Recognition

Dr. Marcus Weera was awarded an RSA Junior Investigator Award.

Dr. Elizabeth Avegno was awarded an NIAAA travel award to ISBRA.

Dr. Lucas Albrechet de Souza was selected for a career development workshop at Fresno State-CA with all the expenses covered (July 16 – July 20, 2018).

Dr. Patricia Molina became President Elect of the Association of Chairs of Departments of Physiology (ACDP). In addition, she received the 2018 Pioneer Award as part of the NIDA-funded advanced training course entitled “Frontiers in Addiction Research and Pregnancy.” She was also selected as the Veterana Panel lead speaker at the National Hispanic Science Network 18th Annual International Conference. Dr. Flavia Souza-Smith was invited to be a speaker in this panel as well.

Drs. Patricia Molina and Flavia Souza-Smith received the IOP for the 2019 Pan American Congress in Havana, Cuba.

Betsy Giaimo retired after 39 years of service to the Department of Physiology. Congratulations, Betsy!

New Faces

Sarah Ford Mozingo joined the Molina and Gilpin Labs as a research assistant who will be conducting research using rat models of traumatic brain injury and alcohol dependence.

IDP student Laura Monteagudo Romero completed a successful rotation in Edwards Lab investigating fentanyl-induced hyperalgesia. We look forward to having her back in 2019.

Dr. Danielle Levitt-Budnar joined the Molina and Simon Labs as a T32 Postdoctoral Fellow investigating alcohol-mediated metabolic comorbidities in SIV/HIV.

Graduate Student Milestones

Zachary Stielper and Krystal Belmonte passed their qualifying examinations.

Jonquil Poret defended her thesis summarizing her work in the Primeaux Lab in April and joined the Molina Lab as a predoctoral student in the IDP program.

Grants


Vasopressin Signaling in Pain and Alcohol Dependence. R01AA025996. PI: Dr. Scott Edwards. This grant will determine the functional role of vasopressin signaling in the manifestation of excessive drinking and hyperalgesia in alcohol-dependent animals.
Preclinical Medications Development Screening in Dependent, Affect and Pain Models of Alcoholism. NIH-NICHHD-2018-05. PI: Dr. Scott Edwards. This contract will test novel medication strategies for excessive drinking and hyperalgesia symptoms in alcohol-dependent animals.

Publications


Presentations

Dr. Elizabeth Avegno presented posters entitled “Alcohol dependence impacts midbrain projections to central amygdala” at the RSA Annual Meeting in San Diego (June, 2018) and “Alcohol dependence impacts ventral tegmental projections to central amygdala” at the International Society for Biomedical Research on Alcoholism Congress in Kyoto, Japan (September, 2018).

Dr. Lucas Albrechet de Souza presented a poster entitled “Predator odor stress produces adaptations in endocannabinoid system protein expression in the basolateral amygdala” at the Stress Neurobiology Workshop in Banff, Canada (June 2018).

Dr. Patricia Molina presented a poster titled “At risk alcohol consumption increases risk for metabolic comorbidities in persons living with HIV (PLWH)” at the 22nd International AIDS Conference in Amsterdam, Netherlands (July 24, 2018) She was also Co-organizer/Co-chair/Speaker at the 19th Congress of International Society for Biomedical Research on Alcoholism (ISBRA) (September 2018), where her symposium was entitled “HIV and alcohol co-morbidities: Pathogenesis and treatment. Alcohol-SIV/HIV-ART interactions & metabolic comorbidity pathways.”
Dr. Elizabeth Fucich presented seminars for the LSUHSC-NO Department of Cell Biology & Anatomy on September 24th and the LSUHSC-NO Department of Physiology on September 27th entitled “Traumatic brain injury & psychological stress: impact on neurobehavioral outcomes.”


On June 22nd, Dr. Scott Edwards participated in a continuing education event for dental providers at the LSU School of Dentistry entitled “Addressing Opioid Abuse and Addiction Among Dental Patients.” He covered the neuroscience of opioid use disorder and screening tools to help practitioners identify problematic prescription opioid use.

On July 24th, Dr. Scott Edwards presented a poster entitled “Neuropathological Mechanisms of Alcohol, SIV, and Antiretroviral Therapy: Enhanced Susceptibility of the Frontal Cortex in Rhesus Macaques” at the 22nd International AIDS Conference in Amsterdam, Netherlands. The presentation represents collaborative efforts of multiple investigators supported by the LSUHSC Comprehensive Alcohol-HIV/AIDS Research Center.

On September 10th, Dr. Scott Edwards chaired a symposium entitled “Alcohol & Opioids: Intersecting Mechanisms and Treatment Opportunities for Pain Management and Addiction” at the 19th Congress of International Society for Biomedical Research on Alcoholism, Kyoto, Japan.

Professional Service
Dr. Michael Levitzky served on the NBME IRC 3 committee in Philadelphia, September 17-19.

On September 1st, Dr. Scott Edwards began service as Section Editor of the Substance Abuse Section for the journal Pharmacology, Biochemistry, and Behavior.

Notable Events
The Physiology Wellbeing Committee (Molina, Simon, Primeaux, Souza-Smith, Fucich, and Poret) has organized weekly meditation sessions each Thurs. from 1:10-1:25 pm in MEB 7267, weekly yoga sessions each Thurs. from 4:30-5:30 pm in MEB 7101, and monthly walks to the Student Gardens. We have had 31 participants thus far, and “wellbeing points” are being logged for participation. The leaderboard as of 10/12/18 is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Dr. Elizabeth Fucich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Dr. Patricia Molina</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Dr. Elizabeth Avegno</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Dr. Stefany Primeaux</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Dr. Danielle Levitt</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Laura Monteagudo</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Dr. Amanda Pahng</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Chloe Ball</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Dr. Lauri Byerley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Jonquil Poret</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Krystal Belmonte’s cat, Zippy, demonstrates a new spin on the “Cat-Cow.”
Physiology faculty and trainees participated in the Association for Women in Science fundraiser at Painting with a Twist on Sept. 19.

Left: Dr. Maureen Basha painting. Right: Trainees Brittany Foret, Jonquil Poret, Dr. Danielle Levitt, and Katie Adler with their masterpieces.

Left: Jessica Cucinello got engaged to the man of her dreams!

Right: Jonquil Poret also got engaged to the man of her dreams!

Left: Sarah Ford Mozingo got married!

Above: Kimberly Edwards went backpacking in Norway!