

May 27, 2010

2010-05-27: A gift for the abstract

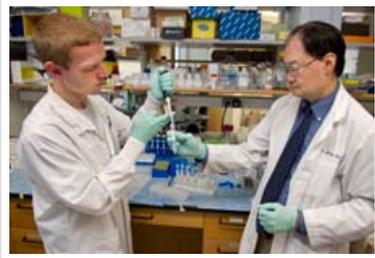
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A gift for the abstract



Dennis O'Rourke and Brian Liu at Brigham and Women's Hospital Photo by Mary Knox Merrill

May 27, 2010

When the American Association for Clinical Chemistry (AACC) holds its annual meeting in late July, third-year Northeastern University student Dennis O'Rourke will be there to give two oral presentations of abstracts summarizing his cancer research, including a poster presentation that is rarely delivered by anyone who has yet to earn a doctoral degree.

"The AACC is a really big deal," said O'Rourke, a **biology** major. "I'm extremely excited about the research, but it is also a bit

intimidating to think about presenting in front of some of the country's top researchers."

O'Rourke's research achievements came in the course of his first experiential learning opportunity last July, when he worked as a co-op researcher under the tutelage of Brian Liu, assistant professor of surgery at Harvard Medical School. Liu is also the director of the Translational Research in Urology and Gyn-Epidemiology Center at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston.

"Dennis was the first co-op student to work in the center and we are all extremely proud of his accomplishments," said Liu. "His work in the lab has been invaluable and his many acknowledgements from the AACC—especially as an undergraduate—are a huge honor for him as well as our lab."

O'Rourke's abstract, "Autoantibody Signatures and Immune Complexes as Potential Biomarkers in Ovarian Cancer with Low Serum CA-125," was one of five abstracts chosen for oral presentation, and also received a National Academy of Clinical Biochemistry Distinguished Abstract Award.

He also was chosen as one of four students to present during the Student Oral Presentation Contest. His abstract was reviewed by a panel of judges who rated it on the basis of scientific value and content, originality and quality of writing. Of 50 abstracts, O'Rourke's received one of four top scores.

Additionally, O'Rourke was among the winners of the 2010 Student Travel Grant Award. Most of the other winners were postdoctoral fellows.

Though his co-op ended in December, O'Rourke has continued his research at Brigham and Women's, where he works with ovarian, prostate and breast cancers. His research looks for specific interactions of antibodies in patients with cancer and proteins associated with known cancer lines. He will resume a full-time co-op position in Liu's lab this July.

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