To bring attention to the incredible work of scientists from underrepresented populations, I have been writing articles titled “Untold Stories” for the organization Science ATL. These stories highlight accomplishments from members of the BIPOC and LBTGQ+ community, and they can be found on the Science ATL website! [https://scienceatl.org/untold-science-stories/](https://scienceatl.org/untold-science-stories/)

**Faculty Spotlight**

**Dr. Lawrence Boise** has been at Emory since 2009 and in BCDB since 2010, and he has served as the contact PI for the BCDB Training Grant for the last seven years. His scientific passion has been understanding how cells stay alive by preventing a form of programmed cell death called apoptosis. In particular, he worked on a magical gene called BCL2 that prevented death by blocking apoptosis as a graduate student and postdoc and continues in his independent lab. His study allows the translation of the basic findings on cell dependencies for survival to clinical trials and develops tests for predicting responses to therapies that target these dependencies.

**Dr. Shashank Shekhar** joined Emory in 2020. He is a biophysicist interested in uncovering the molecular and physical mechanisms underlying complex cellular actin dynamics. Specifically, he is interested in studying how multicomponent protein ecosystems control actin dynamics and how mechanical forces influence the activities and effects of these proteins on actin filaments. His central hypothesis is that emergent actin dynamics in cells result from the simultaneous activity of multicomponent protein ecosystems and mechanical forces. His lab integrates quantitative multispectral single-molecule imaging and microfluidics-assisted total internal reflection fluorescence microscopy experiments that employ bottom-up reconstitution using purified proteins and mathematical modeling to address these questions.

**Dr. Jitendra Thakur** joined Emory in 2021. Her research focuses on the evolution of genetic and epigenetic components of centromeres and the role of RNA in chromatin organization in the area of genetics, cell, and developmental biology. Specifically, she is interested in understanding the nature of the epigenetic processes involved in the nucleosomes assembly on both centromere and pericentric satellites, which are maintained indefinitely through cell division over the lifetime of an organism. She is also interested in understanding the structural organization of distinct chromatin domains in the nucleus and investigating chromatin-RNA interactions using the latest chromatin profiling techniques combined with cytological visualization.

**Recent Accomplishments from BCDB Students**

**Congratulations to our recent doctoral graduates:**
- Dr. Sabrina Lynn
- Dr. Samantha Schwartz
- Dr. Raven Peterson
- Dr. Stephanie Zimmer
- Dr. Raven Shah
- Dr. Izabela Suster
- Dr. Sean Kunding
- Dr. Tyler Moser-Katz

**Congratulations to our 2021 GDBBS Award Recipients:**
- Dr. Samantha Schwartz, Lew Award for Best Paper and Lew Award for Best Overall Student
- Will McFadden, Lew Award for Best Overall First Year Student
- Maria Sterrett, BCDB Program Scholar

**Congratulations to recent fellowship awardees:**
- Tyshawn Ferrell, Graduate Education for Minorites
- Julia Tanquary, Achievement Rewards for College Scientists (ARCS), NSF Graduate Research Fellowships Program (GRFP)
- Colby Schweibenz, NIH NRSA F31
- Paul Zakutansky, NIH NRSA F31
- Christine Bowen, NIH NRSA F31
Get to know our first years
Note: Half of the first-year class is featured in this issue. The rest will be featured in the spring.

Tyshawn Ferrell
Hometown: Columbus, Ohio
Undergraduate institution: Albany State University
Favorite thing about Atlanta: It's the fact that you can live in a dense city then travel 30 minutes and be surrounded by dense forestry.
Fun fact: I am a poet with over 50 poems that I hope to publish in one book before I graduate.

Lydia Gutema
Hometown: Marietta, Georgia
Undergraduate institution: Johns Hopkins University
Research Interests: I like looking at how proteins function in relation to their structure using structural or biochemical techniques.
Spirit animal: Pandas because they are clumsy.

Taylor Hailstock
Hometown: Laurel, Maryland
Undergraduate institution: Bowie State University
Spirit animal: A flamingo! They’re unique and look pretty in pink!
Research Interests: Regenerative medicine and stem cell applications

Ziben Zhou
Hometown: Changsha, China
Undergraduate institution: University of Washington
Favorite thing about Atlanta: The fall!
Research Interests: Cancer Biology, Genomics, Epigenetics

Jose Miguel Castro
Hometown: Laredo, Tx
Undergraduate institution: Texas State University
Why did you choose BCDB? Biochemistry and Industry background. Wanted to expand more in the field, there was a feeling of camaraderie and community when I interviewed.

Molly Little
Hometown: Warwick, New York
Undergraduate institution: George Washington University
Research Interests: Protein-protein interactions and structural biology
Fun fact: I can speak Irish/Gaelic conversationally

Lauryn Worley
Hometown: Clinton, North Carolina
Undergraduate institution: Fayetteville State University
Favorite thing about Atlanta? I really love that there is always something to do! From food to shopping to museums to outdoor events, Atlanta is a very lively and vibrant city.

Winter and spring activities around Atlanta

Activities
Garden Lights, Holiday Nights, Nov. 13-Jan. 15th
Atlanta Christkindl Market, Nov. 26th – Jan. 2nd
Fernbank Winter Wonderland: Celebrations & Traditions Around the World, Nov. 20th – Jan. 8th
Celebrate Chinese New Year at the Atlanta Chinatown Mall, Early Feb.
Atlanta Jewish Film Festival, Feb. 16-27th
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire in Concert with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Feb. 18-20th
Atlanta Dogwood Festival, April 8th -10th.
Shaky Knees Music Festival, April 30th.

Dining
BCDB favorite places to dine
Murphy’s Restaurant
CHAI YO MODERN THAI
Antico Pizza
Bantam + Biddy (lots of gluten free)
A mano
La Pastorita
Brew and Bird
Evergreen Butcher + Baker
Aamar Indian Cuisine

Top spots to grab a drink
The Sippin’ Santa tiki bar at Bon Ton in Midtown
Three Taverns Imaginarium
Thirty
Clairmont Hotel Rooftop
Brick Store Pub
Ladybird Grove and Mess Hall
Bar Vegan
Tiki Tango
New Realm Brewery

Thank you to our students and faculty for their support in putting together this newsletter

Acknowledgements

Congratulations to our new Executive Committee:
Program Director: Dr. Christine Dunham
Director of Graduate Studies: Dr. Anita Corbett
Student Progress: Dr. Laura Finzi
Rotations: Dr. Guy Benian
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Dr. Hyojung Choo
Admissions: Dr. Jennifer Kwong
Curriculum: Dr. Homa Ghalei
Exams: Dr. Andreas Fritz
Membership: Dr. Graeme Conn
Communications: Dr. Bo Liang
Student Representatives: Sarah Strassler and Alejandro Oviedo

Congratulations to Dr. Mike Koval on a successful term as BCDB Director. Thank you to those who have previously served on BCDB Committee.

This newsletter was written and compiled by Dr. Bo Liang, Paul Zakutansky, and Hannah Hrncir.