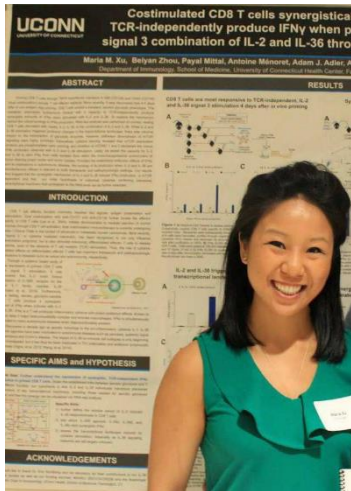


MD/PhD Students Present Posters and Win Awards at Graduate Student Research Day

June 2017



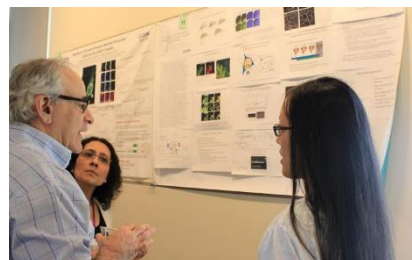
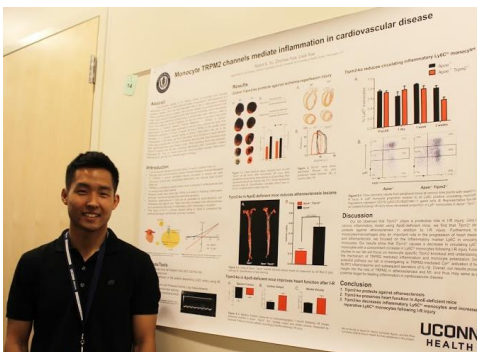
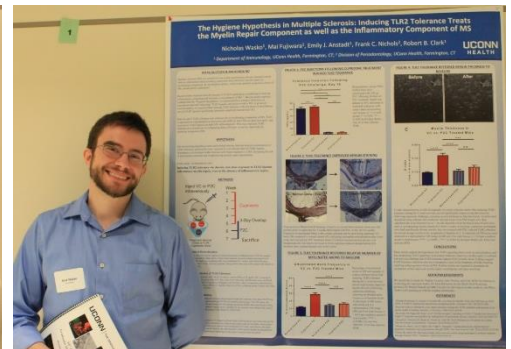
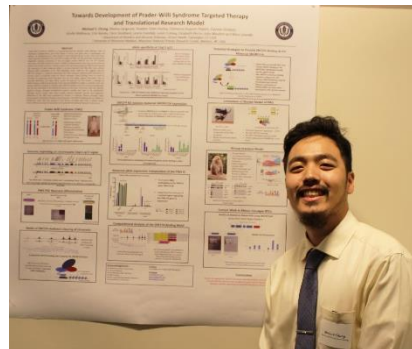
3rd year MD/PhD and Immunology graduate student, Maria Xu, by her 1st Place Poster at the 2017 UConn Health Graduate Student Research Day. (Photo by Valentina Baena)

On June 26, 2017, nine MD/PhD students participated in the 34th Annual Graduate Student Research Day at UConn Health. The day consisted of poster and oral presentations, as well as a Keynote Address by Dean Bruce Liang and a Keynote lecture by Mark Tuszynski, M.D. Ph.D. Dr. Tuszynski is a Professor of Neuroscience at the University of California-San Diego and the Founding Director of the UCSD Translational Neuroscience Institute. His talk was titled “Stem cells in spinal cord injury: Mechanism to translation.”

The poster session was judged by professors and senior graduate students at UConn Health and prizes were awarded to the top posters. We are excited to announce that Maria Xu tied for 1st place for her poster on “Costimulated CD8 T cells Synergistically and TCR-independently Produce IFN γ when Provided a Signal 3 Combination of IL-2 and IL-36 through mTOR.” She commented that she was “excited to share her start on her thesis project with others,” and that she “looks forward to pursuing and uncovering mechanisms and future directions.” Maria is doing her thesis project in the lab of Anthony T. Vella, Ph.D., Professor and Chair of the Department of Immunology.

The following MD/PhD students were among the 30+ students who presented posters:

- Bruce Rheaume** - 2nd year MD/PhD Student: *Neuroscience* (laboratory of Feliks Trakhtenberg, Ph.D.)
- Michael Chung** - 3rd year MD/PhD Student: *Genetics and Developmental Biology* (laboratory of Marc Lalande)
- Katherine DiScipio** - 3rd year MD/PhD student: *Molecular Biology and Biochemistry* (laboratory of Sandy Weller, Ph.D.)
- Alexandra Goetjen** - 3rd year MD/PhD Student: *Genetics and Developmental Biology* (laboratory of Jonathan Covault, M.D., Ph.D.)
- Maria Xu** - 3rd year MD/PhD student: *Immunology* (laboratory of Anthony T. Vella, Ph.D.)
- Sarah Pan** - 4th year MD/PhD Student: *Cell Biology* (laboratory of Guo Fong, Ph.D.)
- Nicholas Wasko** - 4th year MD/PhD Student: *Immunology* (laboratory of Bob Clark, M.D.)
- Albert Yu** - 5th year MD/PhD Student: *Cell Biology* (laboratory of Lixia Yue, Ph.D.)
- Joseph Ryan** - 5th year MD/PhD Student: *Immunology* (laboratory of Anthony T. Vella, Ph.D. and Adam J. Adler, Ph.D.)



MD/PhD students by their respective posters during the Poster Session. Top Left - Right: Katherine DiScipio, Michael Chung, Nicholas Wasko. Bottom Row: Albert Yu, Sarah Pan. (Photos by Valentina Baena)

Fifth-year MD/PhD student, Joseph Ryan, who was recipient of the 2016 Lepow Award, also gave an oral presentation on his thesis project as part of the day's activities. Joseph is co-mentored by Anthony T. Vella, Ph.D. and Adam J. Adler, Ph.D. within the Immunology Department. He presented a poster and his talk was titled "A novel, tetravalent antibody conjugate targeting CD134 and CD137 exhibits unique costimulatory properties and antitumor efficacy in murine melanoma."

Thanks also to all of our students' mentors for their support of these students!



5th year MD/PhD student and recipient of the 2016 Lepow Award, Joe Ryan, presents his research (Photo by Valentina Baena)