

# WOMEN IN SCIENCE

## THE NETWORK



Volume 2, Issue 1-- May, 2008

### Letter from the President, Audrey Forrest



Thus far this has been a great year for Women In Science. We have had great seminars, fundraising, and community outreach this past semester, but we still have room to improve WIS. In order to support the career development of women scientists and to give the women scientists at Virginia Commonwealth University the opportunity to network with other scientists we have put on various career oriented seminars and workshops. We will continue to present bi-semester career development seminars, however, I would also like to introduce a few other events that will hopefully increase the networking opportunities for members of WIS.

This coming semester I would like WIS to host at least one social event to allow members of WIS to network with other women scientists in an effort to begin providing a supportive community of women scientists. I would also like to begin using the discussion board on the WIS blackboard page in which students, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty would be able to pose questions to the members of WIS in order to increase communication among members. This will also hopefully provide a forum for WIS

members to discuss potential issues they have faced while pursuing a career in science.

To continue our efforts in reaching out to the greater Richmond community WIS participated in the Toys for Tots drive and a few WIS members spoke to local Girl Scout troops in order to help them gain their career badges. We continued to reach out to the community this semester by hosting the Girl Scout Science Fun Day in April and participating in the formal dress drive for Cinderella's Closet.

We are having a very productive and successful semester to round out a great year. I would also like to remind all WIS members that Executive board elections are currently underway so remember to vote by May 27th. If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about WIS or is excited about a certain event we intend to hold please don't hesitate to contact any member of the Executive Board about opportunities.

### Upcoming WIS Events

**Early June:** Crispy Cream Fundraiser

**July or August:** Summer Seminar, speaker TBA

## Meet the WIS Executive Board

**President: Audrey Forrest** , ([forrestad@vcu.edu](mailto:forrestad@vcu.edu))

Audrey is a fourth year doctoral student in the department of Anatomy and Neurobiology. She is currently working with Dr. Fuss studying the involvement of Focal Adhesion Kinase in process remodeling and myelination of oligodendrocytes during development.

**Secretary: Amy Delong** ([shawae@vcu.edu](mailto:shawae@vcu.edu))

Amy is a third year doctoral student in the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology. She is studying the modulation of inflammation and metabolism by the dietary polyphenols quercetin and resveratrol in a colon cell model with Dr. Joseph Ritter. If you wish to be added to the WIS email list, please contact her at the above e-mail address.



Left to Right, Upper row: Cortney, Amy, Kia & Jamie.  
Lower Row: Audrey & Tenielle. Not Pictured: Lynn

**Treasurer: Kia Jackson** ([jacksonkj@vcu.edu](mailto:jacksonkj@vcu.edu))

Kia Jackson is a fourth year doctoral student in the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology. Her research focuses on characterizing the nicotinic receptor subtypes and post-receptor calcium-dependent mechanisms that mediate the nicotine withdrawal syndrome with Dr. Damaj.

**Vice President: Jamie Sturgill**, VCU Community Outreach Committee ([sturgillj@vcu.edu](mailto:sturgillj@vcu.edu))

Jamie is a third year doctoral student in the department of Microbiology and Immunology in Dr. Daniel Conrad's lab. She is working on two separate projects: 1) how neuro-immune interactions via glutamate signaling affect human B cells and 2) the role of CD23 in B cell chronic lymphocytic leukemia.

**Vice President: Tenielle Walker**, Professional Development Committee ([s2tdwalk@vcu.edu](mailto:s2tdwalk@vcu.edu))

Tenielle is a fourth year doctorate student in the department of Pharmacology and Toxicology. She is investigating survival and death pathways induced in colon cancer cells following exposure to clinically relevant doses of vorinostat, a histone deacetylase inhibitor, and sorafenib, originally described as a RAF family kinase inhibitor of the RAF-RAS/MEK/ERK MAP kinase pathway

**Vice President: Lynn Hull**, Development Committe ( [hulllc@vcu.edu](mailto:hulllc@vcu.edu) )

Lynn is a fourth your doctoral student in the department of Pharmacology and Toxicology. Her research investigates opioid induced antinociception' s mechanism of action and tolerance development.

**Vice President: Cortney Heyer**, Newsletter Committee ( [heyerc@vcu.edu](mailto:heyerc@vcu.edu) )

Cortney is a third year doctoral student in the department of Pharmacology and Toxicology. She is working on understanding the role of the tumor suppressor, p53, in the cell cycle pathway activated upon nucleotide depletion by various anti-metabolites.

## Overview of this Years Seminar Series

*By Tenielle Walker and Courtney Heyer*

We have had a variety of interesting seminars, from CV/resume workshops, to researchers in academia. Upcoming, we will have speakers from government specifically the NIH and from industry. These speakers have the opportunity to talk about their careers and what would be in store for Ph.D. candidates who may be interested in certain career paths. We hope you have had a chance to enjoy our interesting and informative seminars, but if not, we have more to come!

October 3, 2007: **Erin Lowery, M.Ed.** from the VCU Career Center came and held a CV/resume workshop where everyone learned the ins and outs of how to construct and refine a CV.



November 28, 2007: **Joyce Lloyd, PhD & Michael Fox, PhD** discussed their current positions as faculty members here at VCU. They also were very informative on their career paths to obtaining an academic position and juggling a home life with the stress that academia brings.

February 20, 2008: **Erin Lower, M.Ed.** from the VCU Career Center came back to have a workshop on how to prepare and execute an interview. For tips and hints please visit the Career center website at <http://www.students.vcu.edu/careers/>, and look for more workshops like these in the future!

March 5, 2008: **Barbara A. Spalholz, PhD** from the National Cancer Institute visited VCU to talk about her position as the Chief of the Cancer Cell Biology Branch and to inform us on the pros and cons of working for the NIH and for the government in general.

March 2, 2008: **Dr. Steve Gust, PhD** from the National Institute of Drugs of Abuse talked about his position involving creating collaborations between scientist around the world.

April 23, 2008: **Lenn Murrelle, PhD** from the Life Sciences Division of Philip captivated all with his story from working in an autopsy lab during summers between college semesters to developing a twin database to research alcoholism to eventually taking a job with Philip Morris here in Richmond.

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**If you are interested in a biomedical career which we did not address this year, please do not hesitate to e-mail any member of the E-board with a recommendation for an upcoming speaker.**

## WIS in Reaches Out to the Community

### Donations, Donations, Donations

*By Courtney Heyer*



Throughout the 2007-2008 year, Women in Science held two collection drives to benefit the Richmond community. During December, WIS held a Toys for Tots drive. The outcome was phenomenal, many Richmond family had a happy holiday season due to our success. This spring WIS held a prom dress drive sponsored by Cinderella Dreams. Over 50 items were donated, including formal dresses, shoes, purses and jewelry. All items were then donated to Cinderella Dreams, which then dry cleans the dresses and makes them available to highschool students who would otherwise not be able to afford attending their high school prom. We would like to thank everyone who made both of these drives such a success!

### Science Fun Day

*By Audrey Forrest and Jamie Sturgill*

On April 19<sup>th</sup>, Women In Science held our second annual Science Fun Day on the medical campus of Virginia Commonwealth University. This event is geared toward middle and high school aged girls who are interested in learning more about possible careers in science. It was a great success this year! Over 30 girls from the greater Richmond area (both Girl Scouts and members of Big Brothers/Big Sisters) participated in our half day event. The stations including clinical lab sciences, immunology, forensic science, and pharmacy were all very well received and helped to spark interest in areas of science that the girls might not have known about previously. Due to the overwhelming interest we are already beginning to plan next year's Science Fun Day. Please contact Jamie Sturgill ([sturgillj@vcu.edu](mailto:sturgillj@vcu.edu)) if you are interested in helping out next year

Some photos of the fun filled day:

