

# NEWSLETTER

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PRISE is the acronym for the UPR “Ponce Research Initiative for Scientific Enhancement.” This program is funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) under grant #1R25 - GM096955 - 01, awarded to Dr. Edu Suarez,

Associate Professor of the Biology Department at the University of Puerto Rico in Ponce (UPRP). This proposal was written in collaboration with Prof. Grisobelle Virella-Corujo, Sponsored Research Officer and Chancellor’s Assistant for the External Resources and Development Office.

## What are the program’s goals and objectives?

By fostering competitive research (with a particular focus on the biomedical sciences), UPR-PRISE will advance the mission and goals of UPR Ponce. The planned research activities will increase the intellectual and technical capabilities of our students, which will, in turn, create a pipeline of well-trained students expected to complete a bachelor’s in biological sciences and then pursue a PhD in that same field. The specific aims of this project are oriented towards student development and are achieved via the sponsoring of summer research internships at research-intensive institutions, the offering of a standardized verbal test course (aimed at improving GRE verbal scores and conversational English abilities), the promoting of responsible conduct in research, and the encouraging of community-based learning.

## August Highlights

- Students from UPR-Ponce participated in an activity with 5 UPR-Ponce alumni, at which activity the alumni talked about the academic processes for graduate school and the ups and downs they experienced; they spoke also about their research topics. Dr. Fernando Rodríguez, Chancellor of UPR-P, participated with over 30 students in this conference, which took place on August 30, 2012.
- This semester, the class *Ethics in Research* started; it is a PRISE-sponsored course offered by Dr. Luis Sanchez from UPR-P’s Social Sciences Department.



Alumni Conference



## September Highlights

- Cinema Forum: The Ethics in Scientific Research Course Presented “*Judgement at Nuremberg*,” a Stanley Kramer film from 1961 presented on September 11, 2012 and “*Miss Evers Boys*” A Joseph Sargent film presented September 13, 2012; ; over 20 people attended each.
- Conference: STEP-UP Program in California with Dr. Emil Bogenmann, Director of the STEP-UP Program from the University of South California, took place on September 13, 2012; over 45 people attended.



Visiting the Program’s New Office. UPR-PRISE New and Adjunct Members Meeting (October, 2012)

## STEP-UP Program in California

Dr. Emil Bogenmann, Director of STEP-UP Program at the Saban Research Institute of Children's Hospital Los Angeles (affiliated with the Keck School of Medicine of USC) presented his program.



The overall goal of NIH's Short-Term Education Program for Underrepresented Persons (STEP-UP) is to build and sustain a biomedical, behavioral, clinical, and social science research pipeline focused on NIH's mission areas. STEP-UP aims to increase the participation of students from backgrounds underrepresented in biomedical research, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds or with disabilities and those from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups.

## ABRCMS 2012

We are glad to announce that students from the UPR-PRISE Program will be presenting in the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS) to be held in San Jose (CA) from November 7 through 11, 2012.

### Presenting Students and Projects

1. Martha Echevarria – *Investigation of the Utility of the Simport – Matrix Chaperones for Avian Influenza Virus Sample Storage and Transportation.*
2. Yanaira Alonso – *Can Haptoglobin Attenuate Hemoglobin-Induced Vascular Damage?*
3. Robert Lopez – *Differential Evolution of Human Immunodeficiency Virus in Patients with Pulmonary Hypertension.*
4. Ismael Santiago – *Speedball Modulates Neurotoxic Effects of Vpr.*
5. Michael Manoharan – *Astrocytes Expressing Nef Promote Apoptosis in Neurons.*

### Upcoming Activities

- ✚ ABRCMS Convention, November 7-11, 2012. San Jose, California.
- ✚ Conference: From Undergraduate Student to a Doctorate Degree: A Personal Experience of Perseverance & Excellence in Research with Dr. Vanessa Rivera (PSMHS). November 27, 2012.

## October Highlights

Conference: From Undergraduate Student to a Doctorate Degree: A Personal Experience of Perseverance & Excellence in Research with Dr. Richard Noel from The Ponce School of Medicine and Health Sciences. He is an Associate Professor of Biochemistry and the Director of the Molecular Biology Core Laboratory; he works with HIV/AIDS neuropathology, the structural and functional properties of HIV-1, and the phylogenetic analysis of viral evolution and distribution. The conference took place on October 4., 2012, at noon in room 225.

Dr. Richard Noel's Conference



### UPR-PRISE

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*Try not to become a man of success but rather try to become a man of value.*  
-Albert Einstein