

2008 Vanderbilt Scholars in Diabetes

A central mission of the Vanderbilt Diabetes Center and the Vanderbilt DRTC is training the next generation of scientists and physicians who will improve the lives of patients with diabetes. Each year the Vanderbilt Diabetes Center presents the Vanderbilt Scholar in Diabetes Award to recognize a graduate student and a postdoctoral fellow based on his/her diabetes-related research at Vanderbilt.

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In the graduate student category, the 2008 Vanderbilt Scholar in Diabetes is **Amanda Ackermann Misfeldt**, who completed her doctorate in the Department of Molecular Physiology and Biophysics, received the award in the graduate student category. Working with Maureen Gannon, Ph.D., she investigated the gene FoxM1 and its role in the formation of new insulin-producing beta cells in the pancreas in response to obesity and in the regeneration of new beta cells after injury. These studies help reveal how diabetes might be caused and how it may be treated in the future.

In the PhD post-doctoral fellow category, the 2008 Vanderbilt Scholar in Diabetes is **Jeffrey Raum**. Jeff, working with Roland Stein, Ph.D., in Molecular Physiology and Biophysics, received the award in the postdoctoral category. In his research, he has focused on identifying sequences and transcription factors important in the beta cell specific expression of MafA, a key activator of insulin and Pdx-1 transcription in the adult pancreas. Because MafA is associated with mature, functional beta cells, his work could be applied to help direct the differentiation of

beta cells from human embryonic stem cells.

Attachment

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