



Biomedical Sciences Program in Cancer Biology

2019 Graduates



Sandun Kalpana Gardiyawasam, Ph.D.

Dr. Gardiyawasam successfully defended her dissertation entitled "A mechanistic investigation of the role of RhoA and RKIP in breast cancer invasion and metastasis" on July 23, 2019. She has been mentored by Dr. Kam Yeung.



Yuqi Zhang, Ph.D.

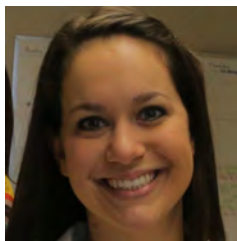
Dr. Zhang successfully defended her dissertation entitled "The Role of mDia2 in Adherens Junctions in Epithelial Ovarian Cancer" on February 20, 2019. She has been mentored by Dr. Kathryn Eisenmann. Dr. Zhang will return to medical school to resume her MD degree requirements.

2018 Graduates



Tupa Basuroy, Ph.D.

Dr. Basuroy successfully defended her dissertation entitled "The Role of Bromodomain Containing Protein 9 (BRD9) in Melanogenesis and Melanoma" on August 21, 2018. She has been mentored by Dr. Ivana de la Serna.



Kaitlyn Dvorak, Ph.D.

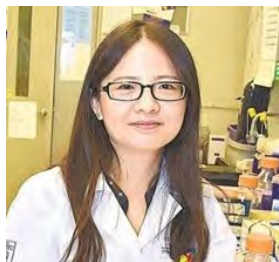
Dr. Dvorak successfully defended her dissertation entitled "A Role for the Tumor Microenvironment in Regulating Cytoskeletal Dynamics in the Setting of Breast Cancer Migration and Invasion" on March 30, 2018. She has been mentored by Dr. Kathryn Eisenmann. Dr. Dvorak is a Clinical Research Coordinator at OSUCCC-James Cancer Hospital and Solove Research Institute.



Zehui Lesley Li, Ph.D.

Dr. Li successfully defended her dissertation entitled "Effects and Mechanisms of Methuosis Defined Through the Use of Indolyl Chalcone Analogs in Glioblastoma Cells" on May 23, 2018. She has been mentored by Dr. William Maltese. Dr. Li has accepted a postdoctoral fellowship with Dr. Michel DuPage, Dept. of Immunology and Pathogenesis at the University of California, Berkeley.

2017 Graduate



Shengnan Du, Ph.D.

Dr. Du successfully defended her dissertation entitled "Novel Microtubule-Disrupting Indole-Based Chalcones That Induce Cell Death in Glioblastoma" on December 7, 2017. She has been mentored by Dr. William Maltese. Dr. Du has accepted a postdoctoral fellowship with Dr. Daphne Bell, Cancer Genetics and Comparative Genomics Branch, National Human Genome Research Institute, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, MD.

2016 Graduates



Nneka Mbah, Ph.D.

Dr. Mbah successfully defended her dissertation entitled "Defining the Mechanisms of Methuosis, Non-Apoptotic Cell Death Induced by Indole Chalcone Compounds in Glioblastoma Cells" on November 30, 2016. She has been mentored by Dr. William Maltese. Dr. Mbah has accepted a postdoctoral research fellowship at the University of Michigan Medical School, Department of Pediatrics & Communicable Diseases, Pediatrics-Hematology/Oncology.



Kari Lavik, Ph.D.

Dr. Lavik successfully defended her dissertation entitled "A Collaborative Role for Neuronal-Wiskott Aldrich Syndrome Protein and Mammalian Diaphanous-Related Formins during Invadopodia Formation and Invasion" on January 8, 2016. She has been mentored by Dr. Kathryn Eisenmann. Dr. Lavik has accepted a postdoctoral research fellowship at the University of Michigan Medical School, Department of Pediatrics & Communicable Diseases, Pediatrics-Hematology/Oncology.

2015 Graduates



Ila Datar, Ph.D.

Dr. Datar successfully defended her dissertation entitled "Positive and Negative Regulators of Tumorigenesis and Metastasis" on July 23, 2015 (Mentors: Dr. Kam Yeung and Dr. Ivana de la Serna). Dr. Datar has accepted a Postdoctoral Fellowship with Kurt Schalper, M.D., Ph.D., Dept. of Pathology, Yale School of Medicine. She will be working on predictive biomarkers of lung cancer.



Archit Trivedi, Ph.D.

Dr. Trivedi successfully defended his dissertation entitled "Bromodomain Containing Proteins in Melanocyte Differentiation and Melanoma" on July 15, 2015 (Mentor: Dr. Ivana de la Serna). Dr. Trivedi has accepted a postdoctoral fellowship with Dr. Lewis A. Chodosh, Dept. of Cancer Biology, Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. He will be working on tumor dormancy, recurrence and related mechanisms.



Shweta Aras, Ph.D.

Dr. Aras successfully defended her dissertation entitled "Role of SWI/SNF Chromatin Remodeling Enzymes in Melanocyte Differentiation and DNA Damage Response to Ultraviolet Radiation" on July 13, 2015 (Mentor: Dr. Ivana de la Serna). Dr. Aras has accepted a postdoctoral fellowship with Dr. M. Raza Zaidi, Dept. Biochemistry, Fels Institute for Cancer Research and Molecular Biology, Temple University School of Medicine, Philadelphia, PA. She will be working on molecular mechanisms of ultraviolet radiation induced melanomagenesis.



Gaurav Mehta, Ph.D.

Dr. Mehta successfully defended his dissertation entitled "Role of Transcription Factor MITF and SWI/SNF Chromatin Remodeling Enzyme Subunit BRG1 in the Regulation of Pathological Cardiac Hypertrophy" on June 3, 2015 (Mentor: Dr. Ivana de la Serna). Dr. Mehta has accepted a postdoctoral fellowship with Dr. Jonathan Epstein, Dept. of Medicine & Penn Cardiovascular Institute at Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

2014 Graduates



Akshada Sawant, Ph.D.

Dr. Sawant successfully defended her dissertation entitled "Role of Base Excision Repair and Mismatch Repair Proteins in the Processing of Cisplatin Interstrand Cross-Links" on June 19, 2014 (Mentor: Dr. Steve Patrick). Dr. Sawant has accepted a postdoctoral fellowship at Wayne State University, Karmanos Cancer Center.



Meghan Wyse, Ph.D.

Dr. Wyse successfully defended her dissertation entitled "CXCL12 Mediated Regulation of the Cytoskeletal Regulator mDia2 Formin Induces Amoeboid Conversions and Cellular Plasticity in Migrating Human Breast Carcinoma Cells" on June 3, 2014 (Mentor: Dr. Kate Eisenmann). Dr. Wyse has accepted a postdoctoral fellowship at UCSD.



Jessica Arden, Ph.D.

Dr. Arden successfully defended her dissertation entitled "Diaphanous-Related Formin Hyperactivation is Superior to its Inactivation as an Anti-Invasive Strategy for Glioblastoma" on May 29, 2014 (Dr. Kate Eisenmann). Jess will return to medical school in July to complete years 3 and 4 to receive her M.D. degree.

2013 Graduates



Qiming Duan, Ph.D.

Dr. Duan successfully defended his dissertation entitled "Cardiac Na/K-ATPase in Ischemia-Reperfusion Injury and Cardioprotection" on December 20, 2013 (Mentor: Dr. Sandrine Pierre). Qiming has accepted a Postdoctoral Fellowship at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH



Venkatesh Chari, Ph.D.

Dr. Chari successfully defended his dissertation entitled "Drug Targets to Improve the Outcome of Hormonal Adjuvant Therapy in Breast and Prostate Cancers" on November 12, 2013 (Mentor: Dr. Manohar Ratnam) and has accepted a position as Staff Scientist at Life Technologies, San Francisco, CA



Jian Wu, Ph.D.

Dr. Wu successfully defended his dissertation entitled "Role of Phosphoinositide 3-Kinase alpha (PI3Kalpha) in Ouabain-Induced Cardiac Signaling and Hypertrophy" on November 1, 2013 (Mentor: Dr. Lijun Liu). He has accepted a Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA



Mugdha Patki, Ph.D.

Dr. Patki successfully defended her dissertation entitled "Novel Actions of Steroid Receptors that Limit Treatment Response in Breast and Lung Cancers" on October 2, 2013 (Mentor: Dr. Manohar Ratnam). Mugdha will continue in her research in Dr. Ratnam's lab for an additional year as a post-doctoral fellow at the Karmanos Cancer Institute, Detroit, MI



Michael Robinson, Ph.D.

Dr. Robinson successfully defended his dissertation entitled "Synthesis and Evaluation of Inducers of Methuotic Cell Death and Preliminary Identification of their Cellular Targets in Glioblastoma Cells" on June 14, 2013 (Mentor: Dr. William Maltese and Dr. Paul Erhardt). Mike will return to medical school to complete years 3 and 4 to receive his M.D. degree



Himangi Marathe, Ph.D.

Dr. Marathe successfully defended her dissertation entitled "SWI/SNF Chromatin Remodeling Enzymes as Regulators of Neural-crest Derived Cell Differentiation" on June 10, 2013 (Mentor: Dr. Ivana de la Serna). She has accepted a Postdoctoral Fellowship at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Memphis, TN.

Recipient of the 2012 Biomedical Sciences Program Outstanding Student award

2012 Graduates



Venkata Srinivas Mohan Nimai Dangeti, Ph.D.

Dr. Dangeti successfully defended his dissertation entitled "Processing of Cisplatin Interstrand Crosslinks (ICLSs) by DNA Repair Proteins" on October 31, 2012 (Mentor: Dr. Stephan Patrick). Dr. Dangeti accepted a postdoctoral fellowship in the lab of Dr. James Bieker, Dept. of Developmental and Regenerative Biology, Mt. Sinai School of Medicine, New York, NY.



Suneethi Sivakumaran, Ph.D.

Dr. Sivakumaran successfully defended her dissertation on August 9, 2012, entitled "Role of Androgen Receptor in Folate Receptor Alpha Regulation and in Prostate Cancer" (Mentor: Dr. Manohar Ratnam). She has accepted a postdoctoral fellowship at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN.



Sanjeevani Arora, Ph.D.

Sanjeevani successfully defended her dissertation on June 29, 2012, entitled "Identifying and Targeting Cellular Mechanisms that Enhance Cisplatin Chemotherapeutic Response in Cancer" (Mentor: Dr. Stephen Patrick). She has accepted a postdoctoral fellowship with Dr. Greg Enders at Fox Chase Cancer Center, Philadelphia, PA.

2011 Graduates



Haymanti Bhanot, Ph.D.

Haymanti successfully defended her dissertation on August 29, 2011, entitled "Mechanisms Underlying Ras Induced Methuosis in Human Glioblastoma Cells" (Mentor: Dr. William Maltese). She has accepted a Postdoctoral Fellowship at Tufts.



Srinivasvinod Saladi, Ph.D.

Vinod successfully defended his dissertation on June 30, 2011, entitled "SWI/SNF Chromatin Remodeling Enzymes: Epigenetic Modulators in Melanoma Invasiveness and Survival" (Mentor: Dr. Ivana de la Serna). He has accepted a postdoctoral research fellowship at Harvard.



Mesfin Gonit, Ph.D.

Mesfin successfully defended his dissertation on June 20, 2011, entitled "The Androgen Receptor as a Transcriptional Co-activator: Implications in the Growth and Progression of Prostate Cancer" (Mentor: Dr. Manohar Ratnam). He has accepted a postdoctoral research fellowship at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD.

2010 Graduates



Kristen Koterba, Ph.D.

Kristen successfully defended her dissertation on April 14, 2010, entitled "Regulation of Autophagy and Cell Death in Breast Carcinoma Cells" (Mentor: Dr. William Maltese). She accepted a Postdoctoral Fellowship at Genentech.



Bridget Keenen, Ph.D.

Bridget successfully defended her dissertation on April 12, 2010, entitled "The Role of SWI/SNF Chromatin Remodeling Enzymes in Melanoma" (Mentor: Dr. Ivana de la Serna). Dr. Keenen is a Field Application Scientist for Applied Biosystems.



Kun Liu, Ph.D.

Kun successfully defended his dissertation on June 14, 2010, entitled "Defining the Roles of FSP27 in Lipid Droplet Formation and Apoptosis" (Mentor: Dr. Cynthia Smas). He has accepted a postdoctoral research fellowship with Dr. Mark Czaja, Professor of Medicine at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Bronx, NY.



Marcela d'Alincourt Salazar, Ph.D.

Marcela defended her dissertation on June 28, 2010, entitled "Genomic Effects of Hormonal Adjuvant Therapies that Could Support the Emergence of Drug Resistance in Breast Cancer" (Mentor: Dr. Manohar Ratnam). Dr. Salazar will hold the position of Assistant Professor of Medicine at the University of Toledo Cancer Center in translational research.

2009 Graduates



Liqun Yang, Ph.D.

Liqun Yang successfully defended her dissertation on September 15, 2009, entitled "Characterization of the Physiologic Function of NF-kB2 p100" (Mentor: Dr. Han-Fei Ding). She will continue her research as a postdoctoral fellow with Dr. Ding at the Medical College of Georgia, Dept. of Pathology.



Goleeta Alam, Ph.D.

Goleeta Alam successfully defended her dissertation on May 1, 2009, entitled "Role of the lineage specific gene, Phox2B, in neuroblastoma development" (Mentor: Dr. Han-Fei Ding and Dr. William Maltese). She is a Research Associate at the University of Michigan, Department of Biologic and Materials Science, School of Dentistry.



Huilin Shi, Ph.D.

Huilin Shi successfully defended her dissertation on April 30, 2009, entitled "Investigation of common bases of sympathetic nervous system and neuroblastoma development" (Mentor: Dr. Han-Fei Ding and Dr. William Maltese). She has accepted a postdoctoral fellowship in the lab of Dr. Brian Pierchala, University of Michigan, Department of Biologic and Materials Science, School of Dentistry.



HuiHui Tang, Ph.D.

HuiHui Tang has been awarded her Ph.D. after successfully defending her dissertation entitled "The Role of RKIP in NFκB Signaling Pathway" on April 23, 2009 (Mentor: Dr. Kam Yeung). She has accepted a postdoctoral fellowship in the Department of Medicine at the University of California, San Diego.



Aparna. Kaul, Ph.D.

Aparna Kaul has been awarded her Ph.D. after successfully defending her dissertation entitled "Mechanisms of Non-Conventional Cell Death in Brain Tumor Cells" on April 21, 2009 (Mentor: William Maltese, Ph.D.). Dr. Kaul has accepted a Postdoctoral Fellowship in the laboratory of Dr. David Gutmann, Dept. of Neurology, Washington University School of Medicine.

Recipient of the Outstanding Ph.D. Student in the Biomedical Sciences Program award



Saravanan Kaliyaperumal, Ph.D.

Saravanan Kaliyaperumal successfully defended his dissertation entitled "hMSH6 Protein phosphorylation: DNA mismatch repair or DNA damage signaling?" on January 27, 2009, and has been awarded his Ph.D. Dr. Kaliyaperumal was mentored by Kandace Williams, Ph.D. He will begin a residency in the Experimental Pathology program at the New England Primate Research Center affiliated with Harvard Medical School.



Vipul Bhrigu, Ph.D.

Vipul Bhrigu has been awarded his Ph.D. after successfully defending his dissertation entitled "Replication of adeno-associated virus in murine fibroblasts with mouse adenovirus provided helper functions" on January 22, 2009 (Mentor: James P. Trempe, Ph.D.). Dr. Bhrigu has accepted a Postdoctoral Fellowship in the laboratory of Dr. Theodora Ross, Cancer Center/Geriatric Center, University of Michigan School of Medicine.



Joyce Bevington, Ph.D.

Joyce Bevington has been awarded her Ph.D. after successfully defending her dissertation entitled "Cellular response to adenovirus and adeno-associated virus co-infection" on January 8, 2009. Dr. Bevington is completing her 4th year of medical school and will be awarded her M.D. in June. Dr. Bevington was mentored by James P. Trempe, Ph.D.

Recipient of the Outstanding MD/PhD Student in the Biomedical Sciences Program

2008 Graduates



Yu Wu, Ph.D.

Yu Wu has been awarded her Ph.D. after successfully defending her dissertation entitled "Identification and functional characterization of adipogenesis-related genes" on October 14, 2008 (Mentor: Dr. Cynthia Smas). Dr. Wu has accepted a Postdoctoral Fellowship in the laboratory of Dr. Robert Casero, The Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center, The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, where she will investigate the antineoplastic drug development targeting the polyamine metabolic pathway.



Juan Zhang, Ph.D.

Juan Zhang has been awarded her Ph.D. after successfully defending her Ph.D. dissertation entitled "New mechanisms of androgen receptor signaling" on September 2, 2008. Dr. Zhang was mentored by Dr. Manohar Ratnam, Ph.D. Dr. Zhang has accepted the position of Associate Director of Tumor Pathology at Crown Bioscience Inc., Beijing, P.R. China.



Shengli Zhou, M.S.

Shengli Zhou has successfully defended her Master's dissertation entitled "ZNF451 is Novel Binding Partner of the bHLH Transcription Factor E12" on August 19, 2008. Ms. Zhou was mentored by Dr. Cynthia Smas.



Aditi Nadkarni, Ph.D.

Aditi Nadkarni has successfully defended her dissertation entitled "Functional Analysis of the *Rad51d* (E233G) Breast Cancer Associated Polymorphism and a Pharmacogenetic Evaluation of RAD51D Status" on July 29, 2008, and has been awarded her Ph.D. Dr. Nadkarni mentored under Dr. Randy Ruch and Dr. Douglas Pittman, Univ. of South Carolina (formerly Univ. of Toledo College of Medicine). She will begin a Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Developmental Therapeutics program at the Mayo Clinic Cancer Center (Rochester, MN) in the laboratory of Dr. Jann Sarkaria.



Junho Lee, Ph.D.

Junho Lee has been awarded his Ph.D. after successfully defending his dissertation entitled "RANBP17, A Novel Non-bHLH Binding Partner of bHLH Transcription Factor, E12" on May 20, 2008. Dr. Lee studied under the guidance of Dr. Cynthia Smas and has accepted a Postdoctoral Fellowship in the laboratory of Dr. Hua Lu, Dept. of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, Indiana University School of Medicine.



Zhe Wang, Ph.D.

Zhe Wang has been awarded her Ph.D. after successfully defending her her dissertation entitled "Dissecting the roles of the non-canonical NF- κ B signaling in the pathogenesis of lymphoma and autoimmunity" on February 12, 2008. Dr. Wang studied under the guidance of Dr. Han-Fei Ding. She has accepted a Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Harvard University, in the laboratory of Dr. Margaret Shipp, Director of the Lymphoma Program.

2007 Graduates



Aymen Shatnawi, Ph.D.

Aymen Shatnawi has been awarded his Ph.D. after successfully defending his Ph.D. dissertation entitled "New mechanisms of transcriptional regulation of the folate receptor and other genes by steroid receptors" on December 10, 2007 (Mentor: Manohar Ratnam, Ph.D.). Dr. Shatnawi has accepted a Postdoctoral Fellowship in the laboratory of Dr. Donald McDonnell, Dept. of Pharmacology and Cancer Biology, Duke University Medical School.



Tai Li, M.S.

Tai Li successfully defended his Master's dissertation entitled "Base excision repair of 7,8-dihydro-8-oxoguanine in DNA mismatch repair proficient and mismatch repair deficient human cells" on August 10, 2007. Mr. Li studied under the direction of Kandace Williams, Ph.D.



Sandra M. Beach, Ph.D.

Sandra M. Beach has been awarded her Ph.D. after successfully defending her Ph.D. dissertation entitled "Transcriptional regulation of RKIP and its involvement in prostate cancer progression" on May 16, 2007. Dr. Beach's studies were under the direction of Dr. Kam Yeung.



Michael A. Edelbrock, Ph.D.

Michael A. Edelbrock was awarded his Ph.D. after successfully defending his dissertation entitled "Cell cycle regulation of DNA mismatch repair protein expression and activity at the H-ras oncogenic hot spot" on May 4, 2007. Mike's studies were under the direction of Dr. Kandace Williams. Dr. Edelbrock is Associate Professor of Biology and ES&H Management, Assistant Director for Master of Science in ES&H Management at the University of Findlay, Findlay, OH.



Hala Elnakat, Ph.D.

Hala Elnakat was awarded her Ph.D. after successfully defending her dissertation entitled “Regulation of folate receptor raft recycling” on January 4, 2007. Dr. Elnakat’s studies were under the direction of Dr. Manohar Ratnam. Dr. Elnakat accepted a postdoctoral fellowship at the Genome Research Institute, Cincinnati, OH.

2006 Graduates



Marian H. Al-Dhaheri, Ph.D.

Mariam H. Al-Dhaheri was awarded her Ph.D. after successfully defending her dissertation entitled “Molecular mechanisms of protein kinase: A signaling pathway on estrogen receptor action in breast cancer” on September 28, 2006. Dr. Al-Dhaheri’s studies were under the direction of Dr. Brian Rowan. Dr. Al-Dhaheri is currently a Senior Medical Technologist at Al-Ain Hospital in United Arab Emirates.



Jennifer Timpe, Ph.D.

Jennifer Timpe was awarded her Ph.D. after successfully defending her dissertation entitled “Effects of Adeno-associate virus on adenovirus replication and cell viability” on July 20, 2006. Dr. Timpe’s studies were under the direction of Dr. James P. Trempe. She has accepted a postdoctoral fellowship in the laboratory of Dr. Jane McKeating, Ph.D., University of Birmingham, Department of Infection & Immunity, Birmingham, UK, working on the project entitled “Functional Analysis of Hepatitis C Virus Glycoproteins.”



Jun Ma, Ph.D.

Jun Ma was awarded his Ph.D. after successfully defending his dissertation entitled “Characterization of tumor-initiating cells in neuroblastoma” on March 30, 2006. Dr. Ma’s studies were under the direction of Dr. Han-Fei Ding. Dr. Ma has accepted a position with the Ordway Research Institute.



Baochun Zhang, Ph.D.

Baochun Zhang was awarded his Ph.D. after successfully defending his dissertation entitled “NF- κ B2 is an autoimmunity regulator and its mutation leads to lymphomagenesis in mice” on March 23, 2006. Dr. Zhang’s studies were under the direction of Dr. Han-Fei Ding. Dr. Zhang will continue his research as a postdoctoral fellow with Dr. Ding.