

PRESS RELEASE

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Undergraduate honored for research completed in Zhou lab

By Meredith Fraser

June 2010 An undergraduate student participating in one of the College of Medicine's research labs has won the John C. Johnson Award from the TriBeta National Biological Honor Society. The award, recognizing the best research presentation by an undergraduate, was presented at the society's national convention in Colorado last month. The Florida State University Biological Science Department chose junior Kourtney Graham to represent the university at the convention with her honors thesis project, which she completed alongside graduate student Molly Foote in associate professor Yi Zhou's College of Medicine biomedical sciences research lab. Graham's award underscores the mutually beneficial results that are possible with the college's open, collaborative attitude toward research. Graham originally impressed Zhou with her work as a student in directed individual study. Following that research undertaking, he offered to have her conduct an honors thesis project in his lab. "I have seen the outstanding progress she has made in my lab, and I am especially impressed with her knowledge and understanding of our research projects," Zhou said. "These qualities set her apart from most of her peers." According to Zhou, Graham has carried out several projects to investigate the function of the 14-3-3 proteins in the nervous system. With help from Foote, their studies have led to the discovery of "intriguing neurological changes" in genetically altered mice, and their findings should provide important insight into the role of the 14-3-3 proteins in the brain. The TriBeta is a society for primarily undergraduate students dedicated to understanding and appreciating biological study and research.