

Biomedical Sciences Special Seminar showcases FSU Alumna

Reem Zaitoon, Contributing Writer 10:47 a.m. EDT May 11, 2016



(Photo: Dr. Kelly McKnight)

The Florida State College of Medicine is showcasing an exciting and much-anticipated medical seminar in which they will exhibit FSU graduate Kelly McKnight, who graduated with her PhD in Biomedical Sciences in 2014. She is currently working at Duke University as the regulatory Affairs Coordinator in which she focuses on advances in research technology for a comprehensive understanding of human health and disease.

The Biomedical Sciences Special Seminar is part of the College of Medicine's general biomedical sciences department seminar series, a series that maintains awareness of research by providing faculty members to speak about their accomplishments and promotes professional development of graduate students by inviting notable speakers like Kelly McKnight from outside institutions.

"This seminar is special because it was our graduate students who invited this guest speaker from Duke," says BSGSA President Nicole Newel.

Dr. McKnight was chosen to speak about her research in the medical field at this seminar because she is a graduate of FSU and is familiar with the FSU College of Medicine.

"Dr. McKnight took a sort of non-traditional route because she chose to do a post-baccalaureate at Duke," explains Newel, "so we are highly interested in having her here to learn more about different career options that are available to us as medical school graduates."

In addition to her career path and medical career options for graduates, Dr. McKnight's extensive list of medical research and accomplishments that she contributed to the medical world will also be discussed at the seminar.

"Most people after receiving their PhD think about becoming professors, so Dr. McKnight's career path is not a conventional route that most people would think about taking, and that's why this particular seminar is special for us," Newel says. "She is someone who took an alternative direction and it will be helpful to have someone to ask questions to about our options."

During her post-baccalaureate at Duke Dr. McKnight's research focused on studying rare genetic disorders, specific to cardiac, renal, brain and skeletal malformations, by using model organisms called zebra fish. Additionally, while she was in the lab she started a fellowship with GlaxoSmithKline, a major British pharmaceutical company, so that the company could do pre-clinical drug screenings with the zebra fish.

"We think it's important to have our graduate alumni back because it shows that where you get your degree matters for your future endeavors," Newel says. "Seeing where our graduates end up matters to us and seeing where FSU graduates end up was one of the major factors in getting Dr. McKnight to come back and instill her experience and wisdom into us."

Today, Dr. McKnight is the regulatory Affairs Coordinator at the Duke Cancer Institute, in which she collaborates with Duke investigators and industry sponsors to coordinate clinical studies activities. Because of her background in her post-baccalaureate, she understands what the researchers and the industry officials are looking for to coordinate clinical studies in labs.

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