



Physiology News

April – June 2020 · Volume 3 · Issue 2

A Message from the Chair

Dear All,

As we brace ourselves for the heat of the summer, we appear to once again be caught in COVID limbo. The daily news of increasing case numbers, particularly among the younger members of society puts a new light to our much-anticipated transition to a less restrictive social environment. Most of us have been able to return to a relatively normal work schedule. Some have had a little bit more difficult time than others, and I want to remind you that you don't have to navigate this alone. We can lean on each other to get moving in the right direction.

The events during the past few weeks, marked by the death of Mr. George Floyd awakened our dormant consciences urging us to proactively seek change. Regardless of political affiliations, we as a department have come together to educate ourselves, to raise awareness of our personal and institutional racism, and to develop plans to make a difference. No longer will we remain silent. No longer will this not be our collective issue. We will be allies, we will hold each other accountable, and we will set the example for others to follow.



During the past 3 months we have also found cause for celebration. Matthew Herrera and Zach Stielper completed their degree requirements, Elizabeth Delery and Elizabeth Fucich both are moving on to their new faculty positions, Amanda Pahng moved to the VA, and Brianna Bourgeois joined the Simon lab. We celebrated Juneteenth, Pride month, and the 4th of July. On a personal note, I share my joy of seeing my eldest son (Mikey) "ZOOM graduating" from his Neurology residency!



At times like this we must stay positive and look for small successes to cherish. I encourage you to take care of yourselves, focus on your families, and keep a positive outlook. We have come so far; we must keep going.

Please be mindful, keep social distancing, wear your mask, and consider all efforts to reduce risk for you and those around you.

Sincerely,

Patricia

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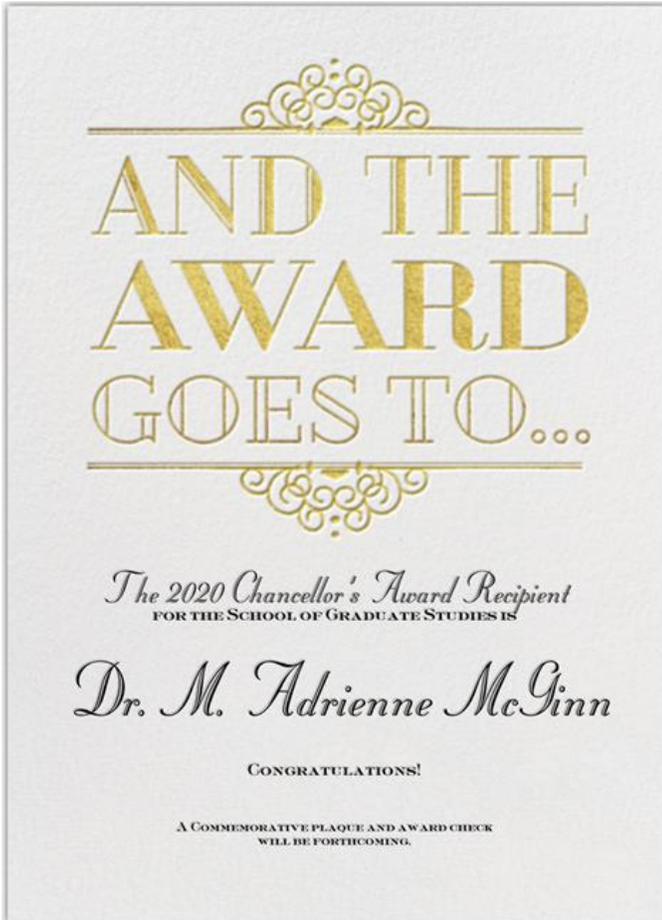


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Recognition

Dr. Adrienne McGinn was awarded the 2020 Chancellor's Award for the School of Graduate Studies.



Congratulations to **Dr. Amanda Pahng** for transitioning to her independent position as a Research Health Scientist at the Southeast Louisiana VA on May 26, 2020. Her Career Development Award and new laboratory will be investigating the neurobiological interactions of chronic pain and fentanyl dependence. She will remain affiliated with LSU Health New Orleans as an Instructor – Research (gratis) in the Department of Physiology.

Congratulations to **Dr. Elizabeth Delery** for her acceptance of a tenure-track faculty position as Assistant Professor of Microbiology and Immunology at the Marian University College of

Osteopathic Medicine in Indianapolis. Her new email address is: edelery@marian.edu.

Congratulations to Dr. Elizabeth Fucich for beginning her Professor of Practice position at Tulane University. Her new email address is efucich@tulane.edu.

Dr. Jason Gardner was promoted to Tenured Full Professor. Congratulations!

Jessica Cucinello-Ragland was elected President and **Nicholas Fried** was elected Vice President of Public Relations of the School of Graduate Studies Student Government Association.

Dr. Patricia Molina was elected as a member of the Academy of Sciences of Latin America (Academia de Ciencias de América Latina; ACAL) in May 2020 and was inducted as President of the Research Society on Alcoholism (RSA) in June 2020.

Dr. Marcus Weera was an RSA 2020 Enoch Gordis Postdoctoral Recognition Award Finalist, talk entitled "Central Amygdala Signaling in Stress-Induced Avoidance Behavior & Escalation of Alcohol Consumption."

New Faces



Brianna Bourgeois (left) officially joined Dr. Liz Simon's laboratory as an MD/PhD student in June after rotating with Dr. Simon last summer. She earned a B.S. in Bioengineering from LSU and spent two years working at Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Baton Rouge before starting her training at LSUHSC.

Erin Davis (right) is a new Research Associate in the Edwards Lab. Erin holds a BS in Anthropology and MS in Neuroscience and will be working on the lab's medications screening projects.





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Dr. Rajani Maiya (right) joined the department as an Assistant Professor. Dr. Maiya obtained her PhD in Molecular Biology from the University of Texas at Austin. She completed postdoctoral fellowships at the Rockefeller University and the The University of California at San Francisco. In her NIH-funded laboratory, Dr. Maiya will use a combination of genetic, molecular, pharmacological, and whole-genome strategies to identify the molecular mechanisms that underlie Alcohol Use Disorder.



mechanisms that underlie Alcohol Use Disorder.



Sarah McQuirter (left) is a Neuroscience and Spanish major at Tulane University. She will be working in the Edwards Lab.

Welcome to the Summer Student Research Interns working with us throughout the summer:

- Katie Adler
- Tyler Dillon
- Mick Dubic
- Eden Gallegos
- Viet Le
- Ari Saravia
- Isabella Welsh
- Jeanette Zavala

Graduate Student Milestones

Dr. Zach Stielper successfully defended his doctoral dissertation.

Jessica Cucinello-Ragland received a JIT for their F31 application titled *Regulation of Pain by Alcohol and Endocannabinoids in the Basolateral Amygdala*.

Grants

Edwards, S and Winsauer, PJ. Examination of NEPE14 in an Animal Model of Chronic Inflammatory Pain. Contract with Full Spectrum Omega, Inc. \$7,350.

McQuirter, S and **Edwards, S**. Neurobiological Correlates of Pain in the Context of Opioid Addiction. Newcomb-Tulane College Research Grant. \$1,000.

Publications

Albrechet-Souza, L, Schratz, CL, and Gilpin, NW. Sex differences in traumatic stress reactivity in rats with and without a history of alcohol drinking. *Biol. Sex Differ.* 11(1):27, 2020. DOI: 10.1186/s13293-020-00303-w. PMID: 32393336.

Bazan, HA, Bhattacharjee, S, Burgos, C, Recio, J, Abet, V, **Pahng, AR**, Jun, B, Heap, J, Ledet, AH, Gordon, WC, **Edwards, S**, Paul, D, Alvarez-Builla, J, and Bazan, NG. A novel pipeline of 2-(benzenesulfonamide)-N-(4-hydroxyphenyl) acetamide analgesics that lack hepatotoxicity and retain antipyresis. *European Journal of Medicinal Chemistry* (In press).

Delery, EC, and Edwards, S (2020). Neuropeptide and cytokine regulation of pain in the context of substance use disorders. *Neuropharmacology*, 174:10853. PMID: 32470337.

Harrison-Bernard, LM, Augustus-Wallace, AC, **Souza-Smith, FM**, Tsien, F, Casey, GP, and Gunaldo, TP. Knowledge gains in a professional development workshop on diversity, equity, inclusion, and implicit bias in academia. *Adv. Physiol. Educ.* 44 (3): 286-294, 2020. PMID: 32484403.

Ferguson, TF, Beauchamp, A, Rosen, E, Ray, AN, Theall, KP, **Gilpin, NW, Molina, PE, and Edwards, S.** Adaptation of an Alcohol, Tobacco, and Illicit Drug Use Intervention for Vulnerable Urban Young Adults. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 2000. (In press).

Ferguson TF, Rosen E, Carr R, **Brashear M, Simon L**, Theall KP, Ronis MJ, Welsh DA, and **Molina PE.** Associations of Liver Disease with Alcohol Use among People Living with HIV and the Role of Hepatitis C: The New Orleans Alcohol Use in HIV Study. *Alcohol Alcohol*, 2020. PMID: 31812989.

Ferguson, TF, Theall, KP, **Brashear, M**, Maffei, V, Beauchamp, A, **Siggins, RW, Simon, L**, Mercante, D, **Nelson, S**, Welsh, DA, and **Molina, PE.**



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Comprehensive Assessment of Alcohol Consumption in Persons Living with HIV/AIDS: The New Orleans Alcohol and HIV Study. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*, 44(6):1261-1272, 2020. DOI: 10.1111/acer.14336.

Osna, NA, Bhatia, R, Thompson, C, Batra, SK, Kumar, S, Cho, Y, Szabo, G, **Molina, PE**, Weinman, SA, Ganesan, M, and Kharbanda, KK. Role of non-genetic risk factors in exacerbating alcohol-related organ damage (Review). *Alcohol*, 2020 Jun 1:S0741-8329(20)30227-5.

Rasineni, K, Srinivasan, MP, Balamurugan, AN, Kaphalia, BS, Wang, S, Ding, WX, Pandol, SJ, Lugea, A, **Simon, L, Molina, PE**, Gao, P, Casey, CA, Osna, NA, and Kharbanda, KK. Recent advances in understanding the complexity of alcohol-induced pancreatic dysfunction and pancreatitis development. *Biomolecules* 10(5): 669, 2020. PMID: 32349207.

Simon, L, Ferguson, TF, Vande Stouwe, C, Brashear, M, Primeaux, SD, Theall, KP, Welsh, DA, and **Molina, PE**. Prevalence of Insulin Resistance in Adults Living with HIV: Implications of Alcohol use. *AIDS Res Hum Retroviruses*, 2020 May 25 [ahead of print]; doi:10.1089/AID.2020.0029. PMID: 32449647.

Presentations

Drs. Liz Simon, Zachary Stielper, and Stefany Primeaux presented their work as part of our Hot Summer Seminar Series.

Professional Service

Dr. Lisa Harrison-Bernard is the new President of the Association for Women in Science - Southern Louisiana Chapter.

New APS Committee Appointments (3-yr terms):

- **Dr. Liz Simon:** Awards Committee
- **Dr. Scott Edwards:** Physiology Educators Committee
- **Dr. Danielle Levitt:** Physiology Educators Committee

Jessica Cucinello-Ragland and **Krystal Belmonte** volunteered to be on a Q&A panel about graduate school for the summer research interns.

Dr. Elizabeth Delery served as a reviewer for *Schizophrenia Research*.

Notable Events

The graduate students participated in the #ShutDownSTEM strike and developed a call to action to invite the rest of the department in joining them on strike. Many department members participated and have committed to continued education and action to combat racism in academia and in our daily lives.

Our department members have also been active in protesting systemic racism and police brutality against Black lives. Graduate students, postdocs, staff members, and faculty members have actively participated in protests across the city (pictured) and at the White Coats for Black Lives protest held at Tulane University (pictured).



Top left & bottom right: Pictures from protests across the city, submitted by **Dr. Tekeda Ferguson**. Top right: White Coats for Black Lives protest at Tulane University, submitted by **Jessica Cucinello-Ragland**. Bottom left: **Jonquil Poret, Muhammad Farooq, Jessica Cucinello-Ragland, Brittany Foret, and Krystal Belmonte** at the White Coats for Black Lives protest.

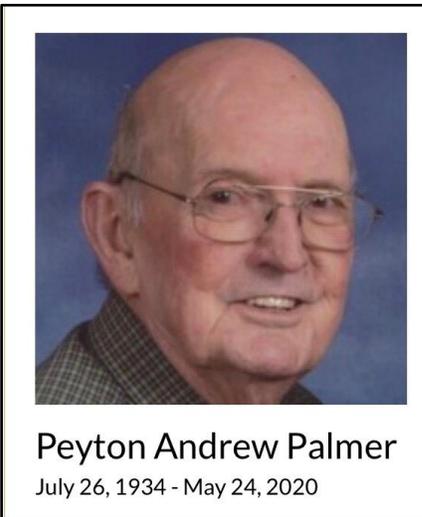


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Meghan Brashear welcomed her new daughter, Marion Brigid Brashear (pictured, right, with her big sister) to the world on June 2, 2020. Congratulations, **Meghan** and family!



We express our deepest condolences to **Connie Poretta**, whose father, Peyton Palmer (pictured), passed away on May 24, 2020, and to **Leslie Brennan**, whose mother, Helen Elizabeth Boyle Brennan (pictured), passed away on June 13, 2020.



Peyton Andrew Palmer
July 26, 1934 - May 24, 2020



Helen Elizabeth Boyle Brennan
January 22, 1929 – June 13, 2020

Leslie Brennan sends the following message: "I deeply appreciate the thoughts and prayers, plants and flowers, personal cards and messages received following the loss of my mother."

Members of the Department of Physiology donated a total of \$700 to help provide food for those in need during the COVID-19 pandemic. **Dr. Maureen Basha** and **Liz Simon** used the donation to purchase food to donate to Lantern Light (pictured above) and donated remaining monies to Cattail Cooks.



Shealan Cruise won the "Work from Home Madness" contest in April (winning submission pictured, left).

Jessica Cucinello-Ragland organized a Pride Month event for the department with the assistance of **Dr. Maureen Basha**. **Jessica** also came out at work as genderqueer and has changed their pronouns to they/them/theirs.



Kimberly Edwards attained a five-star island in Animal Crossing: New Horizons (left).

Jessica Cucinello-Ragland and **Taylor Templeton** received their teaching & tutoring evaluations (below).

