



**BIOMEDICAL
RESEARCH
VICTORIA**

INNOVATING FOR HEALTH



Future Scientists Take the Stage



Cancer, chronic disease, therapeutic drug synthesis – it's impossible to know where the bright young minds that presented at last Friday's UROP Conference Day are destined to make a difference. But one thing that's certain is that these budding researchers are only just getting started.

This successful event, run by Biomedical Research Victoria, hosted over 70 students, supervisors and visitors and was held at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. Scholars gave short presentations on the research they had completed through the CSL-sponsored UROP program at one of many institutions around Victoria, including, for the first time, Geelong's Deakin University.

Keynote speaker Jaclyn Pearson from the Doherty Institute provided a treat as she shared her inspirational, successful – yet somewhat unconventional – journey to academic fame. UROP scholars were eager to ask Pearson about her academic career and pick her brain for tips as they overlooked the Yarra River in the conference foyer during morning tea.



Jaclyn Pearson (left) mingled with students after her keynote address.

Associate Professor Eugene Maraskovsky, Head of the Cell Biology and Physiology department within CSL Research at the Bio21 Institute, warmly welcomed the new 2016 UROP cohort and presented the students with pins and certificates.

As the day drew to a close, CSL's Pierre Scotney admitted the high standard of presentations made picking the best presenters a difficult task for him and fellow judges Mitchell Lawrence (Monash University) and Mirana Ramialison (ARMI). But the awards for the most outstanding computational and biomedical presentations went to Edmund Lau (VLSCI) and Christina Gangemi (ARMI), with runners-up Max Plumley (Monash University) and Stefan Saggese (ARMI) coming in at a close second.



UROP scholar Nicole Page (left) presented her work conducted at Deakin University and CSL's Pierre Scotney awarded the best presentations at the event's conclusion (right).

The students' professionalism in their presentations and confidence in their projects were a testament to the great science that UROP placements continue to yield.

Yet more evidence came to light as we learned a paper co-authored by UROP alumni **Naomi Cohen** had been accepted in the prestigious journal *Nature*. Her work on the evolution of the fin-to-limb transition of zebrafish during her UROP placement at ARMI under Wouter Masselink and Peter Currie is published in today's issue of *Nature*. We would like to congratulate her for this outstanding achievement and wish her much success for the future.

"I owe so much to UROP," said Cohen. "Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to be a part of such interesting research!"

With the next round of UROP student applications opening on August 1, we're excited to see what talent will next pass through our doors.

Exposure to Research Excellence

Organisational representatives from across Victoria's health and medical research community congregated in Melbourne last Friday to entice the next generation of biomedical researchers to a career in cutting-edge science.

The 2016 Victorian Honours & PhD Expo, hosted by Biomedical Research Victoria, saw researchers meet prospective research students over refreshments in a professional but relaxed environment.

Proud to see interest for this event reach a peak this year, we had the pleasure of hosting exhibitors from 20 Victorian universities, hospitals and institutes, including UROP's principal sponsor CSL. Over 100 attendees were drawn to the sold out event, held at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.



Students who attended the expo were eager to enquire about research opportunities.

Many of our promising UROP scholars attended the expo following the 2016 UROP Conference Day and surveys revealed more than half of attending students are currently completing the third year of their undergraduate degree. We are confident that new contacts created at this event will help launch Victoria's best and brightest into the research world.

With overwhelmingly positive feedback from exhibitors and participants alike, we're already looking forward to bringing you next year's expo.

New Engagement Manager Joins BioMedVic

If you attended either event featured in this newsletter my face will already be familiar to you, but I would like to take this opportunity to formally introduce myself as Biomedical Research Victoria's new Engagement Manager. Having recently taken the reins of both UROP and the VCRN, I am thrilled to pick up from an impressive legacy left behind by Dr Udani Ratnayake.

My background is in research and science communication, and my passion for biomedical research is long-standing. After investigating the dynamics of therapeutic drugs through computer simulations at the University of NSW, I became enticed by the atomic detail of the human body. Melbourne's research infrastructure drew me to La Trobe University, where I embarked on a PhD project in protein crystallography.

A zealous communicator of research, I have since delved into the world of science journalism and writing as contributor to popular science magazine Cosmos and writer for a number of Nature-affiliated publications. I am now excited by the opportunity to bring my experience in research and communication to Biomedical Research Victoria.

I look forward to working with you towards better opportunities for up and coming biomedical researchers and stronger biomedical and clinical researcher networks across Victoria. I also very much look forward to meeting you in the near future.

Dr Viviane Richter



UROP Round 2 Opens

We are pleased to announce 2016's second UROP round as open from **August 01 until August 16, 5 pm.**

We would currently like to invite potential supervisors to complete the project form and send it to urop@biomedvic.org.au.

Interested in being a UROP student? Please submit your application to our [online application system](#). Good luck!

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