



December 21, 2007

Three PhDs Awarded to UMBI Graduate Students



(back, left to right) Ph.D. graduates Jinjun Kan, Naglaa Mohamed and Kui Wang; (front, left to right) advisors Russell Hill, Feng Chen.

Three UMBI graduate students received their PhDs at the Winter Commencement ceremonies held at College Park in December. UMBI, the biotechnology institution of the University System of Maryland (USM). UMBI is not a degree-granting institution, but collaborates with numerous laboratories, both with and outside of USM. Having three PhDs awards based on UMBI

research at one time is an extraordinary achievement. This underscores the importance of cooperative research programs, both for training of future scientists and for the advancement of scientific research.

Naglaa Mohamed enrolled in the MEES program at the University of Maryland College Park in August 2003 and pursued her research in Dr. Russell Hill's laboratory at UMBI's Center of Marine Biotechnology (COMB), focusing on the ecology and physiology of microbial communities associated with marine sponges. The research was part of a large study of the microbial communities of marine sponges of the class Demospongiae in Key Largo, Florida, funded by the National Science Foundation Microbial Observatories Program. Her findings contributed to the field of sponge microbiology by clarifying the roles of symbionts and interactions with their sponge hosts. Dr. Mohamed seeks a postdoctoral position in the field of marine natural products, and plans to establish her own academic research laboratory.

Jinjun Kan enrolled in the MEES program at the University of Maryland College Park in January 2001 and pursued his research in Dr. Feng Chen's laboratory at COMB. His research focused on the genetic diversity, population dynamics and environmental proteomics of naturally occurring bacterial assemblages in the Chesapeake Bay. Dr. Kan currently works in Dr. Ken Nealson's laboratory at the University of Southern California. His postdoctoral projects include the characterization of the bacterial community composition and function in microbial

fuel cells, metagenomics in Yellow Stone Lake and investigation of microbial life in extreme environments.



(left to right) Ph.D. graduate Kui Wang; advisor Feng Chen; UMBI's COMB Director Yoni Zohar; Ph.D. graduate Naglaa Mohamed; advisor Russell Hill; Ph.D. graduate Jinjun Kan.

Kui Wang enrolled in the MEES program at the University of Maryland College Park in January 2001 and pursued his research in Dr. Feng Chen's laboratory at COMB. His research focused on the biology and ecology of cyanobacteria (*Synechococcus* spp.) and their viruses in the Chesapeake Bay. Dr. Wang has broad interests in the ecological interactions between bacteria and their viruses

in aquatic environments and has published or coauthored more than ten research papers in the field of microbial ecology. Dr. Wang will continue working in the field of environmental microbiology.

With research centers in Baltimore, Rockville, and College Park, the University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute is the newest of 13 institutions forming the University System of Maryland. UMBI has more than 60 ladder-ranked faculty and a 2007 budget of \$59 million. Celebrating the institution's 20th year of service to Maryland and the world, UMBI is led by microbiologist and former biotechnology executive Dr. Jennie C. Hunter-Cevera. For more information visit www.umbi.umd.edu.

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