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Graduate Student Awards in Chemistry and Chemical Biology

Ann Arbor, Michigan – The first awards under a collaboration between Pfizer Inc. and the Departments of Chemistry, Medicinal Chemistry and the Center for Chemical Genomics (CCG) at the University of Michigan were announced today. The awards highlight the importance of an interdisciplinary graduate education and the unique opportunities at the interface of chemistry and biology.

Graduate students within the U-M's contributing academic units who have made important contributions to the field of chemistry and chemical biology are eligible. Entrants are nominated by their research advisor and the winners receive \$500 with an opportunity to present their research findings at Pfizer's Ann Arbor campus. Nominations for next year's awards will be solicited in August 2007.

The 2006 winners are:

Myra B. Bertrand, Department of Chemistry, Advisor: John Wolfe. Bertrands's research efforts have been directed towards the development of new Pd-catalyzed reactions for the synthesis of pyrrolidines. This new chemistry has permitted her asymmetric total synthesis of the natural product, preussin. Her outstanding work has resulted in a number of recent publications.

Jenifer K. Lum, Medicinal Chemistry, Advisor: Anna Mapp. In Professor Mapp's laboratory, Lum spearheaded the development of functional assays to define the activity of artificial transcriptional activators. She has used this experimental platform to explore the structural requirements for potent stimulation. These important insights will facilitate the exogenous control of cellular transcriptional programs and lead to new opportunities for regulating gene expression.

Chris Evelyn, CCG User Group, Advisor: Rick Neubig. Evelyn developed a cell-based, high throughput screen (HTS) to uncover inhibitors of the Rho-GEF, LARG, which has been implicated in cancer. His efforts have yielded two interesting compounds that might provide insights into the role of this pathway in oncogenesis.

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Links:

Department of Chemistry: <http://www.umich.edu/~michchem/index.html>

Interdepart. Program in Medicinal Chemistry: <http://www.umich.edu/~pharmacy/MedChem>.

Center for Chemical Genomics: <http://www.lsi.umich.edu/institute/labs/ccg/index.html>