Graduate Student Meridith Robins Receives Enoch Gordis Research Recognition Award

July 6, 2017 - Meridith Robins, a doctoral student in the Department of Medicinal Chemistry and Molecular Pharmacology working in the laboratory of Dr. Richard Van Rijn, is the recipient of the Enoch Gordis Research Recognition Award. This award is named after Enoch Gordis, MD, a former director of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA). This award is given by the Research Society on Alcoholism and the NIAAA in recognition of outstanding biomedical and psychosocial research among early career members of RSA.

Each year, six graduate students and six postdoctoral researchers are selected from a competitive application pool as Enoch Gordis finalists in early spring. Each finalist is then prompted to prepare a 10-minute oral research talk and poster to present at the Research Society on Alcoholism meeting that summer. During these sessions, the finalists are judged for several criteria including quality, scientific merit, and effective oral presentation of the results. Students are solely judged on their poster presentations while postdoctoral students are judged on both the talk and poster presentations. While the oral presentations are not scored for the students, this provides an excellent opportunity to present at a national conference.

For the conference, Meridith presented her work entitled “Critical role of Gi-protein signaling in the dorsal striatum in the reduction of voluntary alcohol intake in C57Bl/6 mice” where she was selected as one of the two winners from the student category. The presented data suggests that selective activation of Gi-coupled G-protein Coupled Receptors expressed in the dorsal striatum, such as activation of dorsal striatal delta-opioid receptors by biased G-protein agonist, can decrease alcohol intake through both pharmacologic and chemogenetic strategies and thus provides a novel drug development avenue for alcohol use disorders.

Meridith’s attendance in this conference was supported by a Student Merit Award from RSA and the Logan Travel Grant from Purdue University.
Meridith working in the lab (2014)