

HumBio instructor gets props for YouTube raps

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The rap video “Regulatin’ Genes” stars Stanford student Derrick Davis, left, and Tom McFadden, an instructor in the Human Biology Program.

Ask Tom McFadden, an instructor in Stanford's Human Biology Program (HumBio), why arms, legs and other body parts grow where they do, and he'll hold forth on the role of Hox genes, which are proteins that bind to DNA and interact with cellular machinery to control gene expression.

Explained another way, outside the classroom and over a hip-hop beat, McFadden puts it this way: "Proteins and [DNA](#)? Some interesting [chemistry](#), 'cuz they get jiggy with some interesting affinities."

Actually, the rhyme sounds pretty sweet over the instrumental track for

rapper Jay-Z's "Money Ain't a Thang," which is what McFadden's two-and-half-minute [video](#) on YouTube is set to for "Regulatin' Genes." The video is featured on Stanford's new Facebook profile, facebook.com/stanford.

The video has garnered more than 80 comments by fans who have joined the university's profile, including one left by an alumna who said, "Hum Bio geeks have rhythm, too! Love it!!!"

John Tierney of the New York Times gave a shout out to the science-dropping duo in his blog entry on March 9, "Rappin' for Science." In it, McFadden, 22, explained how he and Davis—both wearing baseball caps, hoodies and shades, holding stacks of graded papers—put a Stanford spin on what goes on in the original rap video.

"In their video, they have so much money that they flip through it, throw it up in the air, throw it out of moving vehicles," McFadden tells Tierney. "Since we just had midterms, I'm projecting some wishful thinking in the video—that there are so many A+'s on the midterm that we can just throw them in the air."

Apparently an aficionado of tight rhymes and video production, McFadden has a collection of clips at www.youtube.com/user/tomcfad, including "I'm Going Going Back Back to Plasma Membrane." For that video, set to Notorious B.I.G.'s version of "Going Back to Cali," McFadden credits senior Jake Wachtel, who films and edits all the videos, which are more for entertainment than instruction.

Also making cameos in that video are fellow HumBio course associate Helen Snodgrass; Bob Siegel, associate professor of microbiology and immunology; and Jonny Dorsey, a senior in the HumBio Program.

Provided by Stanford University ([news](#) : [web](#))

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