**Discussions with Director Dr. Eric Green: a Trainee’s Perspective**

On Monday April 10th, the Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics (BMG) and Center for Public Health Genomics (CPHG) departments hosted Dr. Eric Green, the director of the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI), in a seminar discussing the future directions of genomic medicine and how The Human Genome Project impacted the field of genomics and beyond. Trainees from these departments were also given the opportunity to meet with Dr. Green to pick his brain about his perspective on various topics from the future of the field of genomics to expanding equity within the scientific field, and further to his career working up to being a director under the NIH umbrella.

Especially impactful was Dr. Green’s insight on focusing on building a career in science where he stressed focusing on near-future goals and avoiding a “master-plan”. As trainees, we are often told of the end goals to look towards as career options, but Dr. Green encouraged us to look at our careers of as a series of forks in the road. He emphasized that new opportunities are consistently emerging. His perspective is such that if we are narrow minded, we could miss the opportunity being on the forefront of something incredible, much like The Human Genome Project was for him.

As Samir Lalani, a Ph.D. student in the BMG department, put, “It was inspiring to hear from Dr. Green about his scientific journey and his experience leading the NHGRI through different stages of the genomics research from Human Genome Project until now. I was especially impressed by the commitment of the institute to expand genomic research to lower and middle income countries through programs such as H3 Africa”

As a trainee, it is both encouraging and refreshing to talk with someone with in much sought-after position who is open and honest about his experiences as a scientist over the courses of his career. It was especially encouraging to be reminded that the non-science-related commitments are just as impactful and important pieces of your career as doing the science itself. A big thank you goes to the BMG and CPHG departments for organizing this seminar and time for trainees to speak with Dr. Green, and I hope all departments across UVA continue to give trainees these incredibly influential and inspiring opportunities.

Written by second-year Ph.D. student Kendall Bromley.