Biochemistry Postdocs Drive Today and Tomorrow’s Discoveries

Postdoctoral scholars are a highly valued community in the department. These dedicated scientists are tomorrow’s career researchers and faculty members. They are integral to the successful and important research taking place in our laboratories by pursuing independent research and mentoring graduate and undergraduate students. The department is able to support one postdoctoral fellow each year with an award made possible by gifts.

Boyer Award for Postdoctoral Excellence in Biochemistry

Paul Delos Boyer is a native of Provo, Utah where he graduated from Brigham Young University in 1939. He was a graduate student in the UW–Madison Department of Biochemistry and finished his Ph.D. in 1943. After 17 years as a faculty member at the University of Minnesota, he moved to UCLA where he became founding director of their Molecular Biology Institute. He studied enzymes throughout his career and served as editor of the multi-volume treatise “The Enzymes.”

Boyer’s achievements have been recognized in many awards such as the Nobel Prize in Chemistry, the Rose Award from the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and American Chemical Society Award in Enzyme Chemistry.

Started in 1998, this award recognizes a postdoctoral researcher for his or her excellence in research, and highlights postdoctoral scientists with promise as future leaders. The postdoc awardee then gives a lecture on his or her research in the Boyer Award for Postdoctoral Excellence in Biochemistry Lecture Series.

“I joined the department in 2010 to be a postdoc in the lab of Professor Judith Kimble. Receiving the Boyer Award was a fantastic honor both on a personal and professional level. Personally, it meant that my peers and mentors in Biochemistry recognized my efforts as a scientist. Professionally, the award gave me something special to include in my experiences as I apply for jobs. I will be able to leave the department well prepared for my future.”

— Scott Aoki, 2016 awardee

After finishing her postdoc in the lab of Professor Alan Attie working on the biochemistry of diabetes, 2015 awardee Melkam Kebede is now a lab manager at the University of Sydney in Australia.

After his postdoc with Professor Marv Wickens, Zak Campbell, 2013 awardee, has gone on to be an assistant professor of biological sciences at the University of Texas at Dallas.

Building a Thriving Community

Postdoctoral training is an important step in a modern scientific career. The department is able to foster a community of young scientists through the help of generous gifts, and we are always trying to build our capacity in this area beyond this single award. Our postdocs are moving us forward by being the future of science.
View from the connecting sky bridge. clockwise from left: HF DeLuca Biochemistry Building (1912 and 1937 buildings), 1998 HF DeLuca Biochemistry Laboratories (center), 2010 HF DeLuca Biochemical Sciences Building (right).

Photo by Robin Davies