

WOMEN IN SCIENCE

THE NETWORK



Volume 3, Issue 1-- December 2008

The Women in Science (WIS) student organization is in its third year and has drawn the interest of many students and post-docs.

Last year's seminars, involvement with the community, fundraising, and donation drives were all successful. This year, WIS wants to continue that success. This year's organizational meeting attracted a large number of interested students and post-docs. WIS strives to help students at VCU develop their careers and give them the opportunity to get involved with the community by organizing bi-semester informational career development seminars and reaching out to the community through mentorship and volunteering opportunities.

This year, WIS organized a social night at the Black Finn Restaurant and Saloon in order to let WIS members get acquainted with one another and to create a supportive community

for women scientists. WIS plans on organizing another social night next semester and hopes to continue in the years to come.

WIS T-shirts and travel mugs have been designed and are now for sale! If interested in purchasing a T-shirt or mug, contact us. (More information and a picture of the T-shirt is on page 3). WIS also held a bake sale this semester to help with fundraising. Thank you to everyone who made and donated sweets to be sold!

WIS has also continued its encouragement of the undergraduate chapter on the Monroe Park campus. Members of WIS participated in this year's Monroe Park Campus Science Day to introduce and recruit undergraduates to get involved.

WIS wants to involve students and post-docs from all departments, so if interested in more ways to get involved, please contact us! (wis@vcu.edu)

Upcoming WIS Events:

Event

Girl Scout Fun Day Planning meeting
Cinderella's Dreams Dress Drive
Girl Scout Fun Day
WIS social events
Spring Semester Seminar #1
Spring Semester Seminar #2
Chesterfield County Public Schools
Science Fair Judging

Date/Time/Location

January 14, 2009, 12pm, Rm 1-025 Sanger Hall
February 16-March 6
May 2, 2009, 10am - 3pm
TBA
February 25, 2008
March 25, 2008

April TBA

Meet the WIS Executive Board

President: **Jamie Sturgill** (sturgillj@vcu.edu)

Jamie is a fourth year PhD student in the department of Microbiology and Immunology and works in the laboratory of Dr. Daniel Conrad. Her project focuses on a protein called CD23 and its role in human disease such as autoimmunity and leukemia.

Secretary: **Jen Sisler** (sislerjd@vcu.edu)

Jen is a second year PhD student in the Biochemistry department working in the lab of Dr. Andrew Larner. She is looking at the role of STAT1 in the mitochondria. If you wish to be added to the WIS email list, please contact her at the above e-mail address.

Treasurer: **Amanda Garza** (garzaae@vcu.edu)

Amanda E. Garza is a fourth year graduate student in department of Pathology working in the laboratory of Dr. Youngman Oh. She is studying the signaling mechanisms involved with the IGF-independent effects of insulin-like growth factor binding protein-3 (IGFBP-3) in cellular senescence and its potential correlation with aging.

Vice President, VCU Community Outreach Committee: **Nisha Nagarkatti-Gude** (nagarkattin@vcu.edu)

Nisha is a third year MD/PhD student in the neuroscience program working in the lab of Dr. DeLorenzo in the Pharmacology and Toxicology department. She studies the molecular mechanisms behind the development of epilepsy following neuronal injury.

Vice President, Professional Development and Programming Committee: **Jennifer Wolstenholme** (jwolstenholm@vcu.edu)

Jennifer is a fifth year PhD student working in the laboratory of Dr. Michael Miles through the neuroscience program in the Pharmacology and Toxicology Department. Her current research is focused on investigating the molecular and behavioral factors involved in the individual variation of ethanol drinking behaviors.

Vice President, Development and Fundraising Committee: **Emily Boice** (boiceen@vcu.edu)

Emily is a fourth year PhD student in the department of Microbiology and Immunology and works in Dr. Dennis E. Ohman's lab identifying the interactions between elastase, a major virulence factor secreted by *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, with its propeptide, an intramolecular chaperone that aids in folding and secretion. This year, Emily designed three t-shirts and a travel mug to support the financial pursuits of WIS.

Vice President, Newsletter Committee: **Larra Yuelling** (wallinglm@vcu.edu)

Larra is a fifth year PhD student in the neuroscience program working in the lab of Dr. Babette Fuss in the department of Anatomy and Neurobiology. Her research focuses on the molecule autotaxin and its role during oligodendrocyte development.



Left to right, Upper row: Nisha, Jamie, Larra, Jennifer. Lower row: Emily, Jen, Amanda

Overview of this Semester's Seminar Series

This past semester we had two informational seminars involving collaboration in the scientific community and learning how to be knowledgeable with finances.



Dr. Paul Fisher at a WIS seminar

September 24, 2008: **Paul B. Fisher, M.Ph., Ph.D.**, Professor and Interim Chair in the Department of Human and Molecular Genetics and Director of the VCU Institute of Molecular Medicine. Dr. Fisher discussed topics on how to network and set up collaborations as a scientist. He also dedicated much of the seminar to answer questions or concerns from students and post-docs.



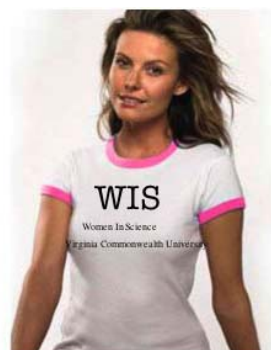
Attendees at a WIS seminar

November 5, 2008: **Terry Burcin** from Mass Mutual Financial Group spoke about topics involving financial literacy. Topics included retirement, savings, and investing.

If you are interested in a topic which we have not yet addressed during the past few semesters, please do not hesitate to e-mail any member of the E-board with a recommendation for an upcoming speaker.

WIS T-Shirts and Mugs!

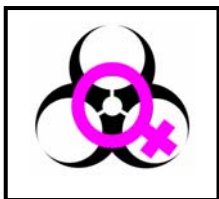
WIS has designed and is now selling T-shirts and travel mugs! This year's T-shirt design is in two types of T-shirts: a white fitted tee with a pink ringer and a heather grey tee. On the front is WIS and on the back is a list of the top ten reasons to date a woman scientist. We have S, M, L and XL sizes. The T-shirts are \$15 and travel mugs are \$6. Proceeds will go to support outreach programs like Girl Scout Science Fun Day in April.



Top 10 Reasons to Date a Woman Scientist

10. We are hot! 🌪️
9. We won't cheat. We barely have enough time for your relationship, much less another one.
8. We have culture.
7. We have significant figures.
6. Our mitochondria keep going and going...
5. We are the doctor your mother always wanted you to be.
4. We know how to use protection - since they are always training us in PPE here.
3. We are always willing to experiment.
2. We are experts at anatomy.
1. Scientific couples have better (bio)chemistry and anatomy, genetics, physiology.

If you are interested in purchasing a T-shirt or travel mug or have any questions, contact Emily Boice at boiceen@vcu.edu or WIS at wis@vcu.edu.



(Design on mug)

WIS Reaches Out to the Community

Here is what WIS has participated in to help the community during this semester and its plans for the future:

GEMS

This past summer, WIS participated in a program organized through Chesterfield county schools called GEMS: Girls Excelling in Math and Science. The goal of this organization is to support girls' interest in math, science and technology. Invited speakers gave a presentation on their career explaining how they use science by involving the students in hands-on activities.



Jamie with students in GEMS

Breast Cancer Walk

WIS also participated in the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk this semester where members either participated in the walk and collected donations or volunteered to assist in the organization.

Partnership with Richmond public schools

WIS is now involved in a partnership at Richmond Community High School. A program has been formulated called "The Visiting Professor" where if a particular faculty member in the school thinks you would be a great "resource" for his/her class they can contact you and then you can go visit the students. You can give a talk, presentation, or whatever you and the faculty member decide will be the best fit for their curricula. We are making a "directory" of all interested VCU students and VCU faculty who want to be listed as potential speakers and the school will keep it on file and contact you as needed. Contact us with any questions or if you would like to be added to the list.

Mentorship

WIS has also received information about a national non-profit organization involving mentorship for girls called Girls For A Change. Girls voluntarily sign up to participate in a Girl Action Team. Teams are made up of 5-10 girls and facilitated by two adult women coaches who are trained by Girls For A Change. To start these teams, women volunteers are needed, called coaches. Together the team will plan, fund, implement, and lead a social change through weekly or bi-monthly meetings. Coaches provide a safe, supportive space while partnering with the girls to implement their projects. Beginning in January 2009, the time commitment is 15 hours per month, January-April. This project is in partnership with Communities in Schools and Richmond Public Schools. For more information visit www.girlsforchange.org or contact Carrie Ellett, National Program Director, Girls For A Change, 408.515.8148, carrie@girlsforachange.org.

Donations – Help the less fortunate!



Every year, Women in Science holds two collection drives to benefit the Richmond community: Toys for Tots and Cinderella Dreams. WIS held the Toys for Tots drive this December and many toys were donated. We thank everyone who participated and due to this generosity, local children were able to have a happy holiday season this year. In the spring, WIS will hold a prom dress drive sponsored by Cinderella Dreams. Last year many items were donated including formal dresses, shoes, purses and jewelry. Once donated to Cinderella Dreams, these items are available to high school students who do not have a dress to attend their high school prom. Thanks again to everyone who contributed!



Toys donated for Toys for Tots

Get to know more about WIS!

Visit our websites: <http://www.studentorg.vcu.edu/wis>
http://www.medschool.vcu.edu/wims/student_org/wis.html

Visit our Facebook group: VCU WIS (Women in Science)

Email us: wis@vcu.edu

WIS is on blackboard. Email us to be added!

Information such as seminars, current events in the sciences, mentoring opportunities, and meeting minutes are available through these resources.

Want to be added to our email list? Contact Jen Sisler at sislerjd@vcu.edu

Women in Science Mission Statement:

The mission of Women in Science is to support and promote the career development of women scientists at Virginia Commonwealth University by increasing the representation, participation, and leadership of women in scientific disciplines and by promoting the leadership skills, visibility, and academic policies required for success at Virginia Commonwealth University and in the sciences. Women in Science serves to facilitate communication and networking among its members and to provide support to all women students and trainees in science in order to build a supportive community of women scientists that will nurture the professional development of current and future women in science.

*The WIS newsletter is produced by Larra Yuelling, Newsletter Committee Chair.