

Mission Statement: The Alaska Biomedical Learning and Student Training (BLaST) program has an overarching aim to enhance capacity for undergraduate biomedical research training and efficacy for both engaging students from diverse, especially rural Alaskan, backgrounds and preparing students for biomedical research careers. With this respect, we would like to congratulate our graduating scholars and URES!

**Congrats to
our Grads!**

Events/Announcements



Olivia Rhines

B.S., Chemistry: Biochemistry: Olivia, a BLaST Scholar, is moving to Las Vegas this summer to attend UNLV's School of Dental Medicine (class of 2021). After graduation, she hopes to return to Alaska to practice.

Alexander Michael Shercliffe
magna cum laude, B.S.,
Biological Sciences:
Physiology: Alexander was a
Summer 2017 URE.

Brandon Putuuqti Kowalski
B.S., Biological Sciences:
Physiology: Brandon, a BLaST
Scholar, graduated Fall 2016.

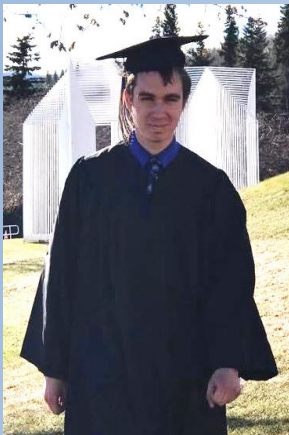


Elizabeth Himschoot

cum laude, B.S., Biological
Sciences: Physiology: Elizabeth, a
BLaST Scholar, plans to expand her
research experience within the One
Health field to develop a more
focused plan for attending graduate
school. She is spending this fall in
Washington D.C. conducting nutrition
research at the National Zoo, an
exciting opportunity to meet others
interested in her area of education.

Jesse Klejka

B.S., Biological Sciences: Cell
and Molecular Biology.
University Honors Scholar: Jesse,
a BLaST Scholar, plans to attend
Victoria University in New Zealand,
pursuing a Master's study in Clinical
Immunology to further explore
research and clinical opportunities
in the medical field, and as a
stepping stone towards attending
medical school.



Farimang Touray Jr.

B.S., Biological Sciences: Physiology:
University Honors Thesis Scholar: Fairmang, a
BLaST Undergraduate Research Experience
Student for the academic year 2016-2017, is
planning to attend either physical therapy school
or entering into a Masters of Public Health
program this upcoming academic year to continue
his education.

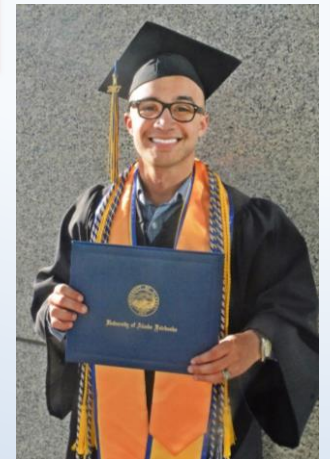


Hannah Taylor Short

magna cum laude, B.S., Biological Sciences: Cell
and Molecular Biology: University Honors
Scholar. Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society: Hannah, a
BLaST URE, graduated December 2016 and will
be attending medical school in August 2017 at
the Georgetown University School of Medicine.

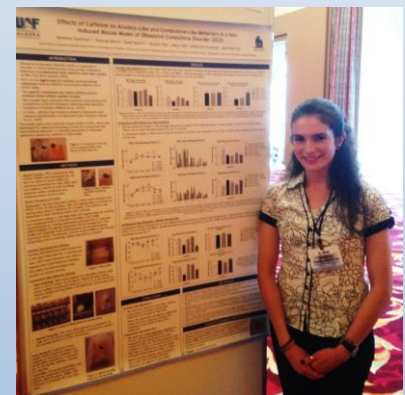
Gabriel Cartagena

summa cum laude, B.A., Psychology.
University Honors Scholar: Gabriel, a BLaST
Scholar, received the Joel Wiegert Award for
Outstanding Senior Man, as well as the
Outstanding Research in Psychological Science at
SACNAS 2016, and Outstanding Psychology
Student of 2017 at UAF in the Department of
Psychology. He has been accepted to the
University of Florida's Clinical and Health
Psychology Ph.D. program, as well as their joint
Masters in Public Health program.



Vanessa Santana- Miranda

magna cum laude, B.S., Biological Sciences:
Physiology: Honors Thesis Scholar:
Graduating second-year BLaST Scholar
Vanessa presented her research at the
International Behavioral Neuroscience
Society conference in Hiroshima, Japan, in
June, 2017 (photo right). Vanessa will be
going to veterinary school next year. She
has been accepted to the UAF/Colorado
State University collaborative program,
Washington State University and
University of Wisconsin-Madison.



Team Updates

We welcome our new additions to the BLaST Program for the upcoming academic year! We look forward to learning, sharing, and getting to know all of you in your new adventures in biomedical science!

Fall 2017 – Spring 2018 Scholars

Jewel Blanchard	Jennie Humphrey	Viktorija Podlutskaya
Courtney Bunker	Noah Khalsa	Jonilee Polanco
Ana Carrasco	Jimin “Josh” Kim	Savanna Ratky
Miyah Chingliak	KaCee Llewelyn	Kristian Rivera
Melissa Clark	Shayle Lliaban	Raven Shaw
Christina Edwin	Brianna Lu	Thorne Varier
Diloola Erickson	Tandi Marth	Mark A. Velasco
Mollie Fisher	Sarah Maupin	Katrina Watson
Daedre Gibbens	Monica Mikes	Hannah Wing
Kendrick Hautala	Ava Parrish	

Fall 2017 – Spring 2018 Graduate Mentor Research Assistantships (GMRAs)

Tynan Becker	Carla Frare	Malabika Maulik
Sheri Coker	Scott Jerome	Lauren Wild
Aline Collin	Madison Kosma	Kimi Yatsushiro
Casey Clark	Don Larson	
Andrew Cyr	Marianne Lian	

Faculty Pilot Projects

Angela Bowers	Carie Green	Joshua Lupinek
Abel Bult-Ito	Jennifer Guerard	Todd O’Hara
Robert Coker	Cristina Hansen	Laura Oxtoby
Kriya Dunlap	Lisa Hoferkamp	Jacques Philip
Devin Drown	Thomas Kuhn	Andrej Podlutsky
Ginny Eckert	Andres Lopez	Sherry Tamone

Fall 2017 Undergraduate Research Experience (URE) Students

Rachel Alexander	Kennedy Demboski	JD Harwell
Louise Bishop	Sam Eames	Hannah Starbuck
Richard Chen	Annaliese Enderle	
Aaron Cook	Tracie Haan	

Equipment Awards July 1, 2017

Srijan Aggarwal – UAS Sitka/Juneau	Linda Nicholas-Figueroa – Iliisagvik College
Cristina Hansen – UAF Vet Med	Heidi Pearson – UAS Juneau
Claudia Ihl – UAF Northwest Campus	Andrej Podlutsky - UAF
Amanda Kelley – UAF	Sherry Tamone – UAS Juneau
Mary Beth Leigh – UAF	Chris Whitehead - Sitka
Josh Lupinek – UAF	Cory Williams - UAF
Sonia Nagorski – UAS Juneau	

Friendly Reminder: Please pay attention to your inbox! **Surveys about your participation in BLaST** come from **Evalulogic**, our outside evaluator, and the **CEC** with the University of California Los Angeles (**UCLA**) at least three times a year!

Tenth Annual
**University of Alaska
Biomedical Research Conference**



May 18-19, 2017

University of Alaska Fairbanks - Margaret Murie Building

URE Student, and now Scholar, Raven Shaw designed this year’s 2017 UA-BRC program booklet, as well as other research materials.



In The News



BLaST supported the 10th annual University of Alaska Biomedical Research Conference (**UA-BRC**) May 18-19, 2017 along with several other UA departments and colleges, providing a unique opportunity for researchers and students from throughout Alaska to learn about and discuss a wide range of biomedical and One Health-related topics, including molecular biology, and fisheries and everything in between. This year featured two days of keynote speakers, roundtable discussions, and oral and poster presentations from students and faculty, including nearly 20 presentations from undergraduates. We are looking forward to seeing everyone again next year at UA-BRC 2018 in Anchorage, Alaska!

The BLaST-sponsored **Biomedical Exploration Experience (BEE)** boot camp was held May 8-19, 2017 at UAF as a two-week, two-credit course. This was designed for undergraduate students considering careers in medicine or science, and offered many firsthand opportunities to learn different techniques and experience environments found in the medical field. Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center (CAIHC), a local tribal clinic run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, was one of the main contributors of service. The class was taught by BLaST LRTT Natalia Podlutskaya. LRTTs are Laboratory Research Teaching Technicians.



In The News



Methods in Molecular Biology (MIMB) student marking and checking a microcosm tube to look for layers of microbial growth during the camp June 4-17, 2017 in Utqiagvik (Barrow), Alaska - BLaST and Ilisagvik College collaboration. There were a total of 9 students from all over Alaska that participated, and led by BLaST LRTT Joanna Green and Ilisagvik College Science faculty Linda Nicholas-Figueroa.



BLaST-supported **Neurodegeneration** two-week two-credit **summer boot camp** was offered July 4-21, 2017 at the UAF campus to five undergraduate students - 3 BLaST Scholars and 2 BLaST Undergraduate Research Experience (URE) students. Using two *in vivo* model systems, mice and *C. elegans*, students used neuroscience lab techniques to explore the effects of dietary supplements and Alaskan blueberries on Parkinson-like symptoms in their subjects. This was led by BLaST GMRA Maulibika Maulik, and Dr. Swarup Mitra.

Partnership Highlight ~ Rural Alaska Honors Institute

By Larry Duffy – Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry, RAHI faculty

Eight RAHI students in the Allied Health biochemistry course, "A Survey of Organic and Biochemistry" participated in developing a One Health approach curriculum model at UAF this past summer May 30 – July 13, 2017. One Health is a trans-disciplinary approach that is especially appropriate for rural Alaska where sustainability during this era of a rapidly changing climate is a major community health challenge. An integrated approach that focuses on the interactions between the environment, plants, animals and humans is key to maintaining healthy ecosystems and healthy communities. The goal of sustainability is to maintain a healthy planet, with healthy people, and the development of appropriate cultural and economic systems.

Students from Galena, Kipnuk, Fairbanks, Utqiagvik, Sitka and Anchorage connected the human, historical, and ecosystem dimensions in Holly McKinney's anthropology research course with basic metabolism and biomedical science in their chemistry course. As the summer progressed, a variety of health topics were discussed in a holistic manner, guided by Vet Med student and RAHI alumni Chris Clement.

A draft course curriculum was developed and organized into three general categories: 1) environment and ecosystem health, 2) animal and human interactions, and 3) human health. Discussions around these different categories were designed to cross disciplinary boundaries in order to explicitly highlight the connections and emphasize to the trans-disciplinary nature of the One Health approach.

In Alaska, where people live close to the land and depend upon natural resources for food, medicine, materials and energy, Alaskans are aware of the connections between the environment, animals and a healthy community. One Health supports the cultural values of Alaska and respects the wisdom of generations contained in their traditional ecological knowledge. The student engagement generated by a place-based One Health of RAHI Research course encourages us to try to deliver the course next spring in the general Allied Health chemistry courses.

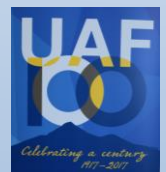
Opportunities

Conferences

- ANHR – Alaska Native Health Research 5th Annual Conference** Oct. 16-18 at Captain Cook Hotel, Anchorage, AK
- Youth and Elders Conference** hosted by First Alaskans Institute– Oct. 16 – 18 at Dena'ina Center, Anchorage, AK
- Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) Annual Conference** – Oct. 19 – 21 at Dena'ina Center, Anchorage, AK
- SACNAS 2017 – Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics & Native Americans in Science Conference** - Oct 19-21 in Salt Lake City, UT
- ABRCMS 2017 – Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students** - Nov 1-4 in Phoenix, AZ

BLaST Events

- NEW FPP Call-Out Announcement** opens August 14th!
- Research Mixer** co-hosted with URSA– Sept. 22 from 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. – Rm 501 IARC – UAF
- NEW URE Applications** for Spring 2019 opens October 23rd!



REMINDER: Fall 2017 BLaST-Off Orientation – Aug. 24–26 held at UAF - 501 IARC

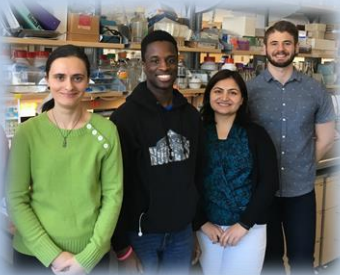
More highlights and information on our webpage: <http://alaska.edu/blast/>

Alaska BUILD Connection



BLaST is funded by the National Institute of Health (NIH)—Diversity Program Consortium (DPC) and part of the BUILD programs. There are ten BUILD sites, which enables us to connect with other nationally recognized biomedical researchers, undergraduates, graduates, and mentors. BLaST is unique as one of the BUILD programs in that we implement a tiered mentoring approach as well as a big focus on One Health! Picture above shows our rural connections. For more information: <http://alaska.edu/blast/resources/>

Scientist of the Month



June Scientist of the Month 2017:

Dr. Elena “Lena” Vayndorf, a Postdoctoral Fellow at UAF focuses on nutrition and biogerontology with her research in neurodegenerative diseases and the relationship between diet and Alaskan blueberries. Congratulations Lena!



July, 2017: Faculty Mentor

Dr. Thomas Kuhn was recognized with all his contributions towards biomedical research and inspiring others – Congratulations Tom!



August, 2017: Undergraduate Researcher Raven Shaw (left, on far right), 2017-2018 Scholar and previous URE, develops & works with harmful algal bloom (HAB) research in Southeast Alaska. Congrats Raven!

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