

MASTER OF BIOTECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

FERMENT

MARCH 2015

SECOND DOWN: ABS HOSTS SUPERBOWL PARTY



MBP students gather at 27 Live for Superbowl XLIX

In the course of a single night, a winter storm blanketed the greater Chicago area under nineteen inches of snow - the fifth largest blizzard in the city's history. CTA service slowed to a crawl, superintendents cancelled school, and the sale of shovels saw a sudden uptick.

But who cares about snow when the Seahawks are only down by four points?

In the midst of this inclement weather, in the dark of an early February evening, the Association for Biotechnology Students (ABS) hosted their second-annual Superbowl party for their first and second-year classmates.

ABS welcomed thirty-seven MBP students to enjoy two hallowed American traditions: the Big Game, and over-eating. Under the soft lamplights of 27 Live, a restaurant and venue in downtown Evanston, students enjoyed a buffet of salads, veggie trays, pizza, Buffalo wings (traditions stay alive), macaroni and cheese, and what can only be described as "a brownie cake thing."

For many of our first-year students, the gathering served as a much-needed social event, and for our international students, as an American cultural milestone. ABS took possession of a cozy corner before the start of the first quarter, staking out the elevated tables for a better view of the game that 27 Live projected on the big screen.

To the dismay of ABS president and die-hard Colts fan Andrew Andis, most of his fellow classmates offered their loyalty to the Patriots, whose final game-winning play had everyone on their feet.

However, staying on their feet proved difficult as MBP students left behind the warmth of the bar for the icy sidewalks of Evanston. In a stunning physical display that rivaled the athletic events of the night, Harsha Gunashekar's face-first tumble left an impression on more than the snow banks outside. (We hope those glasses stayed in one piece, Harsha.)

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(Left to right): MBP students Alexis Kendra, Jasmine Hersheve, Yuka Wantanabe and Taylor Graff at 27 Live in Evanston.

JOYFUL ENERGY : A WEDDING IN INDIA



“I couldn’t even reach the top of the gate when I was a kid. In order to open it, I used to climb the gate. Now, as you see, I am taller than the gate!”

If Ankit Gandhi looked a little tired this month, it’s because he flew to Vadodara, India (and back) in five days. But travel pains pose little obstacle when your big brother is getting married. Combined, his total time in the air averaged out to over twenty-hours each way.

Clearly Ankit loves his family.

Aware of the traveler’s agony ahead of him, Ankit trusted his strengths, and talked to the people around him.



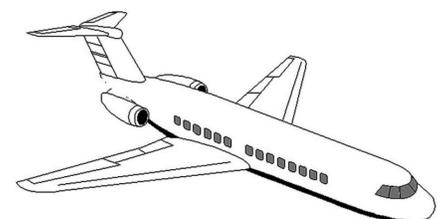
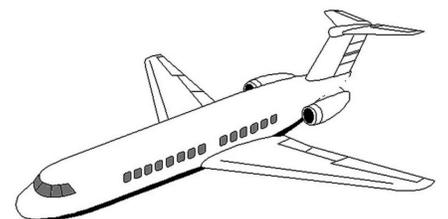
“I ran into this businessman, who travels in between India and US about 3-4 times a year. I asked him for some advice on dealing with jet lag. He said that if I get a good enough (6 hours) sleep on the flight to Mumbai, then I should be good to go (meaning, I shouldn’t be too sleepy for the rest of the day in India).”

Ankit took a lot of naps.

In the five days between departure and arrival, he slept for roughly 26 hours. And somewhere in that time, he managed to do a little reading for class—but once his feet were on the ground, it was all about family.

Ankit buzzed about the house, catching up with family, fighting off sleep, and helping his brother prepare for the big day. Across all cultures, weddings have the potential to carry forward the traditions, rituals, and customs of a nation, but nothing quite compares to traditionalism and encompassing nature of an Indian wedding.

With beautiful weather at their backs (70-80 degrees), Ankit’s family prepared the groom. “We were all trying to be on schedule. On the wedding day, we were running 2 hours behind, so there were definitely some stress-filled moments but at the same time, there was lots of joyful energy and laughter.”





Fort Collins, Colorado. (Photo by Michael Verleye)

VERLEYE INTERESTING: SAFESNIPS, A NUVENTION

Thanks to a developing relationship between Briteseed, LLC and MBP, Michael Verleye had somewhere to be this summer.

Briteseed, a startup medical device company, emerged from NUvention: Medical, an interdisciplinary course in which students not only create innovative medical technologies, but they develop the strategies necessary to commercialize their designs.

Michael started working for Briteseed again this quarter when his academic lab moved to the University of Michigan over the summer. Fortunately Briteseed needed the kind of high-caliber student only the MBP can offer, and welcomed Michael to continue his work on SafeSnips.

SafeSnips, the core technology of Briteseed, allows surgeons to detect blood vessels in real-time during minimally invasive surgery in order to prevent accidental cuts. The financial costs of unintended bleeding are high indeed, as hospitals spend billions of dollars treating patients for these accidental cuts. Devices like SafeSnips are poised to result in healthier

patients, greater surgical precision, and happier hospital administrators.

So where does Michael fit in? He explained, “Our project was focused on developing the next generation of their technology, by finding other types of tissue they could potentially detect, and in doing so, provide a clinical benefit.” Working for Briteseed, Michael became engrossed in the “start-up culture,” as he learned the ins and outs of clinical and market research, and the regulatory realities of the medical device industry. He did all this while applying his technical skills to the biophotonics, electronics and programming related challenges posed by the technology.

A few weeks ago, Michael returned from a successful study of the new blood vessel detection technology at a CRO in Fort Collins, CO. In addition to helping prep for the animal study, Michael also served as the team’s videographer during this particular session, and in doing so warmed up a whole new set of technical muscles. Perhaps a future in science communication awaits?



BRITSEED™



Michael Verleye - MBP Class of 2014/15

PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING STAFF



ERIN RILEY
Research Technologist III

You may have seen Erin in the lab this winter, opening and closing cabinets, clearing out drawers, and looking for answers to an age-old question:

“What the heck is this?”

Inventory was just the first thing on Erin’s to-do list, in between her duties as head TA, lab safety inspector, and on one occasion, event-coordinator.

Erin comes to MBP from the University of Wisconsin-Madison where she served as a research specialist in the Department of Biochemistry. Her work concerned Vitamin D-3 and Rank L research.



SANDRA OROZCO
Program Assistant II

Sandy is our newest staff member, and we couldn’t be happier to have her on board! She’ll be instrumental in serving our students, faculty, and staff with their administrative needs.

Sandy is a self-recognized Francophile, enjoys Victorian novels, macarons, coffee, and fashion design. (She hates reading Hegel.)

A Chicago native, Sandy finished her Bachelor’s degree in Pre-med and English at the University of Illinois-Champaign last fall, and she comes to us from Urban Outfitters. (Get your fashion tips now!)



VICTORIA HARLEY
Communications Coordinator

You may have noticed someone posting the MBP Facebook page a lot lately—and though social media is not all she handles, Victoria is working to spread the word about our program anywhere and everywhere she can.

Victoria enjoys sending postcards, writing letters, and making too much noise in her apartment.

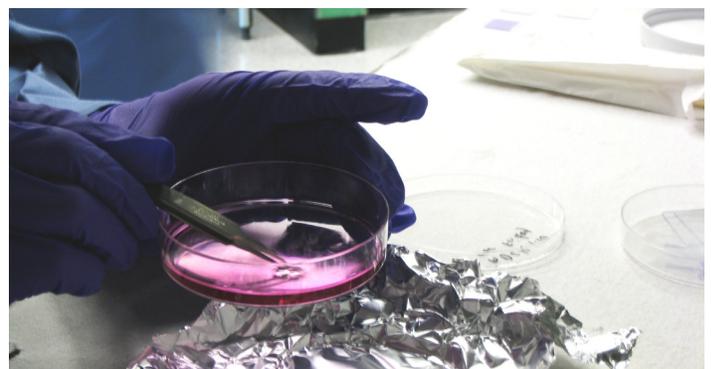
Victoria joined MBP in late December, when Tech was a virtual ghost town. She moved to Chicago last summer after completing her M.A. in Rhetoric and Composition at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio.

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Our program is a word-of-mouth phenomenon. If you tell someone this program is great, then someone else is going to hear this program is great.



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DISCOVERIES, AND INSIGHTS
WITH *FERMENT*.



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