

The DEAN'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the March edition of our eNewsletter. We are grateful to have this opportunity to communicate with our alumni and friends on a regular basis and share some of the wonderful things we've been doing here at the college.

Last month, the college held its first annual "Three Minute Thesis" (3MT) event, where graduate students presented their theses in just three minutes before a panel of judges. It allowed students to practice summarizing and presenting their findings to a non-specialized audience. Thirty-three CPMS students presented their theses, with two being chosen to advance to the university-wide competition. One of the CPMS finalists, physics and astronomy graduate student Conrad Rosenbrock, took second place in the university competition and won \$2,500. He is a PhD candidate researching computational models for novel material classification and discovery.

Recently we held our annual college awards banquet to honor our outstanding faculty and staff members for the excellent work they do within the college.

Four faculty members and one administrative staff member received college awards recognizing their accomplishments. Jim Logan of the Departments of Mathematics and Mathematics Education was awarded the Outstanding Staff/Administrative Employee Award.



Both Randy Skinner of the Department of Geological Sciences and Scott Bergeson of the Department of Physics & Astronomy were acknowledged for their excellence in teaching and classroom instruction; Randy as a faculty member here fewer than 10 years and Scott as a faculty member here for 10 or more years.

Daniel Ess, who joined the faculty of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry in 2010, was awarded the Faculty Young Scholar Award, and Del Scott received the Distinguished Citizenship Award for his work with the Department of Statistics over the past 40 years.



In addition, seven faculty and staff members received University Service Awards, which are based off years of service to the university. Awards were given to Sue Mortensen (5 yrs., Chemistry and Biochemistry), John Ellsworth (10 yrs., Physics and Astronomy), Jeff Farrer (10 yrs., Physics and Astronomy), Jeannette Lawler (15 yrs., Physics and Astronomy), Bart Whitehead (25 yrs., Chemistry and Biochemistry), Kelly Jensen (35 yrs., Chemistry and Biochemistry), and Nan Ah You (40 yrs., Physics and Astronomy).

It's always a pleasure to be able to highlight the efforts and achievements of our many accomplished faculty and staff members. As we strive to perform cutting-edge research and provide students with a world-class education here in the college, the majority of the responsibility falls on this group of diligent men and women, and they always respond admirably.

Without their hard work and dedication, I'm not quite sure where we would be. We are thankful for their service, and we are also thankful to you for being a part of our college family and for your continued support.

.....→ **Scott Sommerfeldt, Dean**

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From Mice to Men



Dr. Capecchi is currently a professor of human genetics at the University of Utah School of Medicine.

Distinguished geneticist Dr. Mario Capecchi spoke at the Izatt-Christensen Lectures about his research that led to a Nobel Prize.

In the next few decades, scientists may be able to eradicate genetic human disease. Dr. Mario R. Capecchi, Nobel laureate and current professor of human genetics at the University of Utah School of Medicine, spoke on gene targeting and disease modeling at the 2014 Izatt-Christensen Lecture on January 24.

Capecchi won the Nobel Prize in 2007 along with his co-researchers, Sir Martin J. Evans and Oliver Smithies, for their work with "knockout genes." This research allows scientists to effectively "turn off" a gene in a mouse to study which parts of development or adult function are affected.

"In terms of gene content, we're 99.9 percent the same," Capecchi said. "Whatever we learn in a mouse is likely to be directly applicable to humans."

Through the use of mice, Capecchi's lab is able to gain greater insight into genetic disease that could directly affect the development of more effective therapies in the future.

"The technology he was talking about was so far beyond what I had known to be possible," said Joryn Boehme, a physiology and developmental biology major from Rolla, Missouri, who attended the lecture. "His technology is revolutionary. Once he perfects what he's doing with mice, we can correct faulty genes in humans. That will change the world."

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[Read more of this story and watch the lecture.](#)

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