

YOUNG INVESTIGATORS EARN RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT

Matt Alexander, a PhD candidate with Geisel's Molecular and Cellular Biology (MCB) Program, is the third Dartmouth scholar in as many years to win a \$10,000 award for melanoma research at the Norris Cotton Cancer Center.

Alexander follows in the footsteps of Geisel researchers Eleanor Clancy-Thompson (2012) and Katelyn Byrne (2011) in earning one of the coveted Research Scholar Awards with which the Joanna M. Nicolay Melanoma Foundation supports exceptional graduate students annually.

"Competing for funding is so critical to research that developing those skills is as important as skills in the lab," says Alexander, who was among 44 applicants for one of this year's 10 awards. "And recognition and support at this nascent stage of a science career is gratifying and incredibly helpful for career development."

Alexander's research has identified a novel way to combine the melanoma-inhibiting drug vemurafenib and vaccine-based immune therapy in a way that has the potential to strengthen the immune response to metastatic melanoma, thus improving outcomes for patients. He will use the award funds to further this research.

Like Clancy-Thompson before him, Alexander is working in the laboratory of David Mullins, an assistant professor of microbiology and immunology. Byrne had conducted cancer research in the lab of associate professor Mary Jo Turk.

"These awards demonstrate the high quality of our graduate research partners, who come to Dartmouth from outstanding undergraduate programs," Mullins says. "The awards also reflect the strength of our mentoring here, which is key to attracting outstanding students."

Just ask Alexander, who after earning his biology degree from Saint Michael's College in his native Vermont did research at the University of Vermont.

"Dartmouth has world-class research, and the scientific environment here allows me to receive the same level of training available at the best institutions in the country," says Alexander. "Dr. Mullins's mentorship epitomizes the supportive atmosphere characteristic of Geisel as a whole, and his guidance is as much a part of my progress as my own efforts."

DAVID CORRIVEAU

Mark Washburn



Matt Alexander, a PhD student in Geisel's Molecular and Cellular Biology Program, is the recipient of a Research Scholar Award from the Joanna M. Nicolay Melanoma Foundation.

Jon Gilbert Fox



HONORING A LEGACY OF SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT

The Robert and Gertrude H. Mertens Scholarship Fund and the Marion Huber Scholarship Fund have helped hundreds of Geisel students over the last four decades. This summer, 29 of the students who currently receive support from the Mertens-Huber Scholarship Funds gathered with Dean Chip Souba at a dinner honoring Jennifer Brock, daughter of Robert and Gertrude Mertens, and her husband Peter. The Brocks have continued the family legacy of philanthropic commitment to the Geisel School and its students. Here, they speak with first-year student and scholarship beneficiary Escar Kusema at the event.