



Apr 12th, 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Porphobilinogen Synthase in the Heme Biosynthesis Pathway of *R. Capsulatus*

Cheryl Clauson

Illinois Wesleyan University

David Bollivar, Faculty Advisor

Illinois Wesleyan University

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc>

Clauson, Cheryl and Bollivar, Faculty Advisor, David, "Porphobilinogen Synthase in the Heme Biosynthesis Pathway of *R. Capsulatus*" (2003). *John Wesley Powell Student Research Conference*. 42.
<http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc/2003/posters/42>

This Event is brought to you for free and open access by The Ames Library, the Andrew W. Mellon Center for Curricular and Faculty Development, the Office of the Provost and the Office of the President. It has been accepted for inclusion in Digital Commons @ IWU by the faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@iwu.edu.

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

Poster Presentation P11

**PORPHOBILINOGEN SYNTHASE IN THE HEME
BIOSYNTHESIS PATHWAY OF *R. CAPSULATUS***

Cheryl Clauson and David Bollivar*
Department of Biology, Illinois Wesleyan University

Porphobilinogen synthase is an enzyme that is essential to the biosynthesis of tetrapyrroles, such as heme and chlorophyll, in organisms from bacteria to humans. The PBGS of purple non-sulfur bacteria of the genus *Rhodobacter* are thought to be unique in that they do not require zinc in the active site of the enzyme and that the enzyme is also not stimulated by the presence of magnesium, as it is in plants and the bacterium *Escherichia coli*. The *hemB* gene from *Rhodobacter capsulatus* was sequenced, and showed great sequence similarity to the related species *Rhodobacter sphaeroides*. The *hemB* gene was cloned into an expression plasmid to create an expression strain of *E. coli* to obtain large quantities of the PBGS protein. The protein was purified from the *E. coli* in milligram quantities and is in the process of being crystallized to determine the three-dimensional structure. Activity assays have shown that zinc, while not required in the active site, does stimulate the activity. Potassium also stimulates the enzyme activity. Magnesium, which has been shown to stimulate in some species, does not seem to stimulate the *R. capsulatus* PBGS. More activity assays are planned and include β -mercaptoethanol, and pH tests to find the optimal pH for the enzyme activity. Other work includes making a knockout mutation of the PBGS gene in *R. capsulatus* as there is evidence for viable mutants in *Rhodobacter sphaeroides*, which is significant since heme is required for life and this pathway is the only known mechanism for making heme