Open Office: Dr. Laurie Raymond on Advising Resources for DMS

By Jenny Sims (G5)

The Office of Advising Resources (OAR), which has provided services from learning assistance to counseling for HMS and HSDM for ten years, has just extended a helping hand to DMS students. We sat down with OAR Director, Dr. Laurie Raymond, as she prepares to take on a new challenge — us.

JS: So how similar is OAR to the Accessible Education Office in GSAS?
LR: It’s spawned from the same idea, but it’s kind of a specialty area when you start to get into helping students with learning, academic, attentional difficulties. One of the things you want to figure out is, how severe is the problem, and then document it by neuro-psych testing, which we send students out to get done by an outside psychologist. The documentation requirements are quite stringent for whether somebody gets extended time on tests or whether they get a separate room or something like that. And it requires a kind of special expertise, which Loring Brinckerhoff has. The other thing that Loring has brought to the office which is helpful — and he’s also been a consultant to some DMS students in the past — is that he often can go in and watch somebody operate, and if it’s in a lab or working in a classroom in a clinical setting, he can often consult and identify problems. When you think about learning disabilities and how people actually function, what you see in testing one day may look very different when somebody’s actually working.

JS: Is the office pretty much limited to helping people who come in with a problem or are you looking to expand?
LR: What’s evolved over the course of the 10 years is that rather than having an office that’s geared toward crisis intervention, it’s more geared toward prevention. What we now try to do more is meet with first-year students, get students who might be worried about transitional study skills — we have an assessment of tools for any student who’s complaining of problems in their courses so we can sort out what kind of learning issues there are. My background is that I’m a psychiatrist, but in this role, I’m an advisor. And the one thing that I’ve learned in this role — I was at University Health Services (UHS) for 5 years or so, I had the opportunity there to see Ph.D. students who came in who were having various problems — but the one thing I’ve learned in having this transition to OAR and working more as an advisor is the degree to which, when someone is not doing well in terms of their learning, they can become depressed secondarily. When I was functioning as a clinical psychiatrist, I would tend to see things through the lens of depression and see that as the primary problem. So this whole experience of seeing people through learning issues gives me a different perspective in terms of the range of symptoms. One big thing we’ve done is that when students have to take Step 1 or Step 2, which are the national licensing boards, that has now become sort of our major area of prevention and intervention...

The more emotional side of things is that — and this applies to DMS students too — is you’re at an age, usually most people are in their mid-twenties up to their thirties, it’s a time in your life where it might be the first time you have a depression when you’ve never had one before, or it’s more severe now that you’re older. The genetic expression of depression occurs in people’s twenties. It’s also a time when they’re dealing with loss in a family — a parent, aunt or grandparent gets ill and dies — for the first time. Also in terms of long-term relationships, it’s a time where a lot of people are getting into more intimate, longer-term commitments and trying to balance a lot of academic stress with all those outside growth issues. And a lot of what I do is helping students when they come in and have those issues — “how do I get all of this done?” Sometimes it can be a time-management issue, sometimes is can be a decision about whether to take “off” time, sometimes requiring or wanting extra support during that time, in which case I can...

In lieu of the soothing lavender facial and Swedish massage you deserve, we bring you an “anti-stress” issue of the Bulletin. We hope you find it therapeutic as you prepare for the holidays!
~Jenny & Cherie
referring to people to UHS or to outside therapists if that’s appropriate… David Cardozo is someone I got to know — I was a tutor in his neuro course for about 3 years, and we worked on some course design for the tutorials. He became the new Dean of Students this past year and asked me if I could extend my advising resources to be available. Before, the way it worked was that Loring Brinckerhoff was available to Dr. Fox, and if he thought a student had a learning issue, he would specifically refer that student to Loring to work with. I think David felt he wanted to expand the access of students to the office so they could come on their own if they wanted to.

JS: So the way you have a structured idea of how to intervene before boards and things — are you looking to have a more structured system for DMS students to come into?

LR: The whole structure of prevention comes from having learned what students need, so I feel like I’m open to if students already have ideas about preventive workshops, any kind of thing, and it’s also making use of people who are available and experienced for example in Ph.D. writing… I’m not yet, because I’ve just started — this’ll be my first fall — I feel like I’m kind of at a data gathering point. But I definitely want to encourage any student in DMS who already has thoughts about what would be helpful, or may have some thoughts about who’s good at — they may have gotten tutoring or help from somebody, and sometimes we’ve done that… I’m glad that DMS is thinking about providing more resources to the students. From where I’m sitting, medical and dental students have very clear, performance kind of hurdles for getting through each year, so students can see very clearly how they’re progressing where they’re having trouble. I think that for DMS students, because you’re working on a thesis, your success is uncertain, the success of your project (nature is fickle), your relationship with your advisor, can all be quite complicated depending on just one person — it all kind of goes against your own personal development at this age where you’re trying to be as independent as possible. It’s a very challenging program. And what I’ve seen, often, is students making the transition from medical training to the Ph.D. program find that the amount of work they have to do internally to sustain themselves and keep themselves going and reassure themselves and deal with self-doubt — it’s much more difficult.

JS: Given that that’s the nature of our problem versus the medical and dental school students, how are you going to go about data gathering? How would you like to find out what you can do?

LR: There could be several approaches. What I did with the medical school is just to work with students and get a sense after having worked for several months with students getting a clear idea of what are the phases of the Ph.D. training where there can be extra support. So for example, the medical school equivalent is that there’s a big shift when you go from the classroom into the wards. I would imagine there’s another big shift in the DMS program where you go from the classroom and qualifying exams into the lab and your thesis. Particularly what I noticed at UHS was that the third year of a thesis tends to be your crunch year, and it’s the time when you’re asking yourself, “Is this really going to work, am I going to have something, when am I going to get out of here, will I have enough to actually write a thesis?” And that can be a time when there’s a real need for support. I want to be open to, if students want to have a focus group, and it may be department specific, any way in which I can get more informed myself or be of help in advocating for more support for students in specific areas …Something I have learned which amazed me is just how wide the scatter is. You’ve got people at Charlestown MGH, you’ve got people at MIT, people at the hospitals — it’s a really wide scatter.

JS: So if a DMS student now were looking for some help, if they have an attention issue that they know about or think they might have one, or depression and know they need help to work through it — should they just walk through your door?

LR: Yup, just walk in the door.

JS: I know a major concern for a Ph.D. student who realizes they have any of these issues is going to be how to deal with that with their boss. Do you see yourself having any role in resolving that?

LR: Well, my policy of confidentiality that I use with medical and dental students is that, because I’m not a clinical entity, it’s not a complete firewall. But I certainly understand, and I think it’s an even more sensitive issue when you’re working with a thesis — a boss in a lab who’s your thesis mentor — that’s a very delicate relationship, and students are going to want to maintain privacy about their issues. If it’s something where the thesis mentor has sent the student, first to David and David says, “I think this person needs to see Laurie,” what I would say to the student first is, “This is a situation in which you were sent. I understand that there are many things you may talk to me about that you are not going to want to share back.” I’ve done a lot of this with medical and dental students. What I do with the student is figure out what’s a palatable thing that they can share, with the idea of “what do they need.” For example, if a student were depressed, needed time off, they could decide how they wanted to communicate that — I would want to take the student’s lead as much as possible. Some people have very good, open relationships with their lab mentors, others it may still be a functional relationship but they don’t share anything personal. The most important thing is to get them the help they need, and then talk to them about what would they be comfortable doing… medical students and dental students, in my experience in the last ten years, everyone individually negotiates this differently…Most often, the more the student is the communicator and the more the student understands what they need and uses us as backup — I think it can go a lot of different ways.

JS: Could you, as a professional, talk to a PI about what his/her student could use and how the lab environment that they provide can influence that?

LR: That’s a lot of what we do at the medical school. For example in the third year there are exams the students take a certain percentage of students especially those with attentional issues fail those exams. The planning of when they take it again is very important, because if they’re really struggling with attention, and
Time Management Mantras for the Overstressed Overachiever

By Suzanne Nizza (G2)

Successful time management skills are critical to maintaining the functional BBS student. Between lab work, class, teaching, and a life outside the lab (what a thought!), it takes some delicate balancing to get everything done! Here are some commonsense reminders that will help you get started on the road to good time management:

- **Make a to-do list.** Basic, yes, but at least you won’t forget anything important that you need to get done. This also provides great positive feedback as you cross things off and the list gets shorter.

- **Prioritize tasks.** You can do this either in terms of importance, urgency, or a combination of the two. This ensures that you use your limited time for completing tasks as efficiently as possible.

- **Don’t procrastinate!** While it’s tempting to have fun now and put off the work until later, wouldn’t it be better to finish the work and then enjoy yourself without anything hanging over your head?

- **Know what works for you.** Are you a morning person or a night person? Do the most important tasks when you are most awake and aware: Being more focused will allow you to get more done.

- **Take breaks when you need to.** If you find yourself getting distracted and you can’t focus while studying or reading, maybe you need a break. Taking a short 10-minute break may pay off, and help you get back on track and focused. Take care of your physical well being by eating right and sleeping enough.

The Bureau of Study Counsel (www.bsc.harvard.edu), part of the Center for Academic and Personal Development, has a great self-help section on their website with good advice about time management. Try some of their useful tips:

- **Do less.** Seems like a no-brainer, but if you look at what you spend time doing, you may find areas where you can cut back. For example, if you’re religiously watching a certain show each week, during a month where you have a lot to do, you could skip that show and then catch up with episodes online when your workload is a little less.

- **Plan time for yourself.** You need periods of downtime and relaxation, too. Pushing yourself too hard could cause you to burnout or suffer a nervous breakdown. Even if the effects don’t turn out to be so severe, inadequate rest can make you less productive, so take some time each day or week to chill and rejuvenate.

- **Remember that you have a life outside of lab.** Don’t forget to include time for having fun and for spending time with friends, family, or a significant other. As the saying goes, “I wish I spent more time at the office” (or in lab!). People think about the time they’ve spent with friends and family. Making time for the important people in your life will make you a happier and healthier person.

Director of Student Services Ellen Fox understands that effective time management is a major challenge for graduate students. As she notes, “Students often feel that there is little or no time for anything other than their course or lab work, which is difficult for all students and particularly for students who are parents.” What can be done if this describes you? Fox advises that we should step back and determine what is working and what is not by asking, “Am I as organized as I could be? Am I working as effectively as I could be? Am I possibly procrastinating and feeling ‘stuck’? What factors may be affecting my ability to manage my time as well as I would like?” Essentially, answer these questions to figure out what is taking up most of your time and stressing you out so you can come up with a proactive solution to lightening its weight on you.

If you need help, Director Fox is available to discuss academic or personal issues with students. She can be reached at (617) 495-5005 or efox@fas.harvard.edu. The Bureau of Study Counsel offers a course on Reading and Study Strategies, as well as workshops and discussion groups (a schedule can be found at http://bsc.harvard.edu/grpwrk.html). For information on the Reading and Study Strategies course, call the Bureau at (617) 495-2581.

We hope implementing some of these suggestions with help you have a more fulfilling and productive year!

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Recent BBS Student Publications:

Trimarchi JM, Harpavat S, Billings N (G5), Cepko CL. (2008) Thyroid hormone components are expressed in three sequential waves during development of the chick retina. **BMC Developmental Biology.** 8(1):101


Announcements

Onyi Iweala (recent grad) and Andrew Spector got engaged on Onyi’s defense day, right after the oral examination. Andrew wanted to make sure that Onyi was qualified before he proposed!

Scott Jones (G3) became engaged to Benjamin Wolfe (GSAS G4) and plans to wed in the spring of 2010. Booyoh!
Tantalizing Cuisine on a Grad Student Budget
By Ariya D. Lapan (G4)

Give the takeout menu a break by checking out these affordable tried and true shrines to gastronomy from around the world, listed to accommodate geographic inclinations:

Africa

Asmara (Central Sq.)
cambridge.zami.com/asmara
739 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge
$8-10 entrées

It’s easy to miss this place as you’re walking through Central Square, but if you look closely, you’ll find a wonderful Ethiopian/Eritrean restaurant. Asmara serves its food on traditional woven basket tables and offers a wide selection of traditional East African dishes. The Injera (a flat pancake-like bread) is homemade and has the characteristic tangy taste of this type of bread. The traditional style entrées (or “wot” as they are called) are served on top of the Injera and are prepared with a distinctive combination of spices and herbs. The Kitfo is particularly tasty if you’re ok with eating raw (or very rare) beef. Be prepared to use your hands here; this meal is eaten without utensils.

The Americas

Darwin’s Ltd (Harvard Sq.)
www.darwinsltd.com
1629 Cambridge Street, Cambridge
$6.50-8 sandwiches

There are actually several good sandwich shops in Harvard Square (Oxford Spa and Hi-Rise Bread Company are good, too), but Darwin’s is the cream of the crop. Darwin’s expertly combines high quality ingredients to form their delicious sandwiches — fresh vegetables, excellent cheeses and meats, and the oft-overlooked but never underappreciated good bread (sadly, even restaurants so-named, albeit in French, overlook this ingredient). Darwin’s also offers a wide selection of mouthwatering desserts and treats, some homemade and others from local confection artisans (try Taza chocolate which has a tantalizing taste and a distinctive texture since it is stone ground). This sandwich shop comes with a coffee shop atmosphere, with young professionals and their laptops or books lining the windows.

Mr. Bartley’s Burger Cottage (Harvard Sq.; Image above by Mandrita Datta)
1246 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge
$9 for a burger, $4 for a frappe

If you’re going to get a burger, Bartley’s is the place to go. Their beef is ground fresh daily, shaped into plump 7oz patties, and offered with a wide range of topping combinations and humorous names (try the “Viagra burger”, served with blue cheese and bacon). Their fries and onion rings aren’t bad, but they can be a little greasy sometimes. If you don’t care about fries, you can save a couple bucks by asking for chips instead. The atmosphere is unique with an incredible collection of bumper stickers, posters, and other knick-knacks, that will keep you occupied while you wait for your burger and frappe. Frappé? That’s right, frappé. Bartley’s frappés (a.k.a. milk shakes) are extra creamy, thick, and wonderfully delicious. A frappé is also gigantic and could be a meal in itself. Come hungry.

Asia

Jojo Taipei (Allston)
www.jojotaipieboston.com
103 Brighton Avenue, Allston
$8-13 entrées

This restaurant opened recently in June 2008 and has caused quite a stir among Boston foodies. Be prepared to wait in line for a table as news has spread like wildfire about this place! Jojo Taipei’s soup dumplings (mini steamed buns) arrive at the table piping hot and smelling yummy; make sure to eat them quickly since they are best when hot (and here’s a trick to eating soup dumplings: bite a little hole in one side of the dumpling and suck out the soup so that you won’t burn your mouth eating the dumpling). At Jojo Taipei, the servers begin the meal with small dish appetizer offerings; don’t worry about the names of the dishes, just point at what looks good and take it from the tray (the beef tendon has excellent flavor and texture, and the shiitake mushroom and mock duck is quite any combination of your favorite Mexican foods so don’t feel overwhelmed by the large menu; the Mexican Combo Plate is great since it comes with two tacos, two enchiladas, and 2 tamales in your choice of vegetable or meat. Go for the burrito if you’re really hungry since they are very large and quite filling. Additionally, the homemade horchata and other drinks are refreshing and go nicely with your meal. Tacqueria offers both an informal dining area for a quick bite to eat and a fancier cantina for more leisurely meals.
tasty). However, do be aware that you do still pay for these appetizers. From the menu, the braised pork with steamed bun appetizer has a savory pork filling inside a delicate and fluffy bun wrap, and the three cup dishes have a very authentic flavor. As with most Asian cuisines, family style dining is the way to go here. The restaurant can be loud at times, but it’s a small price to pay for amazing food.

Montien (Theatre District)
www.montien-boston.com/Findex.htm
63 Stuart Street, Boston (3 minute walk from the Boylston T stop)
$15-20 entrées

This Thai restaurant provides authentic food, generous portions, and excellent variety. Montien offers what they call the “traditional” or “Thai” menu, which consists of a number of flavorful and intriguing dishes that are difficult to find in the U.S. Make sure to ask for it specifically when you go (as it is a separate menu from their regular menu). Here are some highlights from the Thai menu: Kra-Thong-Tong (Golden cups) appetizer, a tasty chicken, vegetable, and herb filling in a crispy pastry shell; Cow-Moo-Dang, a classic roast pork and rice dish with a sweet and tangy red sauce; and Yum-Pla-Duke-Foo, a savory salad topped with delicately crispy minced catfish. And for the really adventurous, try the Goong-Cha-Nam-Pla (raw shrimp served in lemon juice, Thai hot peppers, garlic, ginger, and fish sauce); it is extremely spicy and showcases the number one rule of Thai cooking: perfect balance of sour, salty, spicy, and sweet flavors.

*Note: The Thai menu is not offered at the Inman Square location.

Rod Dee ( Fenway)
www.roddeethai.com
94 Peterborough Street, Boston
$7-10 entrées

This little place is about as close to Thai street vendor food as you will get in Boston (and if you didn’t know, most of the best food in Thailand is sold by street vendors). The Pad-See-Ew is definitely the best value for good Thai food in the area. Another nice attribute of Rod Dee is that it is right across the street from Trilogy and offers delivery for those people further out. There are very few tables at this place, so plan to take-out or get delivery.

*Note: I don’t recommend the 1430 Beacon Street location. My husband and I were disappointed by the authenticity of the food when we went there.

Super Fusion Cuisine (Washington Sq.)
690A Washington St, Brookline
$5-8 for a regular maki roll; $10-12 for a house special maki

Sushi is always on the higher end of the price spectrum, but Super Fusion Cuisine offers excellent quality sushi that’s even affordable for grad students. The fish is always fresh, and, if you ask, the servers will tell you what fish is freshest (and tastiest) that day. The combinations of flavors offered in the maki (rolled sushi) are very creative, so be sure to try some. For example, the Double Plus maki is rolled shrimp tempura topped with torched chu toro, which results in a scrumptious taste and a nice crispy texture; and the Baked Yellowtail maki is a mouth-watering blend of snow crab, tobiko, yellowtail, and avocado. Don’t forget to save room for dessert: the fried tempura ice cream is amazing here. This confection is ice cream wrapped in a layer of Japanese-style sponge cake, dipped in a tempura batter, lightly fried, and then topped with whipped cream, cherries, and cherry sauce. Even if you don’t like sushi, go to Super Fusion Cuisine just for this dessert.

The Mediterranean

Carlo’s Cucina Italiana (Allston)
carlocucinaitaliana.com
131 Brighton Avenue, Allston
$10-20 entrées

Looking for good Italian food at a decent price? Well, it’s not easy to come by in the North End, but you can find it in Allston. Carlo’s Cucina Italiana has a solid array of pasta courses with vibrant, homemade sauces and even some homemade pastas (their fusilli is very fresh and flavorful). Their entrées are classics and competently executed. Sadly, the bread leaves something to be desired, but overall the quality of the meal is high and the value is unbeatable for Italian food in Boston. Save the trek to the North End, and dine at Carlo’s if you’re in the mood for good Italian.

Utopia

Christina’s Ice Cream (Inman Sq.)
www.christinasicecream.com
1255 Cambridge Street, Cambridge
$2.70-4.20 for ice cream

There is a plethora of ice cream stores in Boston, so it can be overwhelming to find the most delicious ice cream place. Christina’s ice cream store is an excellent choice for fine ice cream dining in the city. What you will find here is fresh homemade goodness that bursts with authentic flavors. The chocolate mousse ice cream has the same rich and chocolatey flavor of the confection, and the pink grapefruit sorbet tastes like a frozen, juicy grapefruit. The many flavors available range from the ubiquitous choc chip cookie dough (which is pretty amazing) to herbal chai spice to wild turkey & walnut (let me know if you try this one…). The quality of Christina’s ice cream is well-known, so there is often a long line even in the middle of winter. Don’t worry, though, because the attendants at the store provide fast scooping service. Remember to bring cash; credit cards are not accepted.

BerryLine Frozen Yogurt (Harvard Sq.)
www.theberryline.com
1 Arrow Street, Cambridge
$3-6

BerryLine proves that science is the profitable way to go (ha!); it was started by two Harvard/MIT Biology postdocs. BerryLine opened in September 2007 on the corner of Arrow Street and Mass Ave. This little, unassuming place offers “the real deal” – real frozen yogurt, not the tasteless fro-yo dished out by most places as a “healthy dessert alternative” (though BerryLine’s is low in fat). BerryLine’s fro-yo is refreshing, creamy, and has the true tangy flavor of yogurt. There are always two or three different options for fro-yo flavors, with one being original (pure and unadulterated) and the others being fruit- or candy-flavored. Numerous fresh fruit toppings are available from classic raspberries and mangos to more exotic fruits such as gold kiwi. BerryLine also offers many other toppings including various candies and crushed cookies. The original yogurt flavor paired with gold kiwi and graham crackers is sweet, heavenly-tasting, and a perfect way to end your day. And unlike in the Seinfeld episode, BerryLine’s fro-yo actually has no fat and very few calories.
If G10s Could Speak: The BBS Bulletin Through the Ages
By Cherie Ramirez (G3)

Having a young new face at our latest BBS Bulletin editors’ meeting was a healthy reminder that no matter how fresh our article ideas sound while we’re brainstorming for material, we’re hardly the first editors to have pondered them. Believe it or not, student, staff, and faculty editors at the BBS Bulletin have been going strong for nearly ten years, the evidence of which can be found in this treasure trove on the BBS Program site: www.hms.harvard.edu/dms/bbs/DMSBBSBBSBulletin.html.

Although contributors have come and gone over the years, the mission of this publication as envisioned in March 1999 has remained unchanged: “The BBS Program is a large, diverse community of individuals. The BBS Bulletin has been created to help foster a sense of community among this group of people who have much in common but often too little opportunity to enjoy the benefits of that community. It is a place where we can share ideas and learn about what’s going on around us.”

Going through old issues might be a more amusing pastime for long incubations than you might think. You might just learn about what “Life in the Charlestown Navy Yard” was like a decade ago (Mar. 1999) or find breaking news about the “Not Ready Building” (Mar. 2004). Whether the selected stories were published before you were BBS-approved or you missed them the first time around, we encourage you to delve into the archives for remarkably timeless advice and inspiration.

Our BBS Bulletin comrades have preserved a valuable record of the contemplations and happenings that unite us as a diverse community of scientists, learners, and visionaries.

Of Special Interest to the G1s:
“How I Survived My First Year”
Elizabeth McKenna, pg. 3 of Sept./Oct. 2005
“Choosing the Right Lab”
Tuba Sural, pg. 3 of Sept./Oct. 2007

On Relationships:
“Top 10 Reasons to Date a Fellow BBS Graduate Student”
Jessica Dermody and David Bellovin, pg. 4 of Jan. 2005
“Long Distance Relationships”
Elizabeth Stover, pg. 4 of Jan./Feb. 2007

Fall strikes again, whether they let you out of the lab long enough to notice or not:
“A Beginner’s Guide to Biking in Boston”
Jason Arroyo and Katie Campbell, pg. 7 of Sept./Oct. 2006
“Fall Foliage in Boston”
Dan (Phoebe) Zhang, pg. 7 of Sept./Oct. 2007

Deep Thoughts:
“Community Service Profile: Harvard Square Homeless Shelter”
Bryan McIver Hooks, pg. 4 of Nov./Dec. 2005
“When the Stipend Isn’t Enough: The Search for Extra Cash Leads to Unexpected Destinations”
Alexandra Petrova, pg. 2 of Mar./Apr. 2006
“Science and Faith: Can They Coexist Peacefully?”
Luigi Adamo, pg. 3 of July/Aug. 2007

Science and the Presidential Election Symposium
Photos by Elizabeth McKenna (G5)

Below:
(Left to Right) Dr. Jeff Nesbit (National Science Foundation), Dr. Dick Marchase (Federation of American Societies of Experimental Biology), Lesley Stone (Scientists and Engineers for America), and Professor George Daley of HMS served on a panel moderated by Shane Boker (BBS G6) to discuss ways of getting involved with science policy, such as tapping into the SHARP Network (sharp.sefora.org), enrolling in relevant courses at the School of Public Health or the Kennedy School of Government, and increasing public awareness about science by volunteering at K-12 schools.

At Right:
Dr. Henry Kelly, president of the Federation of American Scientists since July 2001 and a key Science and Technology (S&T) Advisor to the Obama campaign, laid out the top five S&T issues for the 2008 Election: Innovation and U.S. Competitiveness, Energy and Climate Challenges, Effective Use of Information Technology, Nuclear Proliferation, and Integrity of Science.

The team of McKenna, Boker, Carrie Gibbons (G3), and Corey Morris (G5) organized this epic event, bringing together leaders in science policy from across the nation to discuss the candidates’ views (and what they ought to be):
http://scienceandelection.hms.harvard.edu/
they’re in a new clerkship, it may interfere with their performance for the whole year, if they keep trying to make up exams during other clerkships. So talking about that it’s not that this person wasn’t trying, this person has trouble with reading speed, or something else. Now, Loring is particularly good at that kind of consultation — he can even be brought into the lab if it’s okay with the student, and then he observe how that person goes about doing their research. He’s done this for dental students, and he’s made a number of observations that if you just counted on the person’s report of what they do in the lab, you wouldn’t know where they’re having trouble — they may not even know. Sometimes there’s right-left confusion, or it’s a matter of organization that may lead to errors, that kind of thing. So, I think Loring would be the person I would tend to ask to be involved for something like that if it’s specific learning and attentional stuff. On the more emotional side — when someone has had a depression, trying to decide what they need — some people can receive medication if it’s a bonafide major depression, take off a month, come back, and function well, and may be better off maintaining contact with people in the lab, particularly if that’s an important part of their life. Other people, it may really be important for them to take an extended leave and truly recover from a depression before coming back into a pressurized-time situation. Those are also decisions where deciding what is best for the student and having the student give their preference and that might also involve a conversation with David Cardozo about what are the options.

JS: With the med students and dental students, have you been involved with discrimination issues as a consequence of someone seeking your help? The worry for us is that the scientific research culture might put these problems in the basket of “things that make you a bad bench-person.”

LR: I would ask in a situation like that, if a student made me aware that that’s what was happening, and that they were in some way being treated differently, I would immediately — as soon as I could — arrange a meeting with, if the student wanted me to be present, but to definitely send that student to David and to alert David that this was a situation in which the department head and the student and the mentor would need to be talking so that a situation doesn’t start to evolve that gets worse and is much harder to recover from.

JS: The logistical difference between medical/dental students and us is that you can make allowances and transfer between advisors, and the student comes out with the same degree and has the same opportunities afterward. With us, if you switch advisors, you lose your project. If you find yourself in a bad situation because your PI is resistant about whatever condition you have, no matter how many resources the university offers you, you could still suffer career-altering disadvantages. Would you guys stay involved all the way through the process?

LR: I would do everything I could, because that would be exactly why I’m doing what I’m doing. And I think a lot of this is a function of education... The way it was understood in the past, if anyone had any attentional learning problems — slow reading — was either that they were dumb or not trying hard enough. I mean, those were the labels. As a function of knowing much more about learning and attentional problems, that’s changing, and what I see in the medical school and the dental school are a lot different approaches — a lot of interest a lot of curiosity — and true interest in being educated about these things. On my OAR site I have information for faculty and students about these things, so that they can read about them. But I think that if DMS is new to learning about some of these things and understanding how they have an impact in the lab, it’s going to be a process of education. And that’s where I see David Cardozo as offering some leadership. How much we can actually change a particular individual — my own hope would be that if a student is truly in a position where they can’t be productive because the attitude they feel is being directed at them is not good, then I would guess that David would work with that student to figure out a better setting for that student. And I understand that sometimes that can happen.

JS: Are you looking to PIs to recommend students they think are having trouble to come see you and figure out why they’re having trouble and what can be done about it?

LR: I’ve met department heads and I’ve met with David. And what I’ve said to all of them is that my major concern about what goes on in lab is noticing prolonged absences of students from the lab and people being alert to that, because that may mean something. The other thing is for them to be communicating and letting the PIs know that I’m available — so particularly with the DAC meetings, or if someone has trouble with qualifying exam, or is having trouble with classes, those would be some of the red flags that would indicate that there’s a problem. If their thesis committee sees that there’s no progress being made, they’re in a better position to assess, “Is it a problem with the way the person’s framing the scientific question, or is it productivity?” And then that would be an assessment. And that’s my hope — that the departments are communicating with their PIs. I don’t have control over that, I mean, it’s getting the word out that I am here….We certainly want to be available so that a PI feels comfortable saying, “I don’t know if I’m crazy or not, but this is what I’m observing.” What they would be most likely to do is mention it to a department head, and then a department head would mention it to David. So what I do trust that if that’s happening — I don’t think a PI right now, not knowing who I am, unless they’ve kind of gone that route already — would feel comfortable directly talking to me. And I understand that. But I would be available for that. But what we’re hoping is that there are a couple of times in the year when a DAC is meeting — when people are reviewing someone’s progress in courses, during the qualifying exams, those are some of the places where they could say, “I think this student is having trouble, or I’m not sure this student is going to be able to complete this degree.”

JS: Those are some great ideas.

LR: But I have a lot to learn obviously! •

Office of Advising Resources
(617) 432-2653

Location: Upstairs in the Peabody Society, off the TMEC Atrium (258A)

Additional Staff:
Loring Brinckerhoff, Ph.D.,
Educational Consultant
Karen Wulfsberg,
Education Specialist

Website: While logged into eCommons, click “Shortcuts” in the lefthand side bar. Under the letter “O” find “Office of Advising Resources.”
Faculty Profile: Paul Anderson, Frank Austen Professor of Medicine, HMS/BWH
By Cherie Ramirez (G3)

Division of Rheumatology, Immunology and Allergy based in the Smith Building at Brigham and Women’s Hospital

Research Interests:
- Mechanisms of post-transcriptional control: RNA triage/translational repression
- The cell biology of RNA granules associated with these processes

Early Inspiration:
- The “science is fun” epiphany came when he was a high school freshman.
- As a freshman in college, he answered a call to volunteer in the lab: the first time he stepped inside “sealed the deal.” He started out characterizing DNA supercoiling (think twist and writhe from BCMP 200).

Background:
- M.D./Ph.D. from the New York University Medical Scientist Training Program
- Faculty of the Department of Medicine at Harvard Medical School since 1990
- Appointments with DMS Ph.D. Programs in Immunology and BBS Leder Human Biology and Translational Medicine (LHB)

Favorite Fare:
- Comfort food from “kitschy American chains” like the Cheesecake Factory, Chili’s, and Macaroni Grill

Vacation Paradise:
- Enjoying time with extended family on Cape Cod

Advice for Grad Students:
- “Find out what you have a passion for! This career is difficult. It only works if you can’t do anything else.”

Why the decision to join BBS Faculty?
- Although Anderson has mentored Immunology students in the past, recent breakthroughs have shifted his lab’s focus further toward cell biology. In addition, he is excited by the LHB Program’s efforts to merge basic science with training in translational medicine. He maintains a broad medical perspective by seeing rheumatoid arthritis patients half a day a week in addition to his duties in the lab.