

Greetings!

The holiday season is fast upon us, signaling the conclusion of a productive 2017 and the beginning of the Vironomics Core's annual end-of-year closure. Between now and the New Year, the Core will be busy evaluating and re-validating assays and protocols to maintain their compliance with SOPs, finishing projects already in the queue, preparing for an audit, and taking inventory. We appreciate your patience during the holiday closure, as we hope this period of internal upkeep enables us to serve you better in 2018. **Season's Greetings, we are closed now and will reopen on Tuesday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>**, to accept new samples and once again be available for consultations, discussions, and project planning. (BRI, AMC, and ACTG: We will continue to accept shipments throughout December, except Dec 25<sup>th</sup>-Jan 1<sup>st</sup> as the university is closed.)

While we have your attention, we'd like to share a few of 2017's milestones:

- We welcomed Jay C. Zhang into a permanent position this October, bringing the Vironomics Core up to three full-time, dedicated staff members.
- New Assays, including: STR Cell Line Authentication (Feb), Ion Torrent has expanded its long-range capability to 600 base-pairs sequencing (Jay validated, March), custom KSHV AmpliSeq sequencing that lets researchers save >2-fold reduction in whole-genome sequencing costs (Avery validated and then presented at International Herpes Workshop).
- Along with the Dept. of Microbiology and Immunology's Dr. Kristina De Paris, UNC's Flow Cytometry Core, BD and the UNC High Throughput Genomic Sequencing Facility, the Vironomics Core has entered into a single-cell sequencing Super Collaboration.
- The total number of samples received in 2017 was 1,187 – sequencing runs numbered 54 and qPCR reactions totaled 18,173. This averaged out to 108 samples, 5 sequencing runs, and 1,652 qPCR reactions per month!

Aside from the accomplishments listed above, the Vironomics Core dug into business as usual, consulting on various projects, updating the website's guidelines (more coming soon!), and training incoming students and postdocs on shared equipment. We've also been busy reviewing the Core's equipment with visiting scientists, clients, collaborators and vendors. Staff boosted their collective knowledge by attending the 2017 Core Facilities Show in March, the NIH U19 Orfeome Conference in April, the AIDS Clinical Trials Group in June, and the International Herpes Workshop in July. These workshops and conferences enabled the Vironomics Core to bring new perspectives back to UNC, which they shared in service presentations to the Dittmer and Damania labs and in an HLA demo on the Ion Torrent machine in June.

Overall, it's been a pleasantly productive and engaging year, and we look forward to many more opportunities to learn and collaborate in 2018!

Happy Holidays from the UNC Vironomics Core!

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