Congratulations, Class of 2012!

Akshat Arneja
**Benjamin Best
Kythie Boyd
Nathan Buerkle
Justin Campagna
Elizabeth Chappuis
Jennifer Chavez
Kyle Christensen
Sarah Condon
Nicholas Erickson
Jaclyn Essig
**Katherine Ferguson
Zi Gong
John Hartberg
Brian Hodge
Cassandra Hosfield
David Hottman
Sofiya Hupalo
**Carley Karsten
Esther Kearney
** - Summa cum laude

Kyle LeBlanc
Pablo Leitzman
Scott Luisi
Tsuleng Lyfoung
Bhavana Nallamothu
Erick North
David Pachuta
Travis Panneck
Spencer Printen
**Krishna Pundi
Tyler Rehbein
Kathryn Reise
Gabriel Rodriguez
Amara Sankhagowit
Jasvinder Singh
Lauren Smith
Shane Smith
Edward Stronge
MatthewTracy
Lynn Wang
William Wang

Off to Medical School
Ben Best will be attending the Medical School of Wisconsin.

Krishna Pundi will be going to the Medical School at the University of Pennsylvania. He was a community engagement scholar at the U.

Tyler Rehbein won’t be going very far, attending the University of Minnesota Medical School.

Lauren Smith will enroll at the University of Maryland Medical School.

On to a PhD in Neuroscience!
Kyle Christensen will be pursuing a PhD at Michigan State University.

Sofiya Hupalo is off to the University of Wisconsin-Madison for her PhD. At the U, she was a Tsang-Weatherbee Merit Scholar, a Dean’s Scholar and the winner of a Gold National Scholarship.

Carley Karsten will be enrolled in the neuroscience program at UC Irvine.

Off to work!
Nick Erickson will be employed in the Department of Pediatric Surgery at the U. He will be conducting research on the enteric nervous system and specifically the role that glial cells play in multiple gastrointestinal diseases. He plans to apply to Medical School in the fall next year.

Katherine Ferguson will be doing Specialty Care at Abbott Northwestern Hospital. She was admitted to Phi Beta Kappa with Spanish as her language.

Edward Stronge will be employed as a lab tech in the Arlotta laboratory at Harvard. An MD/PhD program is in the future.

Alumni News

Jenny Reifel Saltzberg ’00 says “It’s always good to hear from everyone at the U.” She graduated in 2000 in the second class of Neuroscience students and fondly remembers her time in Dr. Flanders lab.

She then went to medical school at UCLA and completed a residency in Emergency Medicine at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit. She just finished an International Emergency Medicine fellowship and MPH at University of Maryland and is continuing to work clinically as an Assistant Professor at the University of Maryland.

Jessie Luoma ’03 reports that she received her PhD from the Neuroscience program at the Univ of MN in the winter of 2010. Currently, she is a postdoc at Stanford Univ with Tom Sudhof and Lu Chen.
Melissa (Wayne) Engel ’04 has lots of news: “I graduated in 2004. My current update is I went to Medical School at the University of Minnesota and graduated in 2008. I completed my pediatric residency at the Children’s Hospital of The King’s Daughters in Norfolk, VA (2008-2011). Currently I am working as a Board Certified General Pediatrician until I start my Neonatology fellowship at the University of Minnesota in August 2012.

I married my Medical School sweetheart on January 30th, 2009 and we have one son, Henry, born May 6th, 2011.

Hopefully you hear from others!”

Tate Winter ’04 reports: “After completing my PhD (Dec 2010) in Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of Minnesota, as well a postdoctoral position (U of MN), I will be joining (May 2012) Boston Scientific’s Pharmaceutical R&D Division in my hometown of Maple Grove, MN.”

Dan Mark ’06 has a busy life. He has a newborn son and a two-year-old daughter and he will be graduating very soon from New York Medical College and starting his pediatric residency at MUSC Children’s Hospital in Charleston, SC. Congratulations!

Sarah Rustad ’06 graduated from medical school at Saba University School of Medicine, on 09/02/11, and will be starting residency this June with University of Minnesota Family Medicine Residency Program at Eastridge Clinic, Mankato. Congratulations!

Narayan Kissoon ’07 finished medical school and started residency at Mayo Clinic Rochester in Neurology. “I continue to do clinical research and am working with Alejandro Rabinstein, MD, investigating SAH and peripartum stroke.”

Tom Meyer ’07 spent 2 years working for R&D Systems, before matriculating to law school in 2009. He is graduating from Hamline this month and plans to practice intellectual property law.

Carmen Avendano ’08 is starting her 3rd year of medical school in Hackensack NJ at the Hackensack Hospital after spending the first two years in the Caribbean (Grenada). She writes “So far I am loving the program! I have learned and experienced a lot. Missing you guys!!! Hope it’s a great year! ”

Stephanie Buchanan ’08 writes “I will be graduating from medical school in 28 days [at the time of writing] (but who’s counting?). I will graduate with an M.D. from the Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine, then I will be starting my general surgery residency in Columbus, OH.” Congratulations Stephanie!

Ken Dodd ’08 writes “I will graduate from the U of MN Medical School on 5/4/12. During my time there I was elected into the Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honor Society and the Gold Humanism Honor Society. I am thrilled to be spending the next 5 years at Hennepin County Medical Center as resident physician in the combined Emergency Medicine & Internal Medicine program.” Congratulations Ken!

Rima Chakraborty ’09 is in her second year at UMKC-SOM. She recently presented at Experimental Biology April 2012 at San Diego. This summer she will be working at Mayo-Rochester for a summer internship. “Besides that, rotations will begin August 2012 for me and nothing new otherwise.”

Keta Desai ’09 is entering her fourth and final year at the U of Minnesota School of Dentistry. She can’t wait to graduate with her D.D.S. and start putting what she has learned into clinical practice.

David Horn ’09 reports: “Last year I got accepted to the Medical College of Wisconsin to get my medical degree, and I am now finishing up my first year. You might be happy to know that I have a 98.5% score in my medical neuroscience course. I can say happily that you have all contributed significantly to my current scientific success. Also, I am getting married this summer (to a biochemist, no less). Life is good, and I have no complaints.” Editor’s note: Can anyone beat that score? Top score wins a prize – but don’t get too excited- it’s a virtual plaque! I am tentatively awarding it to David, but anyone else who gets even close qualifies.

Nick Sausen ’09 completed his second year of medical school at UMN. He’s currently working with West African Medical Missions to develop health education programs for students in Sierra Leone

Charles R. Vasquez ’09 writes “Here is a brief update on what I am doing. I am currently finishing my third year of medical school at UCLA. After this year, I will be taking a leave of absence to participate in the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) Medical Research Fellows Program. I will be working in the
laboratory of Dr. William Kaelin, an investigator at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute at Harvard University. My project will focus on identifying and characterizing a novel oncogene in renal cell carcinoma."

Desiree Abu-Odeh '10 will be completing an M.A. in Bioethics here at the U this spring. She will start a M.P.H. program in Sociomedical Sciences this fall at Columbia's Mailman School of Public Health.

Jessica Bedi '10 reports "I am applying to medical school, and run a chiropractic clinic now. I am going on a medical mission trip to the Dominican Republic in August. FYI, it's amazing how much neuroscience I use at the clinic and how often the neurologists are impressed with my knowledge (even though I feel like I don't know much!)."

Tom Bedor '10 left a lab job at Tufts University to pursue a master's from the U of M's Bioinformatics and Computational Biology program.

Shannon Boyle '10 joined Teach for America last year and has spent the past 9 months teaching high school biology in rural Alabama.

Omar Cespedes-Gomez '10 just got his position as a Junior Scientist extended for one more year at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in a Cellular and Molecular Biochemistry Laboratory in Minneapolis, MN. He will be applying to Medical School this summer.

Rajas Kale '10 reports: "I hope all is going well. It gives me great pleasure to inform you that I have recently changed employment and now work for the Mayo Clinic in Rochester MN. I am part of Dr. Kendall Lee's lab as well as Dr. Doo-Sup Choi's lab. I am under the guidance of Dr. Osama Abluseoud and we are working to understand the therapeutic effects of Deep Brain Stimulation on alcoholism when modulating certain neurotransmitters in specific parts of the brain. We are using alcohol preferring rats in our research and expect to see a depreciation in addictive behaviors and withdrawal effects when under stimulation. I am also taking part in a growing number of other projects and will be attending the Society of Neuroscience Conference in New Orleans this Fall."

Kacey Rajkovich '10 sent a long letter after the first edition of this newsletter went to press. She writes: "Long time no see! Thank you so much for sending out these newsletters. It's always nice to read about what my former classmates are up to these days, although I keep in touch with most of them. :)"

Currently, I'm finishing up my second year at UT-Southwestern, the neuroscience PhD program of course. I work in the Kim Huber/ Jay Gibson lab studying circuit specificity and development in the neocortex, in the context of synapse elimination - or lack thereof - in autism mouse models. In the lab I developed an optical technique using glutamate uncaging and laser scanning photostimulation to construct synaptic maps of sensory circuits. I'm the only person south of the Mason-Dixon line to do stuff like this because Jay and Kim are so great! And who wouldn't love going to work if they felt like they were driving a spaceship every day with lasers and amplifiers and oscilloscopes!? :) In 9 days I have my qualifying defense, so needless to say, I'm sitting in a coffee shop drinking multiple espresso shots and reading like a mad woman. Honestly, that about sums up my life for the last year or so..."

Anna Schnurrer Steffan '10 has had a busy year! "Here's an update on my life: I have been working on this schizophrenia study for the Dept of Psychiatry for the last year. I got married January 2012, and I will be starting medical school this coming fall at the U."

Matt Goodmanson '11 will be starting medical school at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine.

Editor's Note
I'm enjoying my retirement here in the Berkshires – so much so that this will be my last newsletter. However, I hope you will all keep in touch and if you are ever in western Massachusetts, do drop by.