



Fall Gathering Recognizes Graduate Student Achievements

When graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in the biomedical sciences came together last September for the annual Graduate Student Council Fall Gathering, Medical School Dean Allen S. Lichter, M.D., and Steven Goldstein, Ph.D., associate dean for research and graduate studies, presented awards of recognition to four students. Patrick Murphy and Robert Loberg received Graduate Student Awards for Excellence in Teaching, while Lisa Gerlach-Bank and Robin Erickson were recognized with Overall Excellence in Research and Service Awards.

"These awards recognize the outstanding contributions of, and show our appreciation for, our graduate students in the biomedical sciences. We've been presenting the teaching awards for a number of years, but the research and service awards are new. The competition for all four awards was stiff and the choices difficult," said Goldstein.

Patrick Murphy, Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics, gained recognition for his teaching of pharmacology to nursing students. Nominators noted that his teaching garnered higher evaluation scores than that of tenured faculty members. Murphy, who is passionate about teaching, said that teaching is a moral imperative.

Robert Loberg, Department of Physiology, also was recognized as an outstanding teacher. When Loberg taught optional classes for undergraduates, an 82 percent attendance rate was not unusual. "The atmosphere was outstanding. He made learning fun. He cared and wanted all students to do well," one of his nominators said.

Lisa Gerlach-Bank, Department of Cell and Developmental Biology, is known as a 'can do' person and was selected for her efforts in research and service. According to Dean Lichter, faculty were torn between the teaching and research awards for Gerlach-Bank, who is studying the role of BMP4 antagonists in the patterning and morphogenesis of the developing inner ear.

Robin Erickson, Department of Physiology, was selected for his important contributions in research. According to his nominators, Erickson's service to his department has been more significant than that of any graduate student in the last 20 years. Erickson studies the role of nuclear co-activators in the transcriptional activity of C/EBPs.

Any student actively pursuing a degree in one of the graduate programs within the Medical School can be nominated for these awards, sponsored by the Program in Biomedical Sciences. In addition, candidates for the teaching award must demonstrate effectiveness and creativity as a teacher, effective interactions with students, and the potential for continued growth as a scholar and teacher. To be considered for the research and service award, candidates must demonstrate scientific excellence as judged by publications, academic record or other forms of recognition, as well as service to the University and/or its community through committee participation, events management and outreach activities. 

—Mary Beth Reilly

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