</td>
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<td>Victoria Sutton, PhD, Wisconsin Alumni Alumni Research Foundation</td>
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<td>Wednesday, Mar. 11</td>
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<td>Brian Evavold, PhD</td>
<td>Department of Microbiology and Immunology, Emory University School of Medicine</td>
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<td>Brandon Keele, PhD</td>
<td>PhD, AIDS and Cancer Virus Program, SAIC-Frederick, National Cancer Institute</td>
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<td>Janardan Pandey, PhD</td>
<td>Department of Microbiology and Immunology, Medical University of South Carolina</td>
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<td>Wednesday, Apr. 8</td>
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<td>James George, MD</td>
<td>MD, Departments of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Medicine, University of Oklahoma</td>
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<td>Christopher Klebanoff, MD</td>
<td>MD, Center for Cancer Research, National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health</td>
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<td>Wednesday, Apr. 22</td>
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<td>Lawrence Wrabetz, MD</td>
<td>MD, Director, Hunter James Kelly Research Institute, University at Buffalo, The State University of New York</td>
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<td>George Perry, PhD</td>
<td>PhD, Department of Biology, University of Texas at San Antonio</td>
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<td>Wednesday, May 6</td>
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<td>Pathology Grand Rounds</td>
<td>Ricardo Lloyd, MD, PhD, Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, UW-Madison</td>
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