

Rising Stars of Research 2008

A personal look at the national undergraduate science research poster competition

BY LUKE GOVIA

From all across Canada they arrived. Selected from over 400 applicants, the 90 undergraduates, dubbed Canada's "Rising Stars of Research", descended on the University of British Columbia campus from 21–24 August to attend the inaugural Rising Stars of Research National Undergraduate Science Research Poster Competition, held jointly by the University of British Columbia (UBC), Simon Fraser University (SFU) and the University of Victoria (UVic). The competition brought together students from all areas of science and engineering, allowing them the chance to display their research to a wider public audience.

Day one began with an evening reception, where we were introduced to our hosts, Sven Clarke and Jenny Phelps of UBC, and those responsible for making Rising Stars a reality. We were also introduced to several UBC graduate students who talked to us about graduate school and our research.

Day two was hectic with scheduled events spanning the entire day. After breakfast, we headed over to UBC's Life Sciences Centre to set up our posters, which seemed to be roughly arranged by topic, with the posters seemingly related to physics placed together. Before judging began, we were treated to an engaging speech by Professor Bob Hancock of UBC on manipulating our innate immunity to counteract infections.

Finally, the moment of truth arrived, and it was time for the poster competition. We spent the next two hours showing our posters to the judges and any other interested parties. It was an eye-opening learning experience and a great taste of what the future holds for many of us. It was also amazing to see the wide variety of posters on show, with topics from river fish in Trinidad to 1+1 dimensional universes.

Although we were quite physically and mentally drained, the afternoon of day two was spent touring the many research centres on the UBC campus. That evening the gala event of Rising Stars was held: the awards banquet. We were treated to a fine dinner, a talk by glaciologist Dr. Gwenn Flowers of SFU, and congratulations from all the sponsors. The awards were grouped into two categories, with physics falling into the Discovery division. Of the physics-related posters, Michael Yee (University of Toronto) received an honourable mention.

Day three of Rising Stars began with a workshop on applying to graduate school, and the rest of the day was spent touring Vancouver, SFU or UVic. Day four was departure day, with a tour of either TRIUMF or the UBC Museum of Anthro-

pology taking place in the morning. The TRIUMF tour included the cyclotron, the isotope separator and accelerator facilities.

For more information on sponsors and awards, see <http://www.risingstars.ubc.ca>.



COURTESY OF JENNIFER PHELPS

RISING STARS OF RESEARCH 2008 PRIZE WINNERS

FINDER DIVISION

Health sciences, biochemistry and molecular biology.

ERIC ASAVA-AREE (1)

University of British Columbia
The Contribution of T-cells to Intestinal Inflammation and Fibrosis

SANDEEP KOSHY (2)

University of Waterloo
Tropism and Kinetics of VSV Infection

BRETTA RUSSELL-SCHULZ (3)

Memorial University of Newfoundland
Deuterium NMR of N-Terminal SP-B

DISCOVERY DIVISION

Life sciences and psychology, natural resources and the environment, computational sciences and technology, physical and earth sciences.

GARETH HOPKINS (1)

University of Northern British Columbia
Temptations of Weevil: Feeding and Ovipositional Preferences of Hylobius Warreni Wood on Bark in Laboratory Bioassays

JOSHUA AMIEL (2)

Dalhousie University
Physiological and Behavioural Adaptations of the Eastern Ribbonsnake to Cold Climates

LYNDSEY BAILLIE (3)

Dalhousie University
Genetic Structure of Trinidadian Guppy Populations