Physiology Newsletter

Cellular and Molecular Physiology PhD recruitment held with a (virtual) twist

While last recruitment simultaneously feels like a year ago and yesterday thanks to the pandemic, it’s time once again to flex our fantastic features to our future physiology family.

Erica Avery
1st Year Graduate Student

As with everything else in our lives that has been completely transformed by the pandemic, recruitment of new students to the Cellular and Molecular Physiology PhD program is no exception. The process will look a little different this year, but that doesn’t mean that we still can’t show the prospective students what the Physiology Department is all about. There may not be a happy hour for members of the department to stop by during an incubation step in a protocol, juxtaposing the sight of recruits shaking hands in their final interview suits with current lab members in their sweatspants and active wear with ties clipped to their belts (where the new students will soon find themselves). Regardless, it’s impossible for the eccentric and diverse personalities, engaging scientific minds, and collaborative atmosphere to go unnoticed.

Despite our unmatchable qualities, it will be a challenge without the eight recruits physically on-campus to get a sense for themselves what everyday life is like in the physiology department, thus we as a community are called to work harder to help do just that. With Dylan Sarver, Brittni Moore, and Mackenzie Kui at the helm, there’s no doubt we’ll be able to communicate enough of what the recruits need to realize we can be their new home.

Most of the recruitment day will be interviews with various faculty, interrupted with a tour and break. The latter part of the day will conclude with our usual “elevator pitches” from lab members and Zoom social time with current students to replace the usual socialization at the bar, student lunch, and department happy hour. When I personally interviewed for CMP, the Claypool lab was honestly not on the top of my list for a rotation, but not only did I rotate, I joined. I have my PI to thank for convincing me that mitochondria were more than just the powerhouse of the cell and looking back, I know I ended up where I meant to be. We can’t wait to meet the scientists who will join our ranks (and what nicknames our custodian Reggie will give them.)

A Physiology Farewell

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

“Seems like it wasn’t so long ago when I used to get excited every time I turned a corner because I always ended up in a different building. I will miss the space in second-floor Hunterian that I called home for the past five years. It has been joy interacting and working with the people in the Physiology Department, who have all been incredibly supportive. I am grateful to have met all of you!”

-Dr. Michelle Acoba

“Michelle was such an easy graduate student to mentor. I all needed to do was give space and order things that she needed; Michelle did the rest! Such a smart, hard-working, invested, organized, and humble young scientist. Feel extraordinarily lucky to have worked with you for the past 5 or so years. Wish we could continue doing so, but I know it is time for Dr. Acoba to climb the academic ladder. Maybe I can work in the Acoba lab when I retire!”

-Dr. Steven Claypool

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!

Michelle’s virtual lab celebration for her thesis defense.

“i am originally from Aylmer, Ontario, Canada. I received my PhD in 2020 from the University of Saskatchewan, Canada. My PhD research investigated the role of copper in the Alzheimer’s disease brain and how copper might be targeted using copper chelating drugs. I am very much looking forward to joining the Lutsenko lab and the department as a new fellow.”

-Dr. Michelle Acoba

“Psam has helped many rural villages dig wells to eliminate poverty and hunger, improving literacy, and combatting water-related diseases. The organization’s exam prep program has tripled the passing rate for sixth-grade students on the country’s national exam. Psam has helped many rural villages dig wells to access clean, drinking water.”

-Photo courtesy of Kelly Summers

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!

Michelle Acoba graduates, heads off to postdoc at UT Southwestern

Welcome to the Team

Partings are such sweet sorrow, but new co-workers and friends are joining the Physiology Department as well!
"Any department personnel associated or news with a short description of a platform talk at their annual meeting. The award is to recognize excellence in biophysics research.

James Osei-Owusu, sixth-year graduate student also in Dr. Qiu's lab, won the Biophysical Society (BPS) Travel Award. Dr. Qiu described the award as "an honor to receive and a testament to the hard work and dedication of our students." The fellowship was awarded to Ljubica for being an outstanding junior researcher in the field of biophysics.

Ljubica Mihaljevic, fourth-year graduate student in Dr. Qiu's lab, won the Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds (BfF) PhD fellowship. The fellowship is awarded to students who are planning to pursue a career in research.

The Rao lab rounds the department off with a pair of papers, the first about the effects of acetyl-coenzyme A (CoA) on glucose homeostasis and the second about the role of microRNA-21 in reversing EMT in breast cancer.

Dylan Sarver's research connections at University of Michigan are still proving fruitful with a paper in the Journal of Clinical Investigation.

Alex Maya-Romero, post-baccalaureate fellow of the Claypool lab published an essay for The American Society grad student and postdoc blog on the importance of access to education for people with disabilities. The essay was co-authored by Physiology’s own Anna Moyer, a sixth-year graduate student in the lab of Dr. Qiu.

Svetlana Lutsenko and other copper experts were cited by the Washington Post for their work on the benefits of copper-containing masks as an anti-COVID measure.

Erica Avery, fifth-year graduate student of the Claypool lab published an essay for the American Chemical Society grad student and postdoc blog on the importance of mental health.

Society for Cell Biology entitled "What Are Post-Baccalaureate Programs?" to educators about the benefits of such programs.

Mihaljevic, fourth-year graduate student in Dr. Qiu’s lab, won the Biophysical Society (BPS) Travel Award for a platform talk at their annual meeting. The award is to recognize excellence in biophysics research and promote greater interaction among biophysicists throughout the world.

Congratulations to Qi’s lab for dominating awards and fellowships! We’re all proud of you!"