



Congratulations, Class of 2011!

Sarah Abdelwahab	Bradford Langenfeld
*Vitaliy Baranyuk	Grant Larson
*Thomas Baron	*Luna Liu
Heather Berndt	Aatif Mansoor
Timothy Bohmert	Iqra Mian
*Lane Davis	Brett Newland
Alan Denney	Megan Nimmo
Joshua Farley	Ian Olson
Linda Giang	Kelsey Pflapsen
*Matthew Goodmanson	Courtney Priem
*Tarini Goya	Jasmine Radue
*Leah Grengs	Gabriel Romero
Justin Harrington	Elizabeth Salm
*Pouya Hemmati	*Tapan Sharma
*Matthew Janzen	Alina Shub
Annie Kathuria	Kyle Terleski
Christopher Kennedy	Elizabeth Watkins
Rohit Keshwani	Emalie Welch
Heather Kirkham	*Yee Xiong
*Cassandra Kowalski	Yang Xu
Amanda Kurtti	

* - Honors

Tim Bohmert is a Dean's Scholar and plans to spend the summer water skiing and helping his parents remodel their home. Plans beyond that are uncertain.

Tarini Goyal is graduating summa cum laude and will be attending the U of M Medical School after traveling in India this summer.

Pouya Hemmati is also graduating summa cum laude and he will also be attending the U of M Medical School. In the meantime he is working at the Minneapolis Heart Institute. He is a world traveler with trips to Europe, Iran and the Bahamas.

Aatif Mansoor is planning on going to medical school a year from now. In the meantime, he is working as a lab technician in the Van Ness lab in GCD.

Kelsey Pflapsen is a member of Phi Beta Kappa and will be working in Paul Mermelstein's lab when she is not traveling to Ecuador.

Gabriel Romero is also taking a year's hiatus before enrolling in graduate school. He is currently a junior scientist in Bob Miller's lab.

Alina Shub is also taking a year off to work at the Brain Sciences Center and at a Brain Fitness Center and then planning to travel in South America/Europe.

Emalie Welch has won the Outstanding Student Employee Award and she plans to continue her education in a Physician Assistant program. This summer she is planning a trip to Nicaragua to help out in clinics and child health.

Alumni News

Call them doctor!

Matthew Dufek '02 had a busy year. He completed his PhD in Pharmaceutical Sciences from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill May 7th and then headed west to accept a position with Genentech in South San Francisco. He's working in the Department of Clinical Pharmacology designing and carrying out clinical trials for new oncology drugs. His wife Bobbi (U of M BA in History, 2003) just accepted a position with Stanford University in the Department of Pediatric Gastroenterology. He writes: "We just moved to San Francisco and are loving life after all these years in school."

Eugene Y. Vasserman '03 got his PhD in computer science this past summer from the U. He is a newly-hired Assistant Professor in the Department of Computing and Information Sciences at Kansas State. He says "Sadly, not

a degree in neuroscience. I drifted away from it after undergrad."

Mara Bann '06 will be graduating with an MD degree from Johns Hopkins this year and will start her Internal Medicine residency at University of Washington - Seattle in July.

David Bearl '06 has also had an eventful year. He is graduating with an MD from the University of Minnesota and he will begin his residency this July in Omaha in pediatrics. It is a joint program with Creighton University and University of Nebraska. He writes: "I also got to spend a 6 weeks in Africa just prior to the World Cup last year. I spent 4 of those weeks just outside of Capetown delivering care to children with HIV through a program called HOPE-KIDCRU in conjunction with Stellenbosch University. It was wonderful. I then met my wife in Durban and we visited family of hers along the south coast of South Africa. We then spent a week visiting with friends in Dakar, Senegal. A very different place, but what an experience!"

Ronda Farah '06 is now a graduate of the UMN medical school and going into dermatology! She was a genetics major as an undergraduate but took all of the tough neuroscience courses, so we have made her an honorary alumna. She writes: "I ended up using my experiences in neuroscience to help shape my medical career. I got involved in a neurodermatology research project in medical school because of my neuroscience courses. I then chose dermatology as a field. I am presenting my neurodermatology research at the World Congress of Dermatology Meeting in South Korea next week.

I would encourage all CBS graduates to take courses in your department as neuroscience is a unique department that we have at CBS. It also helped me perform well in my medical school neuroscience courses."

Callie Cox Bauer '07 is now a graduate from Des Moines University College of Osteopathic Medicine with a Doctorate of Osteopathic Medicine. She will be starting as a resident in Obstetrics and Gynecology with Aurora Sinai Medical Center in Milwaukee, WI this summer and she was also recently promoted to captain in the air force upon graduation from medical school.

Narayan Kissoon '07 will be graduating from the University of Minnesota Medical School this Spring and will be starting a Residency in Neurology at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester.

Congratulations to all! [I am sure there are more of you out there, but you need to let us know! Send us a note and we will feature your life story in the next newsletter ... promise.]

Other news:

Sibyl Siegfried '05 writes that she received her MD from University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health in 2009. She is currently a Family Medicine Resident with Group Health in Seattle, WA and will finish residency June 2012.

Blake Daley '06 is currently enrolled at Touro University Medical School in California. He writes "I am excited to be part of the success of our graduating class."

Dan Mark '06 will soon enter his fourth year at New York Medical College. He writes: "After receiving my MD, I plan to go into pediatrics. I am a relatively new father, as my daughter will have her first birthday this July."



Jan Dubinsky entertaining alumni at Sally's last December!

Ashford Kroll '07 (photo above) is interning in Dr. Metzger's lab in the Integrative Biology and Physiology Department at the U of M and is planning on continuing her education. She writes: "After graduation, I worked for a start-up medical device company investigating Direct Current Ablation as a treatment for Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia and Prostate Cancer; (not exactly related to the brain, but still interesting all

the same.) I learned a great deal about the industry and even just small businesses in general, which was especially interesting during our current economic climate. I also wrote grants, assisted with patents, and did some medical illustrating. After that, I got a job as a Personal Care Assistant working for an elderly woman with Alzheimer's Disease. It was so eye-opening to see such a terrible disease first-hand."

Karen Baker '08 graduated from Boston University with an MPH in Epidemiology. She's now working at Hennepin County Medical Center as a data analyst.

Tatiana Anderson '09 has been accepted into the graduate program of neuroscience at the University of Washington in Seattle and will be starting this fall.

Heather Bainter '09 is still employed by the University of Minnesota. "I have recently been promoted to Assistant Scientist and Lab Manager for Dr. ChuanFeng Wang's lab. Here I do IHC and animal studies concerning the neuropeptide BDNF and its role in Obesity." [Heather attended the alumni reunion in December and won the drawing for the plaque. See the full story below.]

Rima Chakraborty '09 goes to UMKC School of Medicine.

David Horn '09 reports that, after spending the last 2 years doing skin cancer research at the University of Arizona, he will be joining the MD class of 2015 at the Medical College of Wisconsin. He also writes "I could not be happier with the education I received in the neuroscience program." Thanks, David.

Krista M. Johnson '09 started graduate school in the College of Pharmacy at the University of Minnesota last fall. She is studying experimental and clinical pharmacology.

Mike Keebler '09 will be attending grad-school next year at Cambridge (St. John's college) with Professor Colin Taylor.

Samantha Lundebj '09 writes: My official position is "project coordinator" at Dittman Research Corporation in Anchorage, AK. If you want to learn more about the company, their website is www.dittmanresearch.com The company is known for its accurate polling in

Alaska -- most recently, we were the only company nationwide that accurately predicted Senator Murkowski to win as a write-in candidate in the most recent General election.

My major definitely helped me prepare for the position -- I find myself thinking often about how much I truly did learn at the U. Specifically, with data analysis in general and scientific interpretation of the statistical results that come into our office. Additionally, my familiarity with Excel has been extremely helpful. I do a lot of compiling of reports and presentation of results to our clients, as well as make the assignments for the actual interviewers (who do mostly telephone polling). It's interesting work, but I do plan on attending paramedic school in fall 2011. For now, I am just trying to chip away at those student loans!

Hope all is well in Minnesota. I do miss it a lot.

Kirubel Zeleke '09 will be attending Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine in New Orleans, Louisiana. He writes: "I will be studying parasitology and working on my Master of Science in Public Health degree. I am really excited for this opportunity. After that, I seek to continue my studies in medical school. I must say that the professors and the staff have been really helpful with helping me transition into graduate education. I especially would like to thank Dr. Janet Dubinsky for all her help."

Desiree Abu-Odeh '10 enrolled in a master's program in bioethics at the U of M.

Shannon Boyle '10 has been working on campus in the O'Connor Lab for the past year and has just recently accepted an offer to join Teach for America. She says: "I will be moving to Alabama this summer and begin teaching a secondary science class (grade and specific class still not determined) there for two years."

Tom Bedor '10 is working at Tufts University right now as a research technician. "This summer I'm quitting that job to canoe down the Missouri River. No kids or marriages or postgraduate programs thus far."

Ricky De Mello '10 is currently working at Fairview hospital procuring tissue from surgeries for research. He writes: "A majority of our specimens are cancerous. This fall, I will be attending the University of St. Thomas Law

School. I was offered a full-tuition paid scholarship and it seemed too good of an opportunity to pass up.

Hope all is well in your life! Have you moved away from dreary cold MN yet?"

[Congratulations and good guess. See story below.]

Armin Jewell '10 was just accepted and will be attending Rocky Vista College of Osteopathic Medicine in the fall 2011.

Jenny Zick '10 has "[g]ood news! I recently found out I got accepted to the MD/PhD program here at the U of M, and I'll be starting in the fall."

Alumni Reunion

In 2010 we moved the annual alumni reception from May to December, hoping to find a good time, when you busy people are in town and/or on vacation. Seven alumni gathered at Sally's with Profs Dubinsky, Flanders, and McLoon, and Soechting, who paid the bill for refreshments (thanks John!). We had a great time, but it is still not clear that we have found the right time slot for this event. Please send your suggestions to **John Soechting**.

As part of the festivities, we held a drawing for one of our "Neuroscience UMN" stained glass window plaques. They were designed and executed by **Kasia Simura O'Donnell '04** and her parents. **Heather Bainter '09** was the lucky winner! In return, she had to tell her life story:

"I completed my high school diploma at Studio Academy of the Arts focusing on music, writing and painting. It was here I wrote a one act play that was preformed, played classical bass guitar, designed a t-shirt for Habitat for Humanity, and painted murals on the walls for a local elementary school. Seeking a profession in the medical field I earned my Associates of Science, focus on Pre-Pharmacy, at Rochester Community and Technical College. I then applied to the University of Minnesota, Neuroscience program because of my fascination of the subject and my desire to be challenged. As an undergrad, I worked in the Beitz lab on projects involving cancer pain and acupuncture.



Heather Bainter showing off her plaque!

Shortly after graduation I was contacted by Dr. ChuanFeng Wang. I accepted a job in his lab as a Junior Scientist. I was later promoted and am currently working as an Assistant Scientist and Lab Manager for the University of Minnesota. Our focus is on the neuropeptide BDNF and its role in the prevention of obesity. In my free time I like run around the lakes, eat at the great restaurants in the cities, fish, and play terrible golf."

Departmental News

The latest from the University, the College, and the Department is, as you may have guessed, that we have insufficient funds. Across campus, departments are scrambling to make the tuition dollar equation work in their favor. The Neuroscience Department considered the idea of substantially increasing the size of our major, and also accommodating more non-majors in our core courses. But we feared that this might compromise the rigorous, research-oriented nature of our program. So instead we decided to try to create a new minor in Neuroscience, with several new classes being designed for, and/or open to non-CBS students (e.g., CLA Psychology majors).

However at the same time, we have also made moves to accommodate growth in our CBS Neuroscience major, since CBS continues to admit larger numbers of top students into the freshman class. Starting next month, we will offer a new summer section of our NSci 4105 Neurobiology Laboratory, to give our current students more flexibility. Dr. Dezhi Liao has nine students signed up and ready for action. Thanks Dezhi - have fun! – Martha Flanders

Editor's Farewell

Ricky De Mello must be psychic. In fact, I will be moving sometime this summer. After almost 40 years at the U, I am retiring, moving to western Massachusetts. It's been a pretty good run while it lasted and I have many good memories of discoveries in research, of graduate students and post-docs who have come through my lab, and of many of my colleagues on the faculty. But I think the highlight has been my interaction with all of you in our undergraduate program. It has been a privilege to teach so many talented students, and then to see them succeed upon graduation! I hope you'll stay in touch! Martha has twisted my arm and I've agreed to edit this newsletter for another year. So keep on sending your latest news to me at soech001@umn.edu.

She also insisted we include the picture of me with the plaque – definitely not my idea! I guess it's supposed to show I still have a firm grip on things!

