

December 2004

To: Worldwide members of the OSU Biochemistry and Biophysics Community  
From: P. Shing Ho, Chairman

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Happy Holidays from a relatively dry Corvallis. First, I would like to thank all of our alumni who responded to the department survey. It was particularly gratifying to see that a large majority of our graduates found their experiences as students in the Department to be rewarding and to have helped in achieving career goals. The results from this survey will be an important component of the self-study document for the review of the Department's undergraduate and graduate programs, set to be underway this coming Winter term.

### ***OSU News***

The University will welcome Dr. John Cassidy from the Ohio State University as the new Vice Provost for Research at the West Coast's OSU. Dr. Cassidy's background is in the area of cancer research, which should hopefully give our Department a sympathetic ear at this very important administrative level. The search for a new Provost for the University continues.

### ***The Faculty***

**Chrissa Kioussi** has produced OSU's first transgenic mouse. The mouse has the gene for selenoprotein W knocked out (deleted), which will lead to an understanding of the role that this unusual protein plays in mammalian development. In addition, Chrissa, along with **Michael Gross** and **Joe Beckman**, continue to work towards the establishment of a fully functional transgenic facility so that other transgenic animal models can be produced routinely on the OSU campus for biomedical research. **Joe Beckman** was named one of the year's Most Cited Scientists in the area of Biology and Biochemistry by Thomas ISI. The "floodgate" model for the role of peroxiredoxins in peroxide signaling, proposed by **Andrew Karplus** in *Science* last year, is gaining support through results from various other labs, and was presented as a lecture by Dr. Karplus in the plenary session of the annual meeting of the Society of Free Radical Biology and Medicine. Andy also has assumed leadership responsibilities as the Director of the Biomolecular and Environmental Chemistry Research Core in the Environmental Health Sciences Center at OSU, and had a joint grant funded with Prof. Lynda Cuifetti (Botany and Plant Pathology) to study the structure and function of the protein ToxA from the fungus *Prenophora tritici-repentis* (quite a mouthful). **Gary Merrill** is currently pursuing a set of studies to test the floodgate model in yeast. **Elisar Barbar** and her husband **Michael Hare** are settling into the department, and have reestablished their research program on physical studies of dynein at OSU. **Phil McFadden's** work on the use of chromatophores (the cells responsible for the coloration of tropical fish) is being considered as part of an environmental biological sensor system by the Army. His current studies focus on metalloproteins and how they are used by squid and other related seafood for camouflage. The confocal microscope facility headed by **Jeff Greenwood** is fully booked, and may require the University to invest in a second instrument. **Victor Hsu** is planning a sabbatical leave with Robert Kaptein at Utrecht University in the Netherlands. **Kevin Ahern** continues to lead a very successful summer program for undergraduate research opportunities, funded in part by a grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Research Institute. This year saw 59 students participating in research projects in 40 different laboratories. **Indira Rajagopal** (former postdoc with Mathews) was appointed as an Instructor in the Biology Program. Although her duties are officially in Biology, our Department will continue to benefit from Indira's outstanding contributions to instruction in the BB labs and various other courses. I spent some time this past year visiting and working in a laboratory in Strasbourg, France and was fortunate enough to receive a Fulbright grant to return this summer. The break from

my duties in the Department was both fruitful (we published a paper on "halogen bonds" in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*) and relaxing (contemplating the biochemical process of fermentation to create a fine bottle of chardonnay).

**Bob Becker** is recovering from by-pass surgery, and is back once again working on antismoking initiatives. **Curtis Johnson**, **Ken van Holde** and I are completing work on the second edition of the *Principles of Physical Biochemistry* textbook. Ken continues his editorial duties with the *Journal of Biological Chemistry* and dividing his time between Woods Hole and Corvallis. The first Mathews Lecture, established by the friends and colleagues of **Chris Mathews**, was presented by Rowena Matthews from the University of Michigan. Of course, Chris continues to maintain an active research group. **George Pearson** continues to contribute his valuable time to the Department by continuing to teach Introductory Molecular Biology and serving as an undergraduate advisor. **Wil Gamble** still studies bears and occupies the library for many hours each day. **Dave Loomis** has not fully recovered from surgery, but still holds down his acreage. **Robert Newburgh** has retired, for the third time, while **Don Reed** says he's retired, but does not appear to be (we can still find him sometimes under the mountain of papers in his office). **Derek Baisted** travels, golfs, and plays piano. **Henry Schaup** lives on the coast, and is rumored to have a new boat. **Don MacDonald** remains active in Audubon and keeps his eyes on the birds.

#### ***Recognition of Current Undergraduate and Graduate Class***

**Kristine Robinson** (3<sup>rd</sup> year Ph.D. student with Beckman) received an award for her poster at the annual CGRB retreat, and **Frank Hays** (5<sup>th</sup> year Ph.D. student with Ho) presented the results of his work in a seminar at the Biophysical Society Meeting in Baltimore, MD and was once again selected to present a seminar at the Annual Biophysical Society Meeting in Long Beach, CA in February. Hung-Ping Shih (2<sup>nd</sup> year Ph.D. student with Kioussi) was awarded a Graduate Research Fellowship from the Department. Of our current undergraduate students, **Jeremy Gregory** was a Rhodes scholar finalist and received the College of Science Dean's Scholarship, **Heather Bolstad** did a summer internship at UT Southwestern Dallas and was received a Goldwater Scholarship, **Nancy Lee** spent a year studying abroad and also received a Goldwater scholarship, **Matt Scott** did a second summer internship at the National Institutes of Health, and **Brett Palama** did a summer internship at Harvard University.

#### ***Undergraduate and Graduate Class of 2004***

We congratulate all of the students who earned their Biochemistry and Biophysics degrees this year. Bachelor's of Science degrees were conferred to 13 undergraduates this June, and included **Steven Blue**, **P. Christophe Champ** (first author of a recent paper in *Nucleic Acids Research*, and currently working in bioinformatics at the University of Pittsburgh), **Anne Marie Corgan** (Ph.D. program at University of Texas Southwestern at Dallas), **Suzanne Dunlap** (Ph.D. program at the Oregon Health and Science University), **Michael Harms** (Ph.D. program at Johns Hopkins University), **Jennie Hines**, **Anna Hsu** (M.S. program in Nutrition at OSU), **Adriane Irwin** (M.S. program at the University of New Mexico/Sandia Labs), **Rob Klune** (Medical School at the University of Pittsburgh), **Kelsey McKee** (currently in the Bay area and pondering graduate school), **Sami Murakami**, **Coral Nash** (working for a Seattle biotech company), and **Binh Nguyen** (doing a stint in the military, and considering postgraduate studies in pharmacy).

**Owusuwaa Ethel Owusu** completed her Ph.D. with Carol Riven.

#### ***Alumni News***

Congratulations to **Annie Staten** (B.S. 2002) and **Marcus Calkin** (postbac, 2002), both in the Ph.D. program at the University of Wisconsin, who were married earlier this fall in Salem, Oregon. **Kevan**

**Stanton** (B.S., 2003) is currently in Medical School at the University of Kansas, while **Keith Hazleton** (B.S., 2002) is in an MD/Ph.D. program at Albert Einstein University. **Stuart Endo-Streeter** (B.S., 2001) began his studies towards a Ph.D. at Duke University, while **Jill Mooney** (B.S., 2000) and **Clint Spiegel** (B.S., 1999) are finishing their Ph.D.'s at the University of Texas Southwestern and the University of Washington at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, respectively. **Brad Peters** (B.S., 1999), who completed a second B.S. in computer Science at OSU and an MBA, will be moving on to Purdue University to start his Ph.D. after he finishes his internship with IBM. **Marguerite Strobel** (B.S., 1998) tells us that, after graduating, she earned two master's degrees, one in religion and ethics at Yale University, and a second in biotechnology at Columbia. She is currently trying to apply both degrees towards a job in bioethics. **Katrina McPherson** (B.S. in BB and B.A. in International Studies, 1997) is working in the Emergency Room at the Children's Hospital in Miami, and has a 2 year old son (Ismayil). **Melinda Woods** (B.S. 1993) has finished her M.S. in Geology at Portland State University and will work on her Ph.D. at the University of Iowa. **Vivian Zumstein** (B.S. 1980) retired as Commander after a 20 year career in Naval Intellegence, and is now a budding writer and soccer mom. **Michael Gribskov** (B.S. 1979, and a former student of Dr. Isenberg) is currently the President of the International Society for Computational Biology.

**Chin-Hwa Hu** (Ph.D., Pearson) presented a Department seminar on his work on the function of ARNT-signaling in zebrafish in August (sorry I missed your visit). **Brandt Eichman** (Ph.D., Ho) and wife Jessica have moved to Nashville, Tennessee where Brandt has started his career as a newly minted Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences at Vanderbilt University. **Savvas Savvides** (Ph.D., Karplus) was appointed to a faculty position at the University of Ghent in Belgium, and received the 2003 EMBO Science Writing Prize (for communicating science to the public). Congratulations to **Jeffrey Vargason** (Ph.D., Ho) and his wife Annette, who welcomed a new addition to the family, Elyse Hannah (7 lb. 7 oz, 20 in.), on November 2 (Election day—I think that Jeff and Annette were the real winners). **Darin Weber** (Ph.D., McFadden) tells us that he is back in Seattle and working as a biotech consultant. **Jordanka Zlatanova** (Research Associate, van Holde) is now Head of the Department of Molecular Biology at the University of Wyoming (congratulations, and best wishes). **Anja Geitmann** (German Exchange student, 1990-1991) is currently an Assistant Professor at the Institut de recherche en biologie végétale at the Université de Montréal

#### ***Development Efforts in the Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics***

We continue to work towards establishing a transgenic mouse facility at OSU to help propel the research efforts in the areas of mammalian developmental biology. Finally, a special thanks once again to all those who have contributed so generously to the Department this year. Your gifts help to support, among many things, the undergraduate BB Club, graduate student recruitment, and the department seminar series.

In closing, on behalf of the faculty, staff and students in the Department, I would like to extend to you and yours a wonderful Holiday Season, and best wishes for the New Year. As always, our doors are open to welcome your visit, and our ears attentive to news of your well being, wherever you may reside.

Yours warmly,

P. Shing Ho

P.S., My thanks again to Chris Mathews, Robert Becker, Kevin Ahern, and Barbara Hanson for their help in assembling information and providing editorial help with the writing of this letter.