

# VT PRIME



VT PREP & IMSD EXTRA:  
News & Tidbits from IMSD/PREP Family



## Message From Program Directors

We hope this newsletter provides you an insight into our PREP and IMSD programs. It is borne out of repeated concerns expressed by current and former scholars about the many "Yay!!!!!" emails to the listserv announcing accomplishments by our scholars. We especially want to thank the faculty and others for their help and assistance in the last few weeks as we put together the 12<sup>th</sup> PREP and 8<sup>th</sup> IMSD cohorts. As always, please feel free to tell us if this Quarterly is just a dumb idea and Leemar should do something else: your feedbacks are welcome.



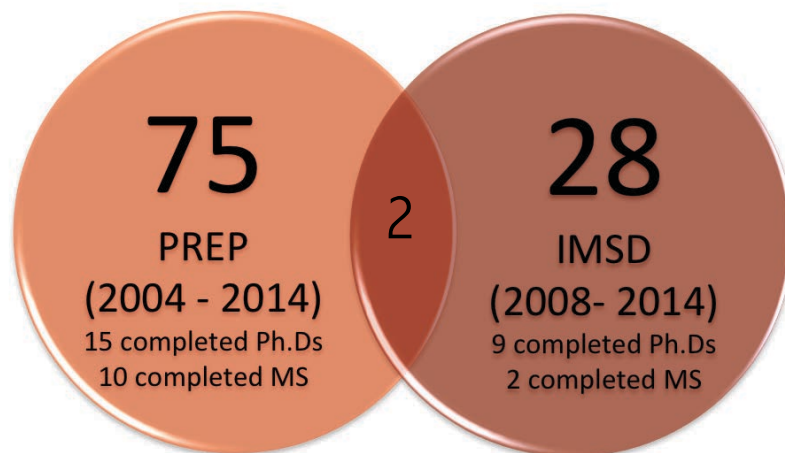
*Drs Smith and Wong arguing about lunch for the next forum.*

**Ed Smith, Eric Wong, Dave Bevan,** Program Directors, **Steve Culver,** Evaluator, **Anne McNabb,** Ombudsperson/General Advisor, **Dennis Dean,** PREP & IMSD Advisory Chair, **Leemar Thorpe,** Program Associate, **Regina Wallace,** Program Assistant



*PREP & IMSD Students at ABCRMS 2013 at the Gaylord Opryland Resort in Nashville, TN. L to R 1<sup>st</sup> row: Simone Campell, Bianca Baker, Erica Lee, Jamaica Sykes, Jephther Buahen, Regina Wallace, Shara Grant. 2<sup>nd</sup> row: Kevin Hughes, Alexa Hendricks, Angelica Melvin, Jordan Booker, Byron Hayes, Alysha Simmons, Shernita Lee, Roberto Padilla. 3<sup>rd</sup> row: Brittany Rice, Leland Fleming, Tere Williams. 10 IMSD & PREP scholars presented posters and oral presentations at ABCRMS*

Both VT PREP and IMSD are NIH/NIGMS funded Research and Education (R25) grants focusing on increasing minorities in research



### Save the Date:

PREP-IMSD Orientation

-Mid August (20-22?)

- VTLSS Speaker, Dr. Donita Brady Oct 31<sup>st</sup> 2014

Grad School Orientation -Aug 22<sup>nd</sup> 2014

ABRCMS - Nov. 12 -15, 2014

-Abstract deadline Sept. 5th 2014

-Travel awards deadline Sept. 5th 2014

SACNAS Oct. 29 -31, 2014

-Abstract deadline - Jun 14 - Jul 16th

-Travel Award

MAPRS -mid May, 2015

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## PREP News

As members of the 11<sup>th</sup> cohort depart, summer brings excitement as fresh new faces will be joining us to start a journey toward biomedical and behavioral sciences careers. This year's cohort continues to bring a diverse group together from both diverse geography and schools: we even have a scholar from the "other school in Virginia."

### 11th Cohort

**Jephter Buahen**, a current PREP scholar in Dr. David Lindsay's lab, is heading to the University of Delaware to pursue a Ph.D. in?

**Simone Campbell**, a current PREP scholar in Dr. Kendra Sewall's Lab, is staying at Virginia Tech to complete her M.S. in Dr. Sewall's lab.

**Leland Fleming**, a current PREP scholar in Dr. Bruce Friedman's lab, is currently in the process of deciding his next move.

**Alexa Hendricks**, a current PREP scholar in Dr. John Philip's lab, is heading to Wake Forest University to pursue a Ph.D. in Neuroscience.

**Kevin Hughes**, a current PREP scholar in Dr. Daniela Cimini's lab, is heading to Yale University to pursue a Ph.D. in Biological and Biomedical Sciences

**Angelica Melvin**, a current PREP scholar in Dr. Martha Ann Bell's lab, is currently in the process of deciding her next move.

**Brittany Rice**, a current PREP scholar in Dr. Elizabeth Gilbert's lab, is heading to East Kentucky University to pursue a M.S. in Biology.

**Tere Williams**, a current PREP scholar in Dr. Irving Allen's lab, is heading to Albert Einstein College of Medicine to pursue a Ph.D. in Biomedical Sciences.



11<sup>th</sup> PREP Cohort- L to R 1st Row: Kevin Hughes, Alexa Hendricks, Simone Campbell.; 2<sup>nd</sup> Row: Leland Fleming, Jephter Buahen, Angelica Melvin, and Brittany Rice

### Incoming 12<sup>th</sup> Cohort

**Chanelle Brown** completed her B.S. in Nutritional Science in May 2014 from the University of Maryland.

**Johanel Caceres** completed her B.A. in Psychology in May 2014 from Skidmore College.

**Chelsee Holloway** completed her B.A. in Biology in May 2014 from McDaniel College.

**Alexandria Kelley** completed her B.S. in Biomedical Sciences in May 2013 from Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT).

**Adewole Oyalowo** completed his B.S. in Neuroscience in May 2013 from Brown University.

**Jasmine Reed** completed her B.S. in Nanomedicine in May 2014 from the University of Virginia.

**Richard Sawyer** completed his B.S. in May 2013 from Norfolk State University

Congrats to Kevin Hughes for winning the Stroobants Award for Exemplary Graduate Scholarship in Post Baccalaureate Research and Education Program and the MAPRS Poster award for the PREP Category.



Kevin Hughes with research mentor Dr. Daniela Cimini posing with stroobants award plaque

## IMSD News

### Recent IMSD PhDs 2014

**Shernita Lee (3<sup>rd</sup> Cohort)** received a Ph.D. GBCB -



*Shernita Lee delivering her speech at the Spring 2014 Virginia Tech Graduate School Commencement. You can view the speech at [http://www.unirel.vt.edu/audio\\_video/2014/05/051614-gradschoolcommencement.html](http://www.unirel.vt.edu/audio_video/2014/05/051614-gradschoolcommencement.html)*

**Bianca Baker (4<sup>th</sup> Cohort)** received a Ph.D. Biological Sciences.



*Bianca Baker, Ph.D. defense Seminar*

### Recent Fall 2013

**Mary Etna Haac (3<sup>rd</sup> Cohort)** received a Ph.D. in Entomology

**Kacie Allen (4<sup>th</sup> Cohort)** received a Ph.D. in Human, Nutrition, Food, and Exercise

### IMSD Undergrad/PreDoc Scholars

The IMSD Undergrads have done a wonderful job this year with their research and accomplishment. Albert Hinman, David Vasquez, and Davia Blake were accepted into Summer internship at UNC. David Vasquez at to University of Georgia. Also, Erica Lee was a recipient of the 2014 Fralin Life Sciences Institute Award for Exemplary Undergraduate Scholarship.

### IMSD Prebacs receiving degrees

**Alysha Simmons** B.S. in Biology & APSC. Headed to Brown University Ph.D. Program in the Fall.

**Amnah Elthair**, B.S. in Biomedical Engineering. Staying at VT, SBES, Ph.D. Program.

**Byron Hayes**, B.S. in Biochemistry. Headed to Duke University, Ph.D. Program in the Fall.

**Erica Lee**, B.S. in Sociology. Headed NC State, IMSD Ph.D. Program in the Fall.



*Erica Lee (top) and Shernita Lee (bottom) accepting their awards from the PREP & IMSD Advisory Chair Dr. Dennis Dean*

### Incoming 7<sup>th</sup> Cohort

The 7<sup>th</sup> IMSD Predoctoral cohort is a large one and a bit more diverse than the PREP cohort. The diversity straddles disciplines, ranging from Human Development to Translational Biology Medicine and Health, and Origin, California to Georgia. A number of scholars started early and are already deep into their first lab rotation.

**Lara Dahora** B.S., Psychology, University of Georgia. Ph.D. program Translational Biology, Medicine and Health.

**Alise DeBruce** B.S., Psychology, Indiana University Bloomington. Ph.D. program, Human Development.

**Kisha Gresham** B.S., Biochemistry from Virginia Tech. Ph.D. program Translational Biology, Medicine and Health

**Kristina Jiles** B.S. in Biological Sciences at Elizabeth City State University, M.S., Biological Sciences at Hampton University. Ph.D. program Human Nutrition, Food and Exercise.

**Mynor Medrano** Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Ph.D. program Biological Sciences.

**Benjamin Okyere** B.S. in Biology, M.S. in Biomedical and Pathobiological Sciences at Virginia Tech.

**Ashley Peralta** B.S. in Biochemistry at Hampton University. Ph.D. program Chemistry.

## ALUMNI NEWS

## IMSD

**Elaine Nsoeise (3<sup>rd</sup> Cohort)**, Post Doc. at Harvard University, Children Hospital Boston. Gave a keynote at MAPRS at UNC Chapel Hill.



*Dr. Elaine Nsoeise presenting her research at the 2014 MAPRS in UNC Chapel Hill*

**Anjolie Diaz (1<sup>st</sup> Cohort)**, to support her Post Doc. at Arizona State Univ., T. Denny Sanford School of Social and Family Dynamics. Received an NIH/NICHHD Grant.

**Albert Kwansa (1<sup>st</sup> Cohort)**, Post Doc. at NC State Univ., Dept. of Materials Science & Engineering

**Rebecca Ortiz (1<sup>st</sup> Cohort)**, accepted a position as a Development Scientist for Beckman Coulter.

**Kacie Allen (4<sup>th</sup> Cohort)**. Post Doc. at University of Southern California, Keck School of Medicine.



*Kacie Allen being hooded by her mentors Dr. Paul Estabrooks (left) and Dr. Jamie Zollener (right)*

## Recent Publications

**Diaz, A., & Bell, M.A.** (2013, April). Understanding normal variations of fear: Context and memory. In S. Hart (Chair). The infant's presentation of fear: Contexts, cues, and electrophysiological substrates. Symposium paper presented at Society for Research in Child Development, Seattle, Washington

**Criscione, F., Qi, Y., Saunders, R., Hall, B., Tu, Z.** (2013). "A unique Y gene in the Asian malaria mosquito *Anopheles stephensi* encodes a small lysine-rich protein and is transcribed at the onset of embryonic development". *Insect Molecular Biology*.

## PREP

**Phil George (5<sup>th</sup> Cohort)**, received his Ph. D. in Malaria Genomics / Entomology, Virginia Tech



*Phillip George's Ph.D. defense seminar*

The Following received their MS: **Regina Wallace (6<sup>th</sup> Cohort)**, MS, Biological Sciences, Virginia Tech  
**Michelle Walker (6<sup>th</sup> Cohort)**, MS, Biomed Sciences, Virginia Tech. Currently working at Bioqual as a research technician  
**Karissa Grier (7<sup>th</sup> Cohort)**, MS, Human Nutrition Food & Exercise, Virginia Tech.  
**Hariyat Andargachew (8<sup>th</sup> Cohort)**, MS, Biological & Biomedical Sciences, Yale University



*Karissa Grier and her mom after her successful Masters Defense*

**Natalia Gonzales (7<sup>th</sup> Cohort)** former PREP Scholar, who is currently pursuing a Ph.D. at University of Chicago, received an F31, NIH's flagship Predoctoral Fellowship grant.

**Mariam Konate (4<sup>th</sup> Cohort)** came back to Virginia Tech to give a talk about her research at our PREP & IMSD summer forum.



*Mariam Konate discussing her research at 2014 PREP & IMSD summer forum*

## MID ATLANTIC RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

### Mid Atlantic PREP & IMSD Symposium

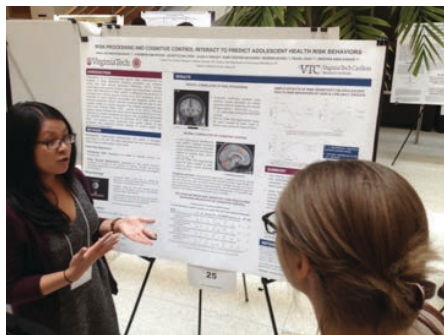
The Mission of Annual Mid Atlantic PREP & IMSD Research Symposium is to bring together institutions from the Mid Atlantic Region with shared interests in seeing an increase in underrepresented groups at the undergraduate and graduate levels pursuing careers in biomedical, behavioral science and engineering.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Mid Atlantic PREP & IMSD Research Symposium (MAPRS) was held in 2013 at Virginia Tech, directed by Dr. Anjolli Diaz (1<sup>st</sup> IMSD Cohort).



*Group of Students at the 2013 MAPRS Opening Reception*

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Mid Atlantic PREP & IMSD Symposium was held at UNC Chapel Hill. Dr. Josh Hall directed this event.



*Nina Lauharatanhira discussing her research at the 2014 MAPRS Poster Session in UNC Chapel Hill*

Here is the list of scholars, who presented,

### PREP Poster Presentations

**Kevin Hughes** – Identification of an interplay between kinetochores

**Leland Fleming** - The title of my presentation will be: "Musical Structure and the Autonomic Specificity of Musically Induced Emotions"

**Simon Campbell** - The impacts of early-life nutritional stress on zenk expression in the auditory forebrain of female zebra finches

### IMSD Poster Presentations

**Jordan Booker**- Self-Compassion and Adjustment among Emerging

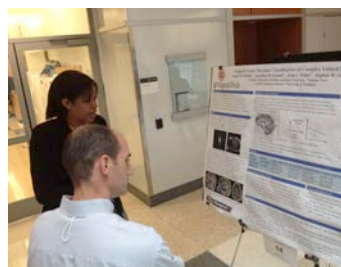
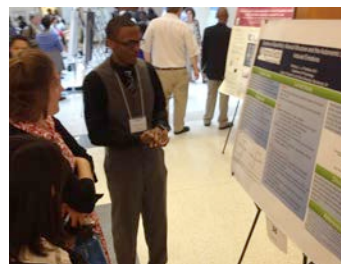
**Alysha Simmon** - Immune Cell Properties of Macrophages in a Urethane Injection- NLRX1 Deficient Mouse Model.

**Nina L.** - Interaction of Risk Sensitivity and Cognitive Control Predicts Adolescent Health Risk Behaviors

**Amnah Eltahir** - Support Vector Machine Classification of Complex Valued fMRI Data

**Shara Grant** - Better Control, Less Startled: Individual Differences in Motivation and Attention Influence Startle Modification

**Bryce Riley** - Emotion Sending and Recognition in Children with Oppositional Defiant Disorder: The Role of Family Environment



*Leland Fleming (top pic) and Amnah Eltahir (bottom pic) discussing their research at the 2014 MAPRS Poster Session in UNC Chapel Hill*

