19TH ANNUAL YALE BOUCHET CONFERENCE ON DIVERSITY AND GRADUATE EDUCATION 2023

"The Role of the Academy in Preserving a Democracy"

CELEBRATING 171 YEARS 1852-2023

CONFERENCE
MARCH 31 - APRIL 1, 2023 | FRIDAY - SATURDAY |

The Connecticut State Legislature passed the Gradual Emancipation Act in 1784. This act held that children of enslaved blacks were to be freed by their 25th birthday. The state banned the sale of slaves four years later and required owners to register all children born into slavery; however, it was not until 1848 that the state finally outlawed the holding of all slaves.

Born September 15, 1852 on the colored end of Bradley Street in New Haven, Edward Alexander Bouchet became a man of exceptional intellectual and emotional courage, undaunted by barriers of the day. His father, William Francis Bouchet, according to some, was born in Connecticut in 1817; others report that he arrived in New Haven in 1824 as the body servant to a Yale student from Charlestown, South Carolina. Edward’s mother, Susan Cooley Bouchet, was born in Westport, Connecticut, October 1817, daughter of Asher and Jane Drake Cooley. Edward, the youngest of four surviving children born to William and Susan Bouchet, their only son, attended the Artisan Street Colored School, an ungraded elementary school with about 30 students and one teacher. He was enrolled in the New Haven High School for two years before entering Hopkins Grammar School (now Hopkins School) in 1868. Hopkins, a prestigious private school in New Haven, is devoted exclusively to college preparation. The course of study in this very academically oriented secondary school in the nineteenth century was three to five years based on the age and intellectual level of the student. To enter at an advanced level, Bouchet had to pass examinations in courses completed by his class. During his time at Hopkins, he studied the classics, Latin, Greek and Greek history, geometry and algebra, and graduated valedictorian in 1870.
Bouchet entered Yale College in the fall of 1870 but lived at home. He was not engaged in campus extracurricular activities but worked as a sexton for the Temple Street Congregational Church (Dixwell Avenue United Church of Christ). During his senior year, he was contacted by Alfred Cope. Cope was a member of the Board of Managers for the Society of Friends Institute for Colored Youth, a prestigious private high school in Philadelphia. Ebenezer D.C. Bassett of Connecticut was principal of the Society of Friends Institute for Colored Youth until he was appointed by President Grant in 1869 to be the first African American Diplomat, Minister, resident and consul-general of the United States to the Republic of Haiti. Cope offered Bouchet a faculty position at the Institute but recommended that he remain at Yale and pursue graduate studies in physics. Bouchet accepted Cope’s offer and recommendation under the conditions that he provide financial support for his graduate studies at Yale and a guarantee of a $1,500 starting salary per annum at the Institute. Cope agreed to both.

Concentrating in physics and mathematics, Bouchet completed his undergraduate studies in 1874, with orations (highest honors or summa cum laude), class rank of six and election to Phi Beta Kappa. He enrolled immediately into graduate studies at Yale. He finished his required courses, passed his language and comprehensive examinations, completed his doctoral thesis research in experimental physics, and wrote his dissertation on Measuring Refractive Indices in two years. A bit short of his 24th birthday, he had earned from Yale a Ph.D. in Physics. By 1876 when perhaps as many as half the citizens in America were able to read and write, Bouchet had become the first self-identified African American to graduate from Yale College, the first admitted to Phi Beta Kappa but not initiated (George W. Henderson who graduated from the University of Vermont in 1877 was the first African American initiated), the first to earn the Ph.D. in any discipline from an American university, and the sixth person ever to earn the Ph.D. in physics in the western hemisphere. Bouchet, the graduate scientist, joined the faculty at the Institute for Colored Youth in Philadelphia, a high school, without benefit of laboratory, library, graduate students, and scientific collaborators. He taught mathematics, physics, and chemistry for twenty-six years with confidence, elegance, and enthusiasm. During his time in Philadelphia Bouchet presented public lectures in science; he was a member and warden of St. Thomas, the first African American Episcopal Church in the nation; he was among the earliest members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the American Academy of Political and Social Science, and the Franklin Institute; and as a faithful member of the Philadelphia Yale Alumni Association, he was cordially and respectfully received at meetings and dinners. In disagreement with the Institute’s administration over the value of a classical liberal arts education versus a practical one for African Americans, he was made redundant and departed from the Institute and Philadelphia. Bouchet was never called to the new graduate department of physics at Harvard; nor was he called to the fledgling graduate program at Johns Hopkins; nor was he called to Yale, the nation’s first Ph.D. granting university. The record shows that he sought a faculty position at Yale, Hampton and Tuskegee among others, but to no avail. For his twenty-fifth reunion he wrote:

I have endeavored to discharge my duty as teacher to those coming under my care, and have aimed to be a good citizen, and to exemplify in my life the mottos of our Alma Mater. …From November 1903, until May 1904, I was business manager for the Provident Hospital, a private institution located in St. Louis, MO. From May 1904 until March 1905, I was United States Inspector of Customs at the Louisiana Purchase exposition in St. Louis, stationed at Ceylon Court... In October 1906, I became director of Academics at the St. Paul Normal and Industrial School, located at Lawrenceville, VA., where I remained until June 1908, and in September 1908, I accepted the position of principal of the Lincoln High School at Gallipolis, Ohio.”

Bouchet remained in Gallipolis for four or five years when poor health forced his return to New Haven. After recuperation, he went to Bishop College in Marshall, Texas around 1914, but returned to New Haven again for health reasons in 1916.
Following a life devoted to teaching and good works, he died October 28, 1918. His funeral was at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church and he was buried in an unmarked grave in the family plot in New Haven’s Evergreen Cemetery. A black granite headstone on which Bouchet’s image and achievements have been etched was unveiled with ceremony on October 18, 1998 by the Reverend Dr. Victor A. Rogers, then Rector of St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, the former Dean of the Yale Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Susan Hockfield, who is the former president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, former Dean of Undergraduate Education at Yale, Joseph Gordon, former Headmaster of Hopkins, Thomas Rodd, Jr., the former New Haven Superintendent of Education, Dr. Reginald Mayo, Yale Chief Research Archivist, Judith Schiff, and Professor Emeritus Curtis L. Patton.

We may never know the specifics of his suppression. Few documents give clues to his thoughts or ambitions as the first African American graduate scientist. We do know that he lived during a period that was terrible for Black people, a period of great challenge. Edward A. Bouchet entered Yale with the prestige of having been valedictorian at Hopkins, and beginning with matriculation to the end, as he went back and forth between Yale and the Colored end of Bradley Street, Philadelphia to St. Louis, Virginia, Ohio, Texas and back to Bradley Street, he ranked among outstanding men, one who demonstrated fine intellect, great energy, and the courage of his convictions. In all his associations, at Yale and in later life, he showed himself a thorough gentleman in the best sense of the term. Prestigious fellowships, prizes and awards have been named in his honor as well as an International Conference on Physics and Technology. His life remains an influence for good at his alma maters, Hopkins and Yale, the city, state, and nation where he was born, the institutions where he taught. For the good progress in education and graduate scholarship, he is memorialized by (1) the Edward A. Bouchet Undergraduate Fellowship Program at Yale, (2) the Promising Scholars Fund – Edward A. Bouchet Scholarship, established by Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity, Beta Tau Boulé of New Haven, Connecticut (3) the Yale Bouchet Leadership Award medal, a national award given to leaders who have played critical roles in diversifying higher education, (4) the Edward Bouchet Abdus Salam Institute, (5) the American Physical Society (APS) Bouchet Award, (6) the Bouchet Graduate Honor Society, and (7) the Bouchet Academy in Chicago, Illinois (previously The Bryn Mawr Elementary School) where First Lady Michelle Obama, nee Robinson attended school. The original Bouchet portrait hangs in the Yale Sterling Memorial Library transept and in facsimiles at Hopkins School (New Haven), Howard University, and in corridors and offices of schools in New Haven, Connecticut and across America. His name, chiseled in granite above the archway leading from Yale’s Saybrook College courtyard to the Dean’s office, was unveiled by Peter Salovey, then Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, now President, and by the former Dean of Yale College, Mary E. Miller, then Master of Saybrook College.

_Curtis Patton, Professor_
Emeritus, Epidemiology and Public Health, Yale University
11:30 AM - 12:30 PM
Pre-Conference Event
Yale University Art Gallery Tour
1111 Chapel Street
Signed up guests only

1:30 PM - 3:00 PM
Bouchet Graduate Honor Society
National Steering Committee Meeting
**Only for Institutional Representatives
Humanities Quadrangle (HQ)
320 York Street, Room 276

3:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Conference Registration
Humanities Quadrangle (HQ)
320 York Street; Outside Room L02

4:00 PM - 6:00PM
Bouchet Graduate Honor Society
Distinguished Service Award & Induction Ceremony
Humanities Quadrangle (HQ)
320 York Street; Room L02

6:30 PM - 8:00 PM
Bouchet Graduate Honor Society Reception
Schwarzman Center
168 Grove Street; President's Room
Karen P. DePauw served as Vice President and Dean for Graduate Education and held academic appointments as tenured Professor in the Departments of Sociology and Department of Human Nutrition, Foods & Exercise at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia from 2002 until her retirement in 2021. Her major accomplishments during her tenure include building a strong, diverse, and inclusive graduate community; establishing the national award-winning innovative Graduate Life Center (GLC); and implementing the signature academic initiative known as Transformative Graduate Education (TGE), including the global perspectives and preparing the future professoriate programs.

Dr. DePauw held several leadership roles in graduate education during her career. She was a founding member and Facilitator/Chair for the Virginia Council of Graduate School (VCGS), served as President of the Council of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS) 2007-2008, served as Chair of the 2010 Board of Directors of the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), and served as Chair of the GRE Board (2013-2014).

Dr. DePauw is an internationally recognized scholar in the fields of adapted physical activity, disability sport and disability studies. She has published extensively, presented keynote and scholar lectures (more than 150) around the world. Her scholarship has focused on inclusion, equity issues, social construction of disability, and sociology of the body. In recognition of her scholarly contributions, she was elected as a member of the American Academy for Kinesiology in 1997. Throughout her academic career, she has served in leadership positions for national and international associations, received numerous honors and awards and has worked extensively with the United States Olympic Committee, the International Paralympic Committee and the Olympic & Paralympic Congresses since 1984.

Dr. DePauw holds a bachelor’s degree in sociology from Whittier College, a master’s degree in Special Education from California State University, Long Beach, and a Ph.D. in Kinesiology from Texas Woman’s University. In the 1970s, she taught with the Los Angeles City and Los Angeles County Schools and California State University – Los Angeles before moving to Washington State University, where she served for 22 years on the faculty and as an administrator.
Day Two - Saturday, April 1, 2023

PROGRAM

7:30 AM - 9:00 AM
Poster Exhibit Set Up
Humanities Quadrangle (HQ)
320 York Street; Lobby Outside L02

8:00 AM - 9:15 AM
Continental Breakfast & Networking
Humanities Quadrangle (HQ); 320 York Street
Room 131 - food/seating
Room 276 - additional seating

9:30 AM - 11:00 AM
Plenary Session
Humanities Quadrangle (HQ)
320 York Street; Room L02
Neutralizing Black Power: Counterintelligence, Counterinsurgency, and the (il-)liberal Academy

Guest Speaker
Wendell Adjetey, Assistant Professor and William Dawson Chair, History and Classical Studies, McGill University

11:15 AM - 12:15 PM
Poster Exhibition
Humanities Quadrangle
320 York Street; Lobby Outside L02

12:30 PM - 1:45 PM
Lunch & Networking
320 York Street; Room 131 and Room 276 for additional seating
Wedgell Nii Laryea Adjetey – Plenary Session Guest Speaker

Wedgell Nii Laryea Adjetey (Nii Laryea Osabu I, Oblantai Mantse, Atrekor We) is Assistant Professor of post-Reconstruction U.S. and African Diaspora history and William Dawson Chair at McGill University in Quebec, Canada. Dr. Adjetey is working on his second and third book projects on warfare and African-led abolitionism on the Gulf of Guinea Coast, and gender and messianic Black revolutionary leadership in the United States, respectively.


Dr. Adjetey is also a prize-winning instructor. He received the Faculty of Arts H. Noel Fieldhouse Award for Distinguished Teaching in May 2022. His undergraduate lecture courses and seminars cover U.S., African American, African Canadian, African Diaspora, and global history. He offers graduate seminars on various topics.

Before arriving at McGill in August 2019, Dr. Adjetey held the W. L. Mackenzie King Fellowship at Harvard University’s Weatherhead Center for International Affairs and Department of History Lectureship. His research has garnered prizes and fellowships from many sources: SSHRC, the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, University of Pennsylvania, Yale, and Princeton, to name a few. In 2017-18, he was Visiting Scholar and Pre-Doctoral Fellow at MIT, and in 2016-17, Visiting Scholar and Senior Resident Fellow at Massey College, University of Toronto.
POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Saturday, April 1 | 11:15 AM – 12:15 PM | Location - Lobby Outside L02

Career Paths, Transitioning
P.1 Jeva St. Fort, Howard University
Nonverbal Assessment for Worksite Preference

Chronic Diseases, Health
P.2 Alexis N. Peña, Johns Hopkins University
Host Remodeling Response in Phase II Clinical Adipose Matrix Implants

P.3 Veronica Canarte, Emory University
Characterization of Novel Factors that Contribute to Myeloma Cell Survival

P.4 Keenan Wiggins, Emory University
Class Switched Memory B Cell Development and Transcriptional Programming is Regulated by EZH2

P.5 Taylor Collins, University of Southern California
SARS-CoV-2 Causes Insulin Producing Beta Cells to Undergo an Unprogrammed Necroptosis Cell Death Pathway

P.6 Carolina Muniz-Partida, Howard University
Assessment of Retentive Memory in a Novel SwAPP-Tshr Mouse Model for Alzheimer’s and Hypothyroidism

P.7 Perpetue Bataille Backer, Howard University
Site Specific Drug Delivery for the Treatment of Gliomas

P.8 Estefany Abrego, Rutgers University
Black Children’s Health Inequities: A Regional Implicit and Explicit Biases Explanation

P.9 Darryl Payton, University of Southern California
SARS-coV-2 Vaccination Prevents Beta Cell Loss
POSTER PRESENTATIONS CONTINUED

Chronic Diseases, Health (Continued)
P.10 Dalena Ngo, Yale University
The University of California Partnerships with Catholic Hospitals after Roe v. Wade

P.11 Destiny Lawler, Howard University
Calcium Channel Blockers as Novel Therapeutic Agents for Triple-Negative Breast Cancer

P.12 Rachell Quarles, Howard University
Case Report: Pancake Kidney in Adult Female Body Donor

P.13 Mildred Galvez, University of California, Los Angeles
B2M Loss of Heterozygosity in Melanoma is Associated with Increased Numbers of Activated NK Cells and Higher Expression of the NK Cell Inhibitory Ligand, HLA-G

Literature, Arts, Culture
P.14 Adriana Ponce, University of Michigan
Stepparents in America: Preliminary Findings on Parenting Work

Race Relations, Social Movements
P.15 Roseline Jean Louis, Emory University
Perceived Racial Discrimination in Healthcare: The Impacts on Health Status in a Racially Diverse Population

Science, Technology, Science Policy
P.16 Franklyn Hall, Johns Hopkins University
Development of a 3D Cellularized Construct to Study the Effects of Cyclic Strain or Vascular Smooth Muscle Behavior in Marfan Syndrome

P.17 Stephanie Fuchs, Cornell University
A Glucose-Responsive Cannula for Automated Insulin Delivery

P.18 Karla Garcia-Martinez
A Role for Stimulator of Interferon Genes in Type I Interferon Response
POSTER PRESENTATIONS CONTINUED

Science, Technology, Science Policy (Continued)
P.19 Stacey Jones, Emory University
Structural and Mechanistic Investigation of B12-dependent Radical SAM Methyltransferases

P.20 Ana Maria Hoffmann, Emory University
The Influence of Language Experience on Sound-Symbolic Size Correspondences

P.21 Chaela Nutor, Emory University
Prenatal Cannabis Use and Offspring Autism-Related Behaviors: Examining Maternal Stress as a Moderator in a Black American Cohort

P.22 Sijan Poudel Sharma, University of Miami
Adaptation of Budding Yeast Saccharomyces Cerevisiae Populations to Novel Antifungal Nanoparticles: Carbon-Dots

P.23 Aylin Ak, University of Oklahoma
The Sequential Categorization Identification Paradigm: A New Paradigm for Combined Inferences

P.24 Kathryn Wall, Yale University
Understanding Racial and Ethnic Barriers in Maternal Neuroscience Research

US/International Policy, Law, Economics
P.25 Mikaela Spruill, Cornell University
Legal Inequity in Context: The effects of legal and sociological systems on human psychology

P.26 Imani Lewis, Virginia Tech
The Role of Media in Critical Race Theory
ORAL RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Concurrent Sessions I

Humanities Quadrangle (HQ); 320 York Street
Rooms (207, 132, 133, 227, 229)
2:00 p.m. - 2:55 p.m.

Science, Technology, Science Policy (Room 207)
(2:00 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.) Kelsey Reed, Virginia Tech
Plant Regeneration: To Cell and Back

(2:20 p.m. - 2:35 p.m.) Dr. Jasmine Marie Hope, Emory University
Assessment of Dorsiflexion Ability Across Tasks in Persons With Subacute SCI After Combined Locomotor Training and Transcutaneous Spinal Stimulation

(2:40 p.m. - 2:55 p.m.) Malick Kebe, Howard University
Statistical Modeling of Rainfall in Guinea

Chronic Diseases, Health IA (Room 132)
(2:00 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.) Dr. Tuwanda Green, Virginia Tech
Human-Centric Design Architecture for Health and Democracy

(2:20 p.m. - 2:35 p.m.) Deja Knight, Johns Hopkins University
Experiences of Black Women in the United States Along the PrEP Care Continuum

(2:40 p.m. - 2:55 p.m.) Oumsalama Elhelu, Howard University
Involvement of Stress in the Schistosoma Mansoni and Biomphalaria Glabrata Relationship and the Effect of Stress-Inhibitor Drugs on the Host-Pathogen Interaction

Chronic Diseases, Health IB (Room 133)
(2:00 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.) Karah Alexander, Emory University
The Feasibility and Preliminary Efficacy of a Novel, Online Culturally Tailored Psychoeducation Course for Black Dementia Caregivers

(2:20 p.m. - 2:35 p.m.) Macy Casaneda, Cornell University
Cholinergic Signaling Impacts Osteocyte Mechanotransduction

(2:40 p.m. - 2:55 p.m.) Rebecca Shasanmi Ellis, Emory University
Whirlwinds: Social Determinants and Psychiatric Acute Care Length of Stay During a Disaster
Concurrent Sessions I (Continued)

Humanities Quadrangle (HQ); 320 York Street
Rooms (207, 132, 133, 227, 229)
2:00 p.m. - 2:55 p.m.

**Literature, Arts, Culture (Room 227)**
(2:00 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.) Talia Boylan, Yale University
Amy Barbour (PhD 1902) and the Democratization of Classical Learning

(2:20 p.m. - 2:35 p.m.) Morinade Stevenson, Emory University
The Figure of the Black Mater(nal) in Black Feminist Literature

**Race Relations, Social Movements (Room 229)**
(2:00 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.) Michole Washington, University of Michigan
A Seat at the Table: Black Girls Co-Designing a STEM Experience

(2:20 p.m. - 2:35 p.m.) Alexa Baker & Amugo Kadenge, Howard University
Alienation of African Indigenous Languages in Communicating Democracy

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3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.  Book Signing with Professor Adjetey - Room 107
Complimentary Books for Registered Conference Guests Only
"Cross-Border Cosmopolitans: The Making of a Pan-African North America"

3:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.  Bouchet Collections Exhibit
Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library; 121 Wall Street
Meet group at 3:45 p.m. in front of HQ (320 York Street) to walk to library
Signed up guests only
ORAL RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Concurrent Sessions II
Humanities Quadrangle (HQ); 320 York Street
Rooms (132, 133, 207, 229)
3:05 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Chronic Diseases, Health IIA (Room 132)
(3:05 p.m. - 3:20 p.m.) Sharleine Taina Cotin, Howard University
Understanding Pathobiology of Type-2 Diabetes of African Americans in Washington, DC: An Epidemiological and Transcriptional Approach

(3:25 p.m. – 3:40 p.m.) Danielle M. Campbell, University of California, San Diego
Examining the Association between Substance Use, Racial Discrimination, and HIV Testing by Sexual Partner Types among Black Women at High Risk for HIV in Baltimore, MD US

(3:45 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.) Aicha Quamine, University of Wisconsin - Madison
Combination Natural Killer Cell-Based Therapy Reduces Murine Neuroblastoma Progression After Allogeneic Bone Marrow Transplant

Chronic Diseases, Health IIB (Room 133)
(3:05 – 3:20 p.m.) Lois Dankwa, Johns Hopkins University
Facilitators of Clinical-Community Collaboration: Identifying Opportunities to Improve Complex Care Management in Health Centers

(3:25 – 3:40 p.m.) Kedamawit Tilahun, Emory University
Elucidating the role of TMEM106B Fibrils in Brain Health and Disease

(3:45 – 4:00 p.m.) Christian M. McDonald, University of Miami
The Role of Hypoxic Cellular Protein Synthesis Machinery in KSHV Replication and Oncogenesis
ORAL RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Concurrent Sessions II (Continued)
Humanities Quadrangle (HQ); 320 York Street
Rooms (132, 133, 207, 229)
3:05 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Science, Technology, Science Policy (Room 207)
(3:05 – 3:20 p.m.) Chinasa T. Okolo, Cornell University
Examining Perceptions of Explainable AI with Community Health Workers in Rural India

(3:25 – 3:40 p.m.) Ayanna Jones, Emory University
Single Molecule Investigation of Ribonucleotide Roadblocks During Transcription Elongation

U.S./International Policy, Law, Economics (Room 229)
(3:05 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.) Briana Bostic, Johns Hopkins University
Geographic Context and Caregiver Beliefs: Associations with Workforce Demands and Resources, Classroom Quality, and Child Outcomes in Head Start Settings

(3:25 p.m. – 3:40 p.m.) Angie Torres-Beltran, Cornell University
Political Preferences and Motivations for Volunteering with Women’s Organizations

(3:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.) Zakhary Mallett, Cornell University
Inequitable Inefficiency: A Case Study of Rail Transit Fare Policies
ORAL RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Concurrent Sessions III
Humanities Quadrangle (HQ); 320 York Street
Rooms (207, 132, 229)
4:10 p.m. - 5:05 p.m.

Science Technology, Science Policy (Room 207)
(4:10 p.m. – 4:25 p.m.) Yemko Pryor, Emory University
Deconstructing Eurocentrism in Skin Pigmentation Research: The Value of Public Health and Genetic Data from Ancient and Contemporary

(4:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.) Ikechukwu (Ike) Onwuka, Florida International University
Particulate and Phosphorus Dynamics in the Water Column and Sediments of Greater Everglades Ecosystem Canals, South Florida, USA

(4:50 p.m. – 5:05 p.m.) Lenore Monterroza, Emory University
Induction of STING/IL-29 Signaling in a Human Lung Adenocarcinoma/Tumor-Infiltrating Neutrophils Biomimetic Model

Chronic Diseases, Health (Room 132)
(4:10 p.m. – 4:25 p.m.) Ayza Croskey, University of Michigan
Defining a Method to Drug the 'Undruggable'

(4:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.) Oscar Reyes Gaido, Johns Hopkins University
Novel Biosensor identifies Ruxolitinib as a Safe and Cardioprotective Drug

(4:50 p.m. – 5:05 p.m.) Ngozi Akingbesote, Yale University
A Precision Medicine Approach to Metabolic Therapy for Breast Cancer in Mice

Literature, Arts, Culture (Room 229)
(4:10 p.m. – 4:25 p.m.) John Kennedy, Cornell University
Acompañamiento/Accompaniment and Leadership in an Engaged Humanities Curriculum

(4:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.) Sarah Jenkins, Howard University
Black Women’s Literary Love Ethics: Recovery, Voice, and Democracy
BOUCHET LEADERSHIP AWARD
KEYNOTE LECTURE AND DINNER

Schwarzman Center; 168 Grove Street
Commons Dining Hall
5:15 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

2023 Bouchet Leadership Award Medal Recipient

David A. Thomas, Ph.D., President of Morehouse College, is internationally recognized for his expertise in organizational management and higher education leadership. A noted academic scholar, award-winning author, and business consultant for 100 of the Fortune 500 companies, Dr. Thomas has also served as dean of Georgetown University’s McDonough School of Business and on the faculty of Harvard Business School and the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. At Morehouse, his fundraising leadership has resulted in approximately $190 million, a still-growing total higher than any other presidential tenure in the history of the college. Under his strategic direction, Morehouse has extended its reach by launching its first online degree programs and has amplified its positioning as a center of intellectual discourse and social engagement in areas such as global leadership, professional equity, social justice, and innovation. He has written and co-written three books and more than 100 scholarly articles, book chapters, cases, and teaching notes.

Among other honors, Dr. Thomas is the recipient of Washington Business Journal’s “Minority Business Leader of the Year” award and the National Executive Forum’s Beacon Award and was named one of “Atlanta’s 500 Most Powerful Leaders” by Atlanta Magazine. Getting Serious About Diversity: Enough Already with the Business Case, co-written by Dr. Thomas, won the 2020 HBR McKinsey Award as the best Harvard Business Review article of the year. He serves on the boards of DTE Energy, Commonfund, Vanguard, and Yale Corporation. He is also a senior advisor for Grain Management. He earned a Ph.D. in organizational behavior studies and a Master of Philosophy in organizational behavior, both from Yale University, along with a Master of Organizational Psychology from Columbia University and a Bachelor of Administrative Sciences from Yale College.
Angie Torres-Beltran

Government

Angie Torres-Beltran is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Government at Cornell University. Her research interests include the comparative study of gender, violence, political participation, state-society relations, and justice in Latin America (Mexico, in particular) and the US. Her dissertation examines local and gendered state-society relations and its consequences for political behavior and responsibilities. Her work has been supported by the American Political Science Association and the National Science Foundation, among others. She is also the founder of the Gender and Political Participation Graduate Working Group, a space for those studying gender and politics to share work and get feedback. Her work has been published or is forthcoming in PS: Political Science & Politics, International Feminist Journal of Politics, and The Washington Post, among others. Angie holds a B.A. in International and Global Studies from the University of Central Florida.

Chinasa T. Okolo

Computer Science

Chinasa T. Okolo is a fifth-year Ph.D. candidate in Computer Science at Cornell University. Her research interests include explainable AI, human-AI interaction, global health, and information & communication technologies for development (ICTD). Within these fields, she works on projects to understand how frontline healthcare workers in rural India perceive and value artificial intelligence and examines how explainability can be best leveraged in AI-enabled technologies deployed throughout the Global South. Chinasa has been recognized as a GEM Fellow, an UNCF-Oracle Academy Graduate Fellow, a North American Network Operators’ Group (NANOG) Scholar, a Cornell Provost Diversity Fellow, and a Google Dissertation Fellow. Her research has been published at premier computing venues and covered in national outlets such as VICE, Bloomberg, and VentureBeat, amongst others. Chinasa holds a Bachelor’s degree in Computer Science from Pomona College and has previously interned at Apple, where she developed responsible AI/ML methodologies for health sensing applications and at Microsoft Research where she built computational models and domain-specific computational tools for bacterial quorum sensing. Throughout her time at Cornell, Chinasa has been a devoted mentor, guiding underrepresented undergraduate students in research projects, mentoring minority students in academic development programs on campus, leading service-learning trips to Nigeria and Ghana, and advising nearly 100 prospective applicants to graduate programs. Chinasa aims to pursue an academic career where she would lead a productive research lab, teach courses in human-centered computing, consult governments and large multinational corporations on technology issues in emerging markets, and eventually transition into academic leadership.
John Kennedy Godoy

Romance Studies

John Kennedy Godoy is a Ph.D. candidate in Romance Studies with a concentration in Latina/o Studies and Latin American Studies. His research focuses on Central American and Mexican migration to the US and its modes of representation, analysis, and definition, in addition to Mesoamerican epistemologies within a contemporary frame. He has received the Fulbright-Hays DDRA Fellowship, a Public Humanities Fellowship at the Center for Humanities in New York, and an Engaged Graduate Student Grant at Cornell. Prior to academia, John worked to support feminist weaving collectives and pedagogy in Ixim Ilew (Guatemala) and served as the academic director of the Yleana Leadership Academy, an organization dedicated to serving students underrepresented in the academy. He has also filmed a medium-length documentary with other Central Americans at the Mexico-Guatemala border, and his work is forthcoming or featured in Aztlán, Routledge, Latin American Literary Review, and others, in addition to being featured in Vogue, Harper's Bazaar, and the official TED forum.

Karla Garcia-Martinez

Biomedical and Biological Sciences

Karla Garcia-Martinez is a fifth year Ph.D. candidate from the Biomedical and Biological Sciences program at Cornell University where she focuses on Immunology and Infectious diseases. She studies how our immune system detects and responds to infection. Particularly, Karla focuses on activation and regulation of nucleic acid sensing Toll-Like Receptors found on monocytes and macrophages. She hopes that her research will lead to new immunomodulators and immunotherapeutics for nucleic acid mediated autoimmune diseases like Systemic Lupus Erythematosus. Karla's dedication to her research and her D&I work has been recognized by the HHMI Gilliam Fellowship in 2021 and by the Science Diversity Mentorship Program in 2022. Karla believes in making scientific and non-scientific education available to everyone and works with multiple associations and programs at Cornell University to increase graduate student outreach and retention. Ultimately, Karla hopes to become an inclusive and supportive leader who helps the next generation of scientists reach their academic and personal goals.
National Bouchet Graduate Honor Society Inductees

Cornell University 2023

Macy Castaneda
Mechanical Engineering

Macy Castaneda is a Ph.D. candidate in mechanical engineering at Cornell University. Her work interrogates the relationship between the nervous system and bone, specifically how cholinergic signaling affects osteocyte mechanotransduction using in vivo imaging techniques. Macy has received the Ford Foundation Predoctoral Fellowship, the Mong Neurotech Fellowship, and the 2021 Young Investigator Award for the Musculoskeletal Repair and Regeneration Symposium. She received her Bachelor of Science in mechanical engineering from the University of California, San Diego, where she was a recipient of the Chancellor's Research Excellence Scholarship, National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering (NACME) Scholarship, and performed research as an IMSD NIH undergraduate scholar. Macy has dedicated a lot of her attention on enhancing STEM education in underserved communities. In college, she volunteered for the office of students with disabilities and for three years was part of the leadership of Project Bell, a tutoring organization that held Saturday schools twice monthly to assist middle school students at risk of not graduating on time. In graduate school she has volunteered as an instructor for CURIE Academy, created a workshop for Expanding Your Horizons, and volunteered as a mentor for undergraduate students as part of GMSU at Cornell. As an aspiring leader in STEM education, it is her career-long goal to teach engineering as a tool for members of underprivileged groups to have successful and meaningful careers.

Mikaela Spruill
Psychology

Mikaela Spruill is a Ph.D. candidate in psychology with a concentration in social and personality psychology at Cornell University. Her research investigates how our judgments and decisions at the individual-level sustain system-level inequities. She examines the cognitive processes and social contexts that facilitate large-scale racial disparities via jury decisions in police excessive force cases and racial equity policy attitudes. For her research and academic pursuits, Mikaela has been honored with the Dalmas A. Taylor Fellowship, The Jenessa Shapiro Research Award, The Advanced Career Student Exemplary Service Award, The Russell Teaching Award, the Dean's Excellence Fellowship, and she was selected for APA Minority Fellowship Program's Psychology Summer Institute. Prior to attending Cornell, she received a Bachelor of Science in neuroscience from the College of William and Mary, and a Master of Arts in psychology from Wake Forest University. The principles that guide her inclusive interdisciplinary research also guide her leadership in the classroom, her department and the broader Cornell community. She has served on her department's DEI Committee since its inception. Through this role, she founded and led the Cornell Psychology Diversity and Inclusion Mentorship Program, which has paired almost 200 undergraduate students who are interested in research careers with a graduate student mentor to help them navigate academia. As she looks to the future, Mikaela's ultimate research goal is to uncover structural changes that can help ameliorate the group-based inequality that pervades our legal system and get our nation closer to the ideals of justice it espouses.
Stephanie Fuchs  
*Biological and Environmental Engineering*

Stephanie Fuchs is a PhD Candidate in the department of Biological and Environmental Engineering. Her research is focused on designing hydrogel-based biomaterials for type 1 diabetes therapies. She is particularly interested in making electronics free, non-invasive devices for glucose-responsive insulin delivery. Outside of the lab, Stephanie has been recognized as a GEM PhD Fellow, a Dean’s Diversity Scholar, has received a CALS Outstanding TA Award, and is a member of the 21-22 NextGen Professor Cohort. She has developed as a science advocate through her work as a STEM module develop in NSF outreach workshops, aided students pursuing research projects in developing countries as a Lumiere Research Mentor, and supported students outside of the classroom as a Graduate Resident Fellow by serving as a liaison between students and faculty in the Alice Cook House residential community. Stephanie has a deeply rooted fascination with the interface between biomaterials and disease, and the potential treatments that can arise from a greater understanding of the complex relationship between the two. As such, she aspires to contribute to the field of Bioengineering as a future faculty member; to further biomaterials research and support disenfranchised students pursuing STEM careers by improving the climate of academia.

Verdie Culbreath  
*Literatures in English*

Verdie Culbreath, M.A. is a Ph.D. candidate in the department of Literatures in English. They received a Bachelors of the Arts from the University of Texas, Austin with distinguished honors and a Master’s of the Arts in Rhetoric and Composition from Northeastern University after receiving a medal of distinction for writings composed as a graduate student. Verdie has held teaching assignments at Northeastern University, Cornell University, and New Roots Charter School in Ithaca, NY. Their teaching and scholarship seeks to embody the values of diversity, inclusion, integrity and the advancement of critical thinking and discussion. Verdie’s research examines the impact and influence of modern psychology on Modernist literature and popular culture. In particular, their research emphasizes the ways in which perception of mental illness and physical or cognitive ability shapes reception and interpretation of creative output. Pedagogically, Verdie focuses on encouraging critical thinking and discussion around this topic in a way that works to remove stigmatization of matters of mental health from the field of Literary Studies as well as within student-centered spaces in the academy. Outside of their academic work, Verdie has also worked as a fundraising expert for a variety of nonprofit organizations working to destigmatize mental health matters across the United States.
Olaoluwatoni Alimi
Classics and Philosophy

Olaoluwatoni Alimi research and teaching span ancient Roman philosophy (specializing in Augustine), intellectual history (focusing on freedom, slavery, law, rule, and authority), contemporary ethics and politics (idem), and philosophy of religion (especially on religion and morality). His current book project, *Slaves of God,* explicates Augustine's reasons for justifying slavery and argues for the centrality of slavery in his ethics and politics. Olaoluwatoni is in the early stages of research on an intellectual history of penal slavery (tentatively titled *Precarious: Retributive Slavery and the Rights of Citizens*), which will trace the development of penal slavery from its ancient Roman provenances through late antique, medieval, and early modern Christian thought, and into the modern context. Other recent areas of research include: 1) the normative structure of covenants; 2) Augustine's metaphysics of goodness; 3) theism and the problem of divine domination 4) the prospects for realism about aesthetic judgments; and 5) the meaning of ‘maturity’ in the history of philosophy. He is currently a postdoctoral associate in Classics and Philosophy as a Klarman Fellow. Before Cornell, Olaoluwatoni earned the Ph.D. in Religion, Ethics, and Politics from Princeton University, the M.A.R. in Ethics from Yale Divinity School, and the A.B. in Religion from Princeton University.

Zakhary Mallett
City and Regional Planning

Zakhary Mallett is the inaugural Strauch Postdoctoral Fellow of City and Regional Planning at Cornell University. His research investigates the relationship between transportation finance, travel behavior, and urban form. Zakhary earned his Ph.D. in Urban Planning and Development from the University of Southern California; Master of City Planning from the University of California, Berkeley; and bachelor's degree from Stanford University. His dissertation, which focuses on spatial and temporal variability of fare equity, was awarded an honorable mention by the Transportation and Public Utilities Group of the Allied Social Science Associations, and one paper from his dissertation was awarded Best Student Paper by the Transportation Research Forum. Zakhary previously served as an elected member of the governing board of the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District, where he spearheaded the agency's affordable housing policy and advocated for policymaking that was conscious of long-term impacts and based on empirical findings.
National Bouchet Graduate Honor Society Inductees

Emory University 2023

Karah L. Alexander
Nursing

Karah Alexander is a candidate for the Ph.D. in nursing at Emory University. Her research examines health literacy and medical discrimination in Black dementia caregivers and explores literacy as a factor of health inequities plaguing underserved populations. She is very passionate about intervention research, specifically assessing the efficacy of the novel, Caregiving While Black Course, which aims to develop caregiving mastery in Black dementia caregivers, and where she developed content on the importance of being a health literate caregiver. Karah co-leads an improvement project at Emory Healthcare, developing patient education that meets the health literacy needs of people in surrounding communities, and is a subject matter expert in literacy for the Atlanta Region Community Health Workforce Advancement Program (ARCHWAY). Karah earned her Master's in Public Health from Georgia State University with a focus on health promotion and behavior and is currently finishing her graduate certificate in health literacy at Georgia State’s College of Education & Human Development. Karah is also a proud alumna of Spelman College where she served as a UPS Scholar, dedicating 10 hours/per week to Fickette Elementary School in Atlanta. Currently, Karah is a graduate mentor in the Emory Pipeline Collaborative Program (EPiC) and works with Atlanta public high school students weekly to prepare for entry into health professions. Karah aspires to continue educating pre-licensure, as well as medical students in applying health literacy principles to clinical practice, and return to Spelman College to join the legacy of preparing Black women scholars to help change the world.

Veronica Canarte
Cancer Biology

Veronica Canarte is a Ph.D. candidate in the Cancer Biology Graduate Program at Emory University studying the role of CD28 and CD86 signaling in the survival of multiple myeloma. As an incoming graduate student, Veronica was awarded the Centennial Scholars Fellowship as an application who demonstrated outstanding academic achievement and who will contribute to the development of a richly diverse student body. Before joining Emory University, Veronica spent two years in the NIH-funded post-baccalaureate research program (PREP) at Tufts University School of Medicine studying Human papillomavirus-associated cervical cancers. In 2018, Veronica graduated from Towson University with a B.S. in Cell and Molecular Biology where she participated in various outreach organizations while on campus. She currently resides as the Division Student Advisory Council (DSAC) representative for the Cancer Biology program advocating on behalf of students and working with the administration to address student concerns. She is also an executive member of the Latinx Graduate Student Association where she spends time fostering a community for Latinx students across Emory University’s graduate programs. Veronica strongly believes in contextualizing social and political ramifications with some of the health consequences we see in the cancer biology field today. Ultimately, she aspires to redistribute her access to the academy and extend opportunities that contribute to prosperity and restoration of health standards in minority communities.
Jasmine Marie Hope
Neurorehabilitation

Jasmine Marie Hope, Ph.D. is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Rehabilitation of the School of Medicine at Emory University. Her research focuses on the underlying neurophysiological mechanisms of gait in persons with stroke. Dr. Hope has been elected as a community leader in the City of Atlanta where she advocates for diverse and historic communities. Additionally, she earned a Doctor of Philosophy in Neuroscience and a Bachelor of Science in Neuroscience and Behavioral Biology from Emory University. She has been awarded funding from the National Institutes of Health throughout her research training, including a National Research Service Award. Dr. Hope enjoys participating in outreach opportunities in which she teaches learners young and old about neuroanatomy, cognition, and neurorehabilitation. She has assisted in the organization of Brain Awareness Month as a member of the Atlanta Chapter of the Society for Neuroscience and volunteered at the Atlanta Science Festival. She has also assisted her neighborhood in the creation of an after-school film club to assist local students in gaining literacy and comprehension skills through the art of short film creation. Jasmine aspires to become an academic research scientist where she can advance the field of neurorehabilitation and advocate for diverse and equitable academic institutions.

Stacey Jones
Chemistry

Stacey K. Jones is a candidate for the Ph.D. in Chemistry at Emory University. His research focuses on the structural and mechanical characterization of B12-dependent radical SAM enzymes due to their implication in the biosynthesis of health-relevant antibiotics. Stacey has been recognized as a Centennial Fellow, Emory Diversifying Graduate Education (EDGE) Fellow, and National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program (NSF-GRFP) awardee. Stacey also received a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from Georgia State University, where he received the Chemistry Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Work. At Emory University, he served as the President of the National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers (NOBCChE). Stacey’s passion is expressed through his commitment to community building across the broader scientific community. He is an active participant in the Laney Graduate School Black Men at Laney United in Excellence (LGS-BLUE) initiative that connects and promotes community among Black and brown, male-identifying graduate students through various social, academic, and professional activities. Ultimately, Stacey aspires to work at the intersection of business and science and foster community through more mentorship programs.
National Bouchet Graduate Honor Society Inductees

Emory University 2023

Chaela Nutor
Psychology

Chaela Nutor is a candidate for the Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at Emory University where she is the recipient of the Centennial Scholar Fellowship. With her research, she aims to better understand the environmental risk factors that lead to disparities in child development. Chaela uses her research to advocate for the inclusion of typically underrepresented groups. Chaela especially values teaching and mentoring as she believes that the ability to influence and inspire young minds is a responsibility that shouldn’t be taken lightly. Chaela has been recognized as an ambassador for Laney Emory Diversifying Graduate Education (EDGE), where she helps other students take advantage of the benefits of the community by planning and executing social events and disseminating information about opportunities, scholarships, and fellowships to underrepresented graduate students. Chaela is also heavily involved in recruiting for both EDGE and the Emory Psychology Department. Chaela also leads the Graduate Students in Psychology and Neuroscience (GSPN) and the Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (JEDI) committees for the psychology department. Long term, Chaela would like to continue teaching undergraduates and conducting research as a tenured professor at an academic institution, as well as continuing her outreach efforts to mentor and teach beyond the confines of the academy.

Yemko Pryor
Genetics & Molecular Biology

Yemko Pryor (she/they) is a Ph.D. candidate at Emory University in the Genetics and Molecular Biology doctoral program. At Emory, Yemko works in an Ancient DNA lab where her dissertation research is focused on mapping the evolutionary histories of Indigenous Peoples in the Americas. In 2021, Yemko was awarded both the Ford Foundation Predoctoral Fellowship and the Nation Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship (NSF-GRFP). In 2022, they were awarded the Emory Laney Graduate School Emory Diversifying Graduate Education (EDGE) Fellowship and now work with Laney’s Associate Dean of Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) to maintain programming centering diverse graduate students on Emory’s campus. In 2018, Yemko gained a B.A. in Biology and Africana Studies from Oberlin College, graduating with High Honors in Africana Studies. Following graduation, she worked as a post-baccalaureate researcher in Human Genetics at the University of Chicago in the NIH Post-Baccalaureate Research Program (PREP). Yemko has always been very involved in university service and community engagement. They have volunteered with Emory’s Office of LGBT Life since January 2020 and currently facilitate the Queer Grads Community Group through the office. Yemko enjoys mentoring and building community with other graduate students, by helping students access campus resources or reviewing fellowship and grant applications. Her future goal is to continue leading DEI-centered initiatives in higher education.
Rebecca O. Shasanmi Ellis

*Nursing*

Rebecca O. Shasanmi Ellis is a candidate for the Ph.D. in nursing at Emory University. Her research focuses on the intersection of nursing workforce development, mental health, and structural determinants of health. Rebecca has been recognized as a Halle Global Institute Graduate Research Fellow, Centennial Scholar Fellow, Emory Diversifying Grad Education Ambassador, Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Honor Society inductee, and received the Top Ph.D. Student Award from the International Philosophy of Nursing Society. She received a Master of Public Health from Morehouse School of Medicine, and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from George Washington University, where she was a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation New Careers in Nursing Scholar. Rebecca currently provides care as a registered nurse at SisterLove, Inc. (the first Black women’s HIV org in the south) and CAPN Clinics (free clinics operating in homeless shelters) in women’s health and mental health. As a mental health triage nurse and Community Resiliency Model teacher she has taught nurses and other clinical/public health providers about managing their own psychological symptoms and sharing these resiliency skills for more effective and patient-centered care in the facility and community-based care.

Morinade J. Stevenson

*Philosophy*

Morinade J. Stevenson is a candidate for the Ph.D. in philosophy with an area of specialization in black feminism at Emory University. Her research focuses on black feminist representations tracing the figure of the black mater(nal) in literature by using a genealogical method that emphasizes discontinuity and contingency. This method invites a method of reading that disrupts the assumptive logic that informs both the reading of the figural representations of black women as well as the very mechanisms through which we interpret and understand the world. Morinade is a Minorities and Philosophy liaison and has completed a term on the national American Philosophical Association where she contributed to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policy initiatives with a team of graduate students. Morinade has been a devoted advocate for increasing diversity within institutions of higher ranking through organizing and community outreach.
Kedamawit Tilahun  
*Genetics and Molecular Biology*

Kedamawit Tilahun is a candidate for the Ph.D. in Genetics and Molecular Biology (GMB) at Emory University. She earned her bachelor’s degree in integrated neurobiology and physiology at North Carolina State University and conducted research that involved studying the role of endocrine disruptors on reproductive capacity and sexual development in Japanese Medaka. From her work, she earned her first co-authorship in a publication. After graduating, Kedamawit worked at the Duke Human Vaccine Institute (DHVI) as a research technician and analyst. She was able to identify neutralizing monoclonal antibodies from vaccinated Rhesus macaques that recapitulated characteristics of monoclonal antibodies from naturally infected individuals. Her time at DHVI led to two co-authorships in *Cell Reports* and *Science Translational Medicine*. Her current research focuses on elucidating the mechanisms of TMEM106B neurotoxicity using in vitro and in vivo methods. Kedamawit was awarded the Centennial Scholar Award from Laney Graduate School as well as the NIH T32 pre-doctoral award. Throughout her time at Emory, Kedamawit has been involved in leadership roles that contribute to diversity and inclusion in the academy by serving as the executive and DEI committee representative in the GMB community. Kedamawit has been active in outreach programs outside of Emory, she has participated in Science ATL’s SPSP program where she partners up with a teacher at a local school to bring engaging and enriching science lessons to the classroom. Kedamawit continues to provide service to her school and outside community by participating in teaching high schoolers as well as Emory undergraduates.

Keenan Wiggins  
*Genetics and Molecular Biology*

Keenan Wiggins is a Ph.D. candidate at Emory University in the program of genetics and molecular biology. His research focuses on the epigenetic and molecular regulation of memory B cells that are part of the adaptive immune system. Keenan completed his Bachelor of Science in biology at Indian River State College, FL where for two years he volunteered for earth day. Keenan has received the Santander Scholarship at the University of Birmingham, UK where he received his Master of Science in biotechnology. At Emory, Keenan teaches biology labs to share his passion with the upcoming undergraduates. He has also been volunteering for the black graduate student association and GDBBS involved in volunteerism at Emory. As a research scientist, Keenan wants to further the field of how memory B cells are programmed after natural infections compared to vaccines. He believes this is a huge area in immunology that is poorly understood and with his expertise in molecular biology techniques, Keenan is confident that he can lead the way for this public health issue. Ultimately, Keenan would like to give back to underrepresented communities by collaborating on health issues that disproportionally affect underrepresented communities.
Adrian Figueroa  
*Earth Systems Science*

Adrian Figueroa is a candidate for the PhD in Earth Systems Science with a concentration in Natural Resources Science and Management at Florida International University (FIU). His research focuses on the role of among-individual variation in resource use by gopher tortoises and the effect of this variation on the effectiveness of individuals as seed dispersers in the globally imperiled pine rockland ecosystem of South Florida. Through his graduate career, Adrian has been recognized as a Zoo Miami Graduate Research Fellow, FIU Institute of Environment Graduate Research Fellow, US Fish and Wildlife Service Directorate Fellow, and National Science Foundation Bridge to the Doctorate (NSF BD) Fellow. He received a Bachelor of Science with a double major in Environmental Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies from FIU, where he was a recipient of the Worlds Ahead Graduate recognition due to his commitment to going above and beyond in academic and research endeavors. Adrian strives to achieve excellence in all he does by collaborating internationally with ecologists, conservation biologists, and statisticians. He believes in sharing his love for conservation through experiential learning in the field and both through formal and informal talks. He has been an avid mentor at Zoo Miami through a longstanding collaborative internship program with FIU and now through the first-ever zoo-based Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program focused on enhancing diversity in environmental STEM. Ultimately, Adrian aspires to work at the intersection of conservation science and ecology, with a passion for improving conservation outcomes through collaborative approaches in cutting edge research.

Deidre A. Okeke  
*Public Health*

Deidre A. Okeke is a candidate for the Ph.D. in Public Health with a concentration in Epidemiology at Florida International University (FIU). Her research focuses on the intersection of social media use and mental health, particularly the connection between ethnic discrimination in social media and depressive symptoms experienced by Hispanic emerging adults within collegiate settings. Deidre has been recognized as a Presidential Fellow, a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Fellow, and received the Inclusive Leadership certificate of completion from FIU’s Executive Leadership Development Program. She received a Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences from George Washington University and a Master of Public Health from FIU, where she was recognized by the Dean for becoming the first Maternal & Child Health (MCH) graduate at the university. Through her role as Vice-Chair of her college’s Diversity & Inclusion Committee and her status as a FIU DEI Fellow, she hopes to shed light on and raise awareness of the impact of screen time in the context of racial inequities, to eventually disrupt processes of marginalization and minoritization as it pertains to health. With a background in health disparities, experience in teaching, and a passion for communication, Deidre wishes to turn her classroom into a global audience and educate others through broadcast journalism as a CNN medical correspondent.
Ikechukwu (Ike) Onwuka

*Earth Systems Science*

Ikechukwu (Ike) Onwuka is a Ph.D. candidate in Earth Systems Science at Florida International University (FIU), where he has been involved in the multibillion-dollar restoration of the Everglades. For his PhD project, Ike has developed cost-effective long-term methods that can provide high-resolution phosphorus estimates in canals, to assess how rapid discharges can degrade Everglades wetlands. Ike’s research has been recognized through the Everglades Foundation Fellowship, and an Endowment Award from the Society for Freshwater Science, an international scientific organization. He is a first author of two published peer reviewed articles and has contributed to public forums and discussions around massive Biscayne Bay fishkills. As an International Community Engagement Program ambassador, Ike co-led a presentation on environmental footprints and partook in different group activities. He also served in the Male Mentoring Initiative, a program created to enhance the academic, social, and professional success of male students of color, and as a mentor with the Mentor Collective Program where he helps undergraduates adjust to and thrive in college. As a Graduate Student Advisory Board member, Ike successfully advocated for expanding the mentorship program to include graduate students. Ike hopes to continue to support mentorship and diversity in academic and non-academic spaces. He intends to engage in work that will enrich lives, protect the environment, and promote sustainable practices in organizations.
Kemet Azubuike
Sociology

Kemet Azubuike is a candidate for the Ph.D. in sociology specializing in public sociology. Broadly, Kemet studies social and economic inequality, environmental sociology, and urban sociology, explicitly focusing on the African American community. His dissertation seeks to understand social equity in D.C.‘s urban sustainability initiative by measuring whether perceptions, awareness, and the perceived benefits of the initiative vary by race, socioeconomic status, and ward of residence. Kemet has been recognized as an Ernest E. Just and Percy L. Julian Research Fellow through Howard University’s Graduate School and has won competitive fellowships from the University of Michigan’s School of Environment and Sustainability and George Mason University’s Mercatus Center. At Howard, Kemet has served as a graduate research assistant in the Department of Sociology and has participated in research with The National Park Service and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. He earned his Master of Arts in sociology from Howard University and his Bachelor of Arts in economics and Africana studies from Indiana University. Kemet believes that sociology should be applied to uses beyond the academy, partnering with communities to provide research support to assist in solving relevant social issues. Ultimately, Kemet aims to use his scholarship to help create more equitable environmental, economic, and political outcomes for historically marginalized African American communities.

Symone Campbell
Communication, Culture, and Media Studies

Symone Campbell is a candidate for the Ph.D. in communication, culture, and media studies at Howard University. Her research focuses on critical and cultural approaches to analyzing digital media. Her dissertation examines how Black-oriented and Black woman-owned K-12 EdTech platforms challenge power structures through multimodal discourse, contributing to culturally relevant learning experiences for Black students. Symone has been recognized as a McNair Scholars Fellow, a Graduate Research Fellow for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and a Next Century Cities Fellow, where she published the report Beyond Broadband Access: The Need for Advocacy and Cultural Competency in the K-12 Digital World. Symone holds a Bachelor of Arts in sociology from SUNY Buffalo State College and a Master of Arts in Africana studies from the University at Albany. At Howard, she is the president of the Cathy Hughes School of Communications Scholars Forum, which facilitates critical discussions with Ph.D. students and provides insight on how to get research published. Symone previously served as a teaching associate in the Strategic, Legal, and Management Communication department at Howard, where she taught public speaking courses and grew a passion for mentoring undergraduate students. Ultimately, Symone aspires to positively impact marginalized communities by furthering the scope of critical and cultural research about digital media.
Sharlene Taina Cotin

*Biology*

Sharlene Taina Cotin is a candidate for the Ph.D. in biology with a concentration in biomedical science and epidemiology at Howard University. Born and raised in Haiti, Sharlene is a proud first-generation college and graduate student. Her research investigates the pathophysiology and socioeconomic factors influencing health disparities caused by Type 2 diabetes (T2DM) in African Americans in Washington, D.C. She has been recognized as a William Randolph Hearst Foundation Scholar and National Society of Leadership and Success Award recipient. Sharlene earned her Bachelor of Science in biology and Master of Science in cell and molecular biology from St. Thomas University, where she received a four-year merit scholarship. In 2022, Sharlene published her first manuscript in the Diabetes/Metabolism Research and Reviews Journal. At Howard, Sharlene has served as an undergraduate tutor. She also currently serves as a graduate teaching assistant in microbiology at Howard. As an aspiring principal research investigator, Sharlene is enthusiastic about training the next generation of STEM research scientists. In addition, she is determined to inspire underrepresented students in the U.S. and her home country of Haiti to become scientists. Sharlene’s long-term career goals are to use nutrition to independently investigate natural and holistic remedies to help prevent and reverse certain metabolic illnesses. She also hopes to build a research facility in Haiti.

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Terri Davis

*Communication, Culture, and Media Studies*

Terri Davis is a candidate for the Ph.D. in communication, culture, and media studies at Howard University. As a communication and critical/cultural scholar, her research interests lie at the intersection of communication activism and social justice. Her most recent research centers on the Black/White wealth gap and examines racist and discriminatory housing policies that have contributed to the existing gap. Terri has delved deep into the research utilizing a critical historical approach coupled with obtaining firsthand knowledge by interviewing African Americans impacted by the devastating effect of eminent domain in their communities. Additionally, she utilizes her passion for communication to amplify muted voices as a form of resistance against the erasure of African American history. Terri is committed to giving voice to the voiceless and shining a spotlight to give context to the existing generational wealth gap. As she often shares when discussing her research: “For some, it is history. For others, it is a memory.” Most recently, Terri was selected by the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights as a participant in their leadership program and is currently recognized as a Just-Julian Graduate Fellow through Howard University’s Graduate School. She plans to continue advocacy as a communication activist unearthing disparities in African American communities. She has established a communication and media equity company that will serve as a platform to amplify these voices.
Sharon Jessé Edwards

History

Sharon Jessé Edwards is a candidate for the Ph.D. in history with a concentration in U.S. and public history at Howard University. Her research focuses on the educated, Christian, and 'colored' race in the late nineteenth century as they used education as a tool of resistance to form historically Black colleges and universities in the rural south. Sharon Jessé traces themes of racial upliftment, education, Christianity, Black spaces, Black women, and erasure to help readers grasp the importance of education in religious Black communities, specifically in the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. She received her Bachelor of Arts in history from Spelman College, and her Master's in Teaching History from Tufts University. She was awarded the Phi Alpha Theta award for her scholarship in history. She has published on Black education and criticality in venues like The Teachers College Record and the edited collection Using Culturally Relevant Practices to Support Student Achievement. By designing engaging and culturally relevant curricula for history students and teachers at varying levels, Sharon Jessé hopes her work will positively impact communities. In addition, Sharon Jessé aspires to help further conversations about the importance of preservation and conservation efforts for Black archives, education, and buildings. Her favorite quote is Audre Lorde's take on courage. Lorde says, "I have come to believe repeatedly that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal, and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood."

Latoya S. Hogg

Social Work

Latoya S. Hogg is a candidate for the Ph.D. in social work at Howard University. Her research focuses on the Impostor Phenomenon in Black social work doctoral students attending historically Black colleges and universities. Latoya received her Bachelor of Science in criminal justice from the University of Texas at Tyler and her Master of Social Work from Stephen F. Austin State University. Since her admittance into the social work Ph.D. program at Howard, Latoya has had accepted presentations at the Council on Social Work Education's Annual Program Meeting, the National Association of Social Worker's National Conference, the Society for Social Work and Research Annual Conference, and the Network for Social Work and Management Annual Management Conference. During her studies at Howard, she has also held consecutive internships at the United States Government Accountability Office as a Graduate Student Analyst. In addition, Latoya mentors emerging social work undergraduate and graduate students across the country and hosts virtual accountability spaces for fellow doctoral colleagues on the weekend. She also serves as an adjunct faculty member in social work at Champlain College, Howard University, and the University of Texas at Arlington.
Melanie R. Holmes

History

Melanie R. Holmes is a candidate for the Ph.D. in history with a concentration in African diaspora history and a minor in U.S. history at Howard University. Her research interests include Black colonial resistance and Black Power movements. She is a veteran educator in the District of Columbia Public Schools. She teaches middle school world geography while serving as the Social Studies Department chair. At a local and district-wide level, Melanie has written and led professional development on culturally responsive curricula so that children can receive an education that is inclusive of the unique experiences of people of color. In this way, she hopes students can learn more about their history and develop respect for people of diverse backgrounds. Before teaching, Melanie was a newspaper reporter for The Philadelphia Tribune and Baltimore's Afro-American Newspaper. As a journalist, Melanie focused on providing a voice for underserved individuals and communities by highlighting their concerns and spotlighting their successes. Melanie's work has always been highly motivated by her passion for racial justice. She hopes to use her doctoral work to inspire the youth to continue fighting for an equal society. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in print journalism from Howard University and a Master of Science in education from the University of Pennsylvania.

Destiny Lawler

Pharmacology

Destiny Lawler is a candidate for the Ph.D. in pharmacology at Howard University. Her research focuses on discovering novel therapeutic targets for drug delivery in Triple-Negative Breast Cancer (TNBC) and Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE). Destiny has been recognized as a Bridge to Doctorate (B.D.) Fellow and has received the Excellence in Service to Students Award from the National Society of Leadership and Success. She received her Bachelor of Science in forensic biology from Alabama State University. While at Howard, Destiny volunteered at the round table discussion for the 13th Annual Texas Conference on Health Disparities Diversity in the Era of Precision Medicine. Destiny serves as a graduate teaching assistant in the Department of Pharmacology at Howard. She also mentors high school students aspiring to STEM fields and careers. Ultimately, Destiny aspires to advance positive patient health outcomes by pursuing research involving possible targets for novel drug therapy for common diseases and comorbidities.
Joshua Lawson
*English*

Joshua Lawson is a candidate for the Ph.D. in English with a concentration in Caribbean literature at Howard University. His research centers on the construction of whiteness, creolization, racial identity formation, and modernity through a close reading of four Anglophone Caribbean novels. He earned his Master of Arts in literature and English studies from Minnesota State University Mankato, where he received the Jane F. Earley American Literature Scholarship. Joshua has been recognized as a Plympton Literary Fellow and a recipient of the 2019 Dean’s Choice Award. Joshua is committed to lifelong learning and using his love of literature and writing to foster critical thinking through education. In addition, he has served as a coach for the ACE Scholars program, a writing program designed to help Howard University students apply for the Fulbright program. In the past few years, as a tutor in the Writing Center at Locke Hall, Joshua has demonstrated dedication to coaching students to find their voice through writing. Ultimately, Joshua is passionate about using literature to create space for students to think deeply about the world around them and nurture a passion for reading and writing.

Dana Williams-Johnson
*Communications, Culture, and Media Studies*

Dana Williams-Johnson is a candidate for the Ph.D. in communication, culture, and media studies at Howard University. Her research focuses on the impacts of misinformation and hate speech in online spaces, race and feminism in social media, and the societal impact of social media. Dana’s goal is not only to examine the impact racism in online spaces has on society but also to celebrate the joy of marginalized populations and how they utilize social media to share their experiences online. Her dissertation, *Stitches of Progress: Knitting, Consciousness, and the Changing Power of Black Women’s Work and Leisure*, is a study to understand how Black women disrupt the knitting industry’s ideals of womanhood through their use of social media. Through a content analysis of popular knitting magazines and the social media posts of Black women who knit, in addition to qualitative interviews with Black women who knit, her work will use postcolonial feminist theory to explore societal standards of beauty and womanhood in craft and representations of Black women on social media. Dana has served as a graduate research assistant for Harvard University’s Berkman-Klein Center for Internet and Society and written for their Medium account on internet responsibility. She recently published a peer-reviewed online resource on double consciousness in the workplace through SAGE Publishing. Dana is currently an instructor and will start as an assistant professor in the Howard University School of Business Marketing Department in the fall of 2023.
Franklin J. Avilés-Vázquez

**Biophysics**

Franklin J. Avilés-Vázquez is a graduate student pursuing his Ph.D. in Biophysics at Johns Hopkins University. He holds a bachelor's degree in Chemistry from the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras campus. Franklin's research focuses on understanding the molecular mechanisms of cohesin and DNA repair proteins after DNA damage. During the pandemic, knowing about the significant gaps in education and the difficulties arising in his hometown in Puerto Rico, he cofounded, along with Dr. Claudio, the COVID-19 Coalition of Wisdom of Puerto Rico (COSACO). In a matter of weeks, COSACO became a leading educational resource for the scientific and non-scientific community, where Franklin, as an executive director, organized more than fifteen scientific seminars on COVID-19 and over 200 5-minute informative capsules through local TV channels, reaching over 300,000 Puerto Ricans. Throughout his academic journey, Franklin has received several awards and scholarships for his academic achievements, including the Francis D. "Spike" Carlson fellowship and an Honorable Mention in the 2021 National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP). He has mentored undergraduate and graduate students through programs at Hopkins and led and organized events that advocate for diversity and inclusion in the scientific community. As a Ph.D. candidate, Franklin will continue his scientific pursuits, make significant contributions to DEI, and be committed to serving society through science. He is confident that his passion for science, dedication, and hard work will help him achieve his long-term career goals and positively impact the scientific community.

Briana S. Bostic

**Education**

Briana S. Bostic is a candidate for the Ph.D. in education at The Johns Hopkins University. Her research at the School of Education and within the Well-being for Early Learning Lab focuses on teacher well-being, the availability of early care educators' resources across geographic contexts, and children's development (social, emotional, behavioral). Briana has been recognized as a Children's Equity Project Start with Equity Fellow. As part of this fellowship, she was a policy intern at the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Early Childhood Development. Briana has also received the Jeffrey A. Grigg Award for excellence in research in Baltimore, supported by her involvement in the Baltimore Early Childhood Advocacy Council. Also, she earned a Bachelor of Arts in economics and anthropology from Washington University in St. Louis, where she received the Excellence in Anthropology Research Award from the Department of Anthropology. Briana taught preschoolers in Chicago, where she earned a Master of Science in Education from Dominican University, specializing in early childhood education. Briana is a writer. She loves community organizing and has volunteered with neighbors in St. Louis, Chicago, Baltimore, and Prince George’s County (MD) to advocate for better social infrastructure and preservation of community. Fundamentally, Briana seeks to grow in her scholarship and has been inspired by her relationships to understand how dynamic communities can be nourishing and sustainable.
Lois Dankwa
Health Policy and Management

Lois Dankwa is a Ph.D. candidate in Health Policy and Management at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (BSPH). Her research interests include cross-sector collaboration and care management in underserved communities for individuals experiencing chronic illness and complex social challenges. Her work explores teamwork and collaborative decision-making related to health behavior, organizational structure and development, and strategic management. Prior to Hopkins, Lois developed and ran public opinion research to identify people’s needs and experiences within the health care system to inform people-centered policy design; she also conducted clinical research to examine biological factors on patients’ health outcomes. Lois received her M.S. in Health and the Public Interest from Georgetown University and B.A. in Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania. As a current C. Sylvia and Eddie C. Brown Community Health Scholar, Lois is committed to serving as a connector of people, information, and resources, and hopes that her research will amplify meaningful solutions to gaps in health services. In 2022, she was one of two inaugural awardees for the Institute for Health and Social Policy BSPH Student and Trainee Policy Impact Award. Additionally, from 2020 to 2022, Lois served as the BSPH AcademyHealth Chapter President, and currently serves on the Academy of Management’s Student Engagement Committee and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Taskforce in the Health Care Management Division. Through her career, Lois hopes to contribute to care management transformation that will ultimately reduce health disparities and improve overall population health.

Franklyn D. Hall III
Biomedical Engineering

Franklyn D. Hall III is a candidate for a Ph.D. in Biomedical Engineering at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. Franklyn received his Bachelor of Science in chemical engineering with a biomolecular concentration from Mississippi State University. His dissertation research is focused on using vascular cells derived from stem cells obtained from patients with Marfan Syndrome (MFS) to understand new mechanisms of disease progression. In pursuit of his research goals, Franklyn received the Howard Hughes Medical Institute Gilliams Fellowship and National Institutes of Health Ruth L. Kirschstein Predoctoral Award (F31) to support his work. Outside of research Franklyn enjoys engaging with undergraduate students through teaching and mentorship. He recently co-wrote a course entitled “Food of the Future” which explores how microbiology, genetic and stem cell engineering are fueling emerging solutions to the global climate, animal welfare, and food scarcity challenges of today. Franklyn believes service to his fellow graduate students has been the source of some of the most rewarding and enjoyable experiences in his graduate school journey. He was particularly excited about three initiatives he designed including programming for assisting minority graduate students in learning self-promotion techniques through identifier and social media platforms, a roundtable/networking event between Black faculty and students to discuss race-based challenges in academia, and the first black graduate student retreat aimed at creating a space for community-building and recovery from pandemic-induced stressors. In the future, Franklyn will continue studying how physiologically relevant 3D cellular models can be used to study disease and identify potential therapeutics.
Michael Hopkins
*Biochemistry Cellular Molecular Biology*

Michael is a 5th year Ph.D. candidate in the department of biological chemistry at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. His research focuses on elucidating the molecular mechanisms underlying stress granule condensate formation during proteasome-mediated stress responses using biochemistry and microscopy techniques. Proteasome-mediated degradation is impaired during neurodegenerative disease pathophysiology and stress granules are the molecular precursor for protein aggregates, therefore this work could have important implications for neurodegenerative disease etiology. Michael's thesis work is supported by the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute Gilliam Fellowship, and the Society for Neuroscience Neuroscience Scholars Program. At Johns Hopkins, Michael has been involved in on campus diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts through the Biomedical Scholars Association, including serving as the director of social engagement for the past 2 years where his job is to support the recruitment and retention of minority students through innovative social programming. Prior to his matriculation to graduate school, Michael graduated Summa Cum Laude from North Carolina Central University with a degree in pharmaceutical science where he was actively involved in student leadership positions including serving as Student Government Association President and as a member of the university Board of Trustees. After graduation Michael plans to pursue a career at the intersection of science, business, and policy, leveraging the power of biomedical research to improve his community.

Deja Knight
*Social and Behavioral Interventions*

Deja Knight, MPH, MA is a doctoral candidate in the Social and Behavioral Interventions program in the Department of International Health at the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health. Her research focuses on intersectional social determinants of health, HIV, and substance use in the United States, specifically among minoritized and under-resourced communities. Deja has been recognized as a National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's Ford Foundation Predoctoral Fellow, C. Sylvia and Eddie C. Brown Community Health Scholar, and has received the Center for AIDS Research Adolescent and Young Adult Microgrant. Deja also serves as a Steering Committee Member on the International Health's Inclusion, Diversity, Anti-Racism, and Equity Group, and is a Teaching Council Fellow. Deja received her MPH from Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, where she served as an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Fellow in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. She received her MA from the University of Iowa in the Psychological and Brain Sciences Department, with a concentration in Behavioral and Cognitive Neurosciences, where she co-founded and co-direct Our Collective Brains (OCB), an organization that aimed to help first-generation and minority students excel academically. Deja received her BA from Wesleyan University, where she was a Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program Fellow and a QuestBridge Scholar. Deja is a Section Counselor in the Community Health Planning and Policy Development Section of the American Public Health Association. Ultimately, Deja is passionate about addressing health disparities through research and advocacy.
Alexis N. Peña  
*Biomedical Engineering*

Alexis N. Peña is a Ph.D. Candidate in Biomedical Engineering at the Johns Hopkins University with a focus on Translational Cell & Tissue Engineering. She is in Dr. Jennifer Elisseeff’s lab where they target the immune system to make healthy tissues. Alexis researches human cell/tissue products for musculoskeletal injuries and disease. Tissue- and blood-based biomaterials are a class of regenerative medicine technologies that have shown great clinical promise in promoting tissue regeneration through mechanisms of immune modulation. She is a member of the Alpha Eta Mu Beta Biomedical Engineering Honor Society and a GEM Associate Fellow. She was awarded the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship (NSF-GRFP). Her north star is to improve health outcomes and improve quality of life. She recognizes that there must be a holistic approach to healthcare that involve innovations for acute care and for lifestyle and behavioral interventions to manage and mitigate chronic diseases. To establish deeper competency in food and nutrition, she completed a graduate certificate from Johns Hopkins School of Public Health in food systems. She received a Bachelor of Science in Bioengineering at Syracuse University, where she was a Ronald E. McNair and LSAMP scholar. During her undergraduate and graduate training Alexis has been committed to being of service by volunteering, mentoring, serving on committees and panels, and supporting local businesses. To date, she has co-authored 9 publications spanning regenerative medicine strategies and in vitro cell platforms to ultimately provide tissue engineering and regenerative medicine solutions.

Oscar E. Reyes Gaido  
*Cellular & Molecular Medicine*

Oscar E. Reyes Gaido is an MD-PhD candidate within the Cellular & Molecular Medicine and Medical Scientist Training Programs at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. His research focuses on leveraging kinase biosensors for the development of cardiovascular therapies. For this work, Oscar has been recognized with a predoctoral fellowship from the American Heart Association, the JHU Graduate Student Association Scientific Presentation Award, and was named a finalist of the JHU 3-Minute Thesis competition. He received his Bachelor of Science degree from Johns Hopkins University, where he was the sole recipient of the Lee Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Research for his work on dietary cholesterol metabolism. Oscar has served his Baltimore community under many roles including as a medical interpreter, sex-ed teacher, family planning counselor, and as liaison between the Latino community and local government. He is a founder of Latino Leaders in Training, a mentoring organization which pairs underrepresented Baltimore students with medical students and has successfully guided dozens of trainees into STEM careers. Oscar has served a national advocacy role through his position as regional community service chair for the American Medical Association, where he has lobbied for increases to mental health and financial support to marginalized trainees. For these efforts, he was awarded the Paul S. Lietman Johns Hopkins International Scholarship and the JHU Diversity Leadership Award. Oscar is eager to continue his career at the crossroads of science and medicine—aiming to develop therapeutics for the conditions that disproportionally afflict underserved communities.
Jonathan J. Suen

*Nursing*

Jonathan J. Suen is a PhD candidate at the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing (JHSON). He also trains at the Johns Hopkins Cochlear Center for Hearing and Public Health within the Bloomberg School of Public Health (BSPH). Suen received a Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award (F31) from the National Institute on Aging (NIA/NIH) to study the roles of hearing health and social connections for supporting healthy aging in older adults. He orients his scholarship for identifying opportunities to promote health equity among aging populations through transdisciplinary collaborations, including with older community members from Baltimore who confront social and structural barriers in accessing care. Recognized as a leading advocate for increasing the accessibility of hearing care by older adults, Suen has presented across disciplines at conferences nationally and internationally. The first-ever World Report on Hearing from the World Health Organization (2021) also cited three of his publications. Suen has served on several advisory boards by invitation from leaders like the Editor-in-Chief of the American Journal of Public Health. He received annual honors twice from the Johns Hopkins Diversity Leadership Council for his roles in organizing key equity and inclusion initiatives at the university. He earned his Bachelor of Science from Boston University, where he received the Community Service Award at commencement, before completing his Peace Corps service in Kenya teaching at schools for deaf students in Kenyan Sign Language. Suen also earned his Doctorate in Audiology from Gallaudet University in Washington, DC where he was a President’s Scholar.

Marah Wahbeh

*Human Genetics and Genomics*

Marah Wahbeh earned her Ph.D. in Human Genetics and Genomics at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Her thesis work was focused on elucidating the functional impact of some of the recently discovered genetic schizophrenia associated variants (both common and rare) by using a combination of CRISPR/Cas9 genome editing, transcriptomics, and induced pluripotent stem cells. Marah got her Bachelor of Science in Biology from Wayne State University where she graduated Magna cum laude and was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa. During her time at Hopkins, Marah was involved in student government, DEI and advocacy efforts, and science communication efforts engaging the Arabic speaking science community. This includes serving as VP of Diversity and Inclusion with the Graduate Students Association, chairing The Peer Collective committee, and serving on the Genetics Society of America’s Early Career Leadership Program’s Policy and Advocacy subcommittee where she co-organized the inaugural Multilingual Seminar Series in Arabic. Marah is pursuing a career in science policy where her goal is to engage in work that can foster her interest and expertise in science and honor her desire for a team-based work environment where she can work on projects that are fast-paced and have a direct impact on people.
Gloria Ashaolu
History

Gloria Ashaolu is a candidate for the Ph.D. in history at Michigan State University. Her research interests include, but are not limited to, the history of Black education, Black women’s history, Black intellectual history, and the Black historical enterprise. Her dissertation project seeks to attend to the underappreciated educational activism and practice-based and evidence-based intellectual philosophies and pedagogies of Black female teachers during the Early Black History Movement. It also examines the regional, national, and international organizing efforts of Midwestern Black women toward the advancement of the Black freedom struggle. As a Future Academic Scholars in Teaching (FAST) Fellow, her IRB-approved project seeks to examine how the cognitive flexibility and complementary auditory learning that story-telling podcasts offer, and the narrative forms present promote an increased application-based enriching comprehension of historical themes discussed in a class and their broader relevance in contemporary society. Through her academic studies and community engagements, and commitment to a career of learning, teaching, research, advocacy, and servant-leadership, Ashaolu aspires to create meaningful historical work that helps us better understand the present through our collective history, coupled with effective, innovative, and educational instructional practices.

Chelsie Boodoo
Biosystem and Agricultural Engineering

Chelsie Boodoo is a candidate for the Ph.D. in biosystem and agricultural engineering at Michigan State University. She created biosensors for Staphylococcus aureus and African Swine Fever Virus in her research in Dr. Alocilja’s lab. She also works to connect researchers worldwide to save lives through the Global Alliance for Rapid Diagnostics. She has collaborated with fellow students in designing a welcoming environment that fosters all aspects of science communication (scicomm) in a modern, dynamic, and youthful way for all. Her passion for scicomm drives her to find unconventional and inspiring ways to mix science with the art of storytelling. This led her to be the founder and President of MSU SciComm. In addition, Chelsie co-hosts the award-winning show, “The Sci-Files”, with Daniel Puentes on Impact 89FM, where they explore various MSU student research topics.
Jada Gannaway

History

Jada Gannaway is a Ph.D. student in history at Michigan State University. Her research interests include, but are not limited to, twentieth century radical politics in the Caribbean with wide interdisciplinary interests in the African Diaspora and Black women's history. Gannaway is currently working on a political biography of Trinidadian-born activist, Althea Jones-Lecointe, who was an instrumental figure of the Black Power Movement in the U.K. during the late 1960s early 1970s. Furthermore, her work in progress explores the transatlantic connections between Trinidad and the U.K. through the life and experiences of Jones-Lecointe. She intends to spend the upcoming Fall semester abroad in London to conduct archival research on the political contributions of Jones-Lecointe and other Black West Indians during the Black Power era. Gannaway is the recipient of the 2023 Kathy Chamberlain Research Award and the 2022 North Atlantic Conference on British Studies Diversity and Inclusion Fellowship. She currently serves as a member of the 2022-2023 Graduate Student Advisory Council for the College of Social Science and as a Graduate Assistant to MSU's Womxn of Color Initiative. Gannaway is a proud alumna of North Carolina Central University.

Chanteliese Watson

Educational Policy and K-12 Educational Administration

Chanteliese Watson is a dual Ph.D. student in educational policy and K-12 educational administration at Michigan State University. Her research aims to analyze connections between teacher retention, vicarious trauma, and their personal social and emotional learning (SEL). In fitting this gap into the larger conversation of teacher labor markets—specifically teacher retention—Chanteliese is interested in understanding how SEL practices and policies for teachers impact their stress levels, job satisfaction, effectiveness measures, and student outcomes. She is passionate about bridging the gaps between education research, policy, and practice. She recently co-authored a paper published in Equity in Education & Society examining inequities that schools faced during the initial outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Chanteliese is a member of MSU’s Black Graduate Student Association (BGSA) and Collaborating Across Education Policy Students (CAEPS). She earned a Bachelor of Arts in English from Howard University and a Master of Urban Education from Union University through the Memphis Teacher Residency (MTR) program. Prior to beginning her studies at MSU, Chanteliese served as an elementary school teacher in Memphis.
Antonio White

Neuroscience

Antonio White is a candidate for the Ph.D. in neuroscience at Michigan State University. His research focuses on brain gut axis signaling. He is examining maternal gut microbiome contributions to maternal behavior and identifying metabolites that gut microbiome uses to impact maternal behaviors in mice. Antonio has presented scientific posters at local and international conferences in his field of study. He was a (2021-2022) Future Academic Scholars in Teaching Fellow and was selected to participate in the College Online Academy at MSU. He has served as a teaching assistant in genetics, neurosciences and biology courses. Antonio is active help in the MSU community. He is a social chair within the Neuroscience Program that develops social communal events among undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty. He serves as a graduate student mentor in the Pathway to research program and assists marginalized students in STEM to seek research opportunities at MSU and other universities. He serves as the current president of the Black Graduate Student Association, advocates on behalf of Black graduate students, and develops community events that support the needs of Black graduate students. Antonio’s long-term goal is to become a research professor at a Historically Black College/ University and bring the field of neuroscience to HBCUs that do not have a neuroscience curriculum.
Kavitha Chintam  
*Chemical & Biological Engineering*

Kavitha Chintam is a fourth-year PhD candidate in Chemical Engineering at Northwestern University in the lab of Professor Linsey Seitz. Kavi’s research, policy, and outreach interests are centered on equity in climate change mitigation and higher education. Kavi explores electrochemical carbon dioxide reduction as a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions during the production of hydrocarbons, the basis of many important fuels and chemicals. She has presented her work at national conferences. Kavi is the President of the Science Policy Outreach Taskforce at NU where she promotes community-based projects and overlooks efforts to engage students in policymaking. A founding member and Co-Chair of the Chemical and Biological Engineering department’s Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ARDEI) committee, Kavi led the development of and was the first teaching assistant for a first-year graduate course for students to learn ARDEI concepts and implement them into their career at NU and beyond. Outside of NU, Kavi is a volunteer Policy Analyst for the Transportation Hub of RE-AMP Network, a nonprofit that advocates for equitable climate action and policies in the Midwest. She is also the former Advocacy Committee Chair of the National Science Policy Network. Kavi has published op-eds and memos related to equitable policymaking, including pieces in Scientific American and Inside Higher Ed. Kavi is also passionate about local engagement and has volunteered organizations like RefugeeOne, SitStayRead, and the Chicagoland Food Sovereignty Coalition, and is an active participant in campaigns encouraging people to vote.

Karla Thomas  
*Human Development and Social Policy*

Karla Thomas is a dynamic and multifaceted activist-scholar. After receiving a BS in Mechanical Engineering from Ole Miss and MBA from Kellogg, she spent fifteen successful years in industry and six years running multiple entrepreneurial ventures. Currently, she is pursuing a Ph.D., where her research interests examine the everyday and radical efforts of Black students and their families as they navigate racially unjust educational institutions. Her research agenda stems from her experiences as a grassroots parent activist on Black and queer educational justice. Karla's dedication to equitable justice is evident in her leadership roles at Northwestern and in Evanston. She leads a SESP Critical Context Writing Collective and has co-led the SESP Equity Book Club for two years, grappling with "Caste" (Isabel Wilkerson), "No Study Without Struggle" (Leigh Patel), and "On Critical Race Theory" (Victor Ray). Karla serves as chair of the City of Evanston's Equity and Empowerment Commission, where she spearheads the drafting of equity-focused ordinances and policy changes for consideration by the mayor and the city council. Sharing her knowledge with the next generation, she recently served as a panelist for the Northwestern Equity in Leadership Program, speaking to undergraduates about actualizing equity in community leadership roles. As a budding critical race scholar, she co-authored a 2021 publication, "Applying a Transformative Justice Approach to Encourage the Participation of Black and Latina Girls in Computing." She will present ongoing research entitled "Black Parent Engagement: Motherwork in Racially Charged School Environments" at this year's AERA conference.
Monique Newton  
*Political Science*

Monique Newton (she/her) is a 4th-year Ph.D. Candidate in the Political Science Department at Northwestern University. Her research interests lie at the intersection of urban politics, race and ethnic politics, political behavior, and political psychology. A mixed-method scholar, Monique employs ethnographic, interview, survey, and experimental methods to examine Black political behavior in American cities. Her dissertation project examines the impact traumatic events by state agents (i.e. fatal police shootings) have on local Black political participation in the United States. Through her research, Monique examines the effect of police behavior and perceptions of crime on Black political behavior. Her current work explores the socialization process regarding a recently passed Reparations Bill in Evanston, Illinois. Monique is a former APSA Minority Fellow, Mellon Mays Fellow, and Ralph Bunche Summer Institute scholar. At Northwestern, Monique has served as a Diversity Fellow at the Office of Diversity and Inclusion in The Graduate School for two years. Monique served as a group leader for the Summer Research Opportunity Program at Northwestern this past summer. Before attending Northwestern, Monique was a Pittsburgh Coro Fellow in Public Affairs and a recent graduate of Oberlin College where she excelled as a varsity student-athlete, winning two national women's track and field titles. A staunch advocate for first-generation college students, Black and Brown students, student-athletes, and those who identify with the LGBTQ community, Monique prides herself on cultivating strong interpersonal relationships and mentorship.

Erica Rosario  
*Interdisciplinary Biological Sciences*

Erica Rosario is a 3rd-year graduate candidate in the Interdisciplinary Biological Sciences (IBiS) Ph.D. program where she investigates how organelle distribution within the cell impacts organelle function and overall cell homeostasis. In 2021, Erica applied and was accepted to the Biotechnology Training Grant (BTP) at Northwestern. In 2022, she was awarded the NSF-GRFP fellowship. Later that year her work in collaboration with two colleagues led to a publication in the Journal of Cell Biology in which she is a co-second author. Outside of research, Erica devotes her time working with IBiS faculty and admin to generate a more inclusive and safe environment for individuals who hold underrepresented identities with a focus on first-generation STEM graduate students. For the past two years, she has had the privilege to join several student groups and committees such as the IBiS DEI committee, Diversity in Biological Sciences (DiBS), and Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics & Native Americans in Science (SACNAS). Working in these student groups allowed her to help host events that address some issues facing underrepresented students in academia. Topics include microaggressions in STEM, obstacles for transgender scientists, and hardships disabled scientist face in STEM. Erica's goal this year is to plan three events. The first event will mediate a discussion on optimizing a mentor and mentee relationship. The second event will address the emergence of older graduates in STEM and stereotypes held against this demographic. The third will address how to deal with anxiety and failure in STEM.
Connie Chau
Technology & Social Behavior

Connie W. Chau is a PhD student in the Technology & Social Behavior program, advised by Dr. Maia Jacobs in the Personalized & Adaptive Technology for Health (PATH) Lab. She applies her interdisciplinary human-computer interaction (HCI) background to research that aims to design novel and scalable computational approaches to reducing vicarious trauma and burnout for frontline advocates in nonprofit organizations that serve survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) with a particular lens on the disproportionate effect of burnout on marginalized advocates. In addition to her novel research work, Connie recognizes the current needs of the community and developed educational material on technology-facilitated abuse. Her material has been presented at multiple universities & educational programs to teens, university students, teachers, religious leaders, and parents in multiple languages throughout Chicagoland. In partnership with The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence, Connie will be leading multiple trainings on a technology abuse that will be open to GBV advocates and professionals in numerous settings, including hospitals, schools, workforce development services, and more. She actively mentors and also contributes to students' wellbeing and diversity of interests through her participation in numerous on-campus organizations including Graduate Society of Women Engineers, ResilientNU, the Future of Health & Computing Collective, Graduate Women in Computing, SPEAK for Change, and IndivisibleNU. Previously, Connie published two articles on the importance of service provider perspectives in workforce development technologies and a multidisciplinary hackathon literature review with recommendations on diversifying and improving minority participation and virtual hackathon experiences, respectively, to top conferences in HCI.
Chandini Dublin
*Business Psychology*

Dr. Chandini Dublin is a Fall 2022 graduate of the Business Psychology Ph.D. program at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology in Washington, DC. Her quantitative dissertation examined the moderating and mediating effects of perceived organizational support on non-managerial employees’ affective commitment and knowledge sharing. In her second year, she served as a teaching assistant for the Advanced Statistics Ph.D. level course, and she also graduated from the Preparing Future Professional Faculty program with distinction. Dr. Dublin is passionate about effective leadership, healthy organizational cultures, employee well-being, and diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA). In her role as a senior management consultant, she leverages her research and background in business psychology and law to help clients gain new insights and solve complex organizational problems. As a certified leadership and executive coach, she also creates spaces where leaders can be transparent, and she partners with them in a co-creative process to achieve goals related to both their personal and professional development. Prior to her Ph.D., she earned a Juris Doctorate from Boston College Law School, a Master of Business Administration from the University of Maryland, and a Bachelor of Arts in Communication and Hispanic Studies from Boston College.

Mtondela Mondoloka
*Business Psychology*

Tondi Mondoloka is a Business Psychology doctoral candidate whose research centers on organizational culture as a driver of organizational resilience in weather-related crises attributable to climate change. She completed her bachelor’s degree in history and psychology from The College of William and Mary within three years, earning dean’s list honors. She earned her MBA and master’s degree in communication from Marist College. Ms. Mondoloka’s doctoral research culminates her academic interests, career focus on national security and health equity, and commitment to solving complex global challenges that often further disempower underserved communities. In 2022, she coauthored an article on a multi-year program evaluation of adolescent health education for immigrant, refugee, and LGBTQIA+ youth that was published in the American Journal for Sexuality Education. She has served in Big Brother Big Sister of Greater Williamsburg and as a trained advocate of domestic violence survivors. She has volunteered as a cheerleading coach and tutor to youth experiencing housing insecurity to promote belonging, scholastic achievement, and positive self-esteem. Ms. Mondoloka has continued to mentor early career professionals and to encourage underrepresented young scholars to pursue STEM by volunteering for events such as West Point LEADS. She is also a passionate advocate for neurodiversity and is focused on supporting students with autism spectrum disorder. As a first-generation immigrant, she has a deep appreciation for the opportunities paved by those who came before her, in Zambia and the United States, and she commits to helping others forge new paths of continued progress.
National Bouchet Graduate Honor Society Inductees

The Chicago School of Psychology 2023

Tracie McCargo
Business Psychology

Tracie McCargo, Ph.D. obtained her Doctorate in Organizational Leadership at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology. She received a Master of Liberal Arts in Psychology from Harvard University, an Executive MBA from Troy University, and a Bachelor of Science in Management from Long Island University along with an Award of Distinction. Tracie’s curiosity around the disproportionate mortality and morbidity experienced by minorities during the pandemic led to the exploration of complex decision making in pandemic environments. Her most recent research focused on the experiences of nurse managers during the allocating of scarce (lifesaving) resources to patients during COVID-19. The emerging theory is the Provider Crisis Decision Making model. This model describes areas of concern for nurse leadership in crisis environments and is intended as a tool for organizational leadership to improve patient care and provider well-being. Tracie's current activities include working as a Teaching Assistant at Harvard University, Adjunct Professor at Emory University participating on a World Health Organization (WHO) initiative, and Editor for medical review journals: Rehab in Review, Bones & Brain in Review, and Stroke in Review. She is a consultant and subject matter expert for a lifestyle medicine course for Harvard Medical School. Tracie has been published in several peer reviewed journals and is co-author of two lifestyle medicine books. Tracie is an avid volunteer in the Atlanta community supporting small nonprofits and with Emory University's Urban Health Initiative. She enjoys giving back to the community and finding practical solutions to advance mankind.

D'Alizza Mercedes
Organizational Leadership

D'Alizza Mercedes is a Ph.D. candidate in psychology with a concentration on organizational leadership at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology. Her research investigates the relationship between organizational culture and women’s career decisions post-pandemic. D'Alizza earned her Bachelor of Arts in political science from the University of Colorado – Boulder and a Master of Science in strategic management. As a professor, D'Alizza was nominated for the UMGC Stanley J. Drazek Teaching Excellence Award and the University of Maryland Global Campus Teaching Recognition Award for exhibiting a spirit of inquiry about teaching and learning, student development, and for using evidence-based resources to improve and support teaching. Her experiences as a mother, educator, and executive continue to reaffirm her goal of entering academia and research to reconstruct the environment where marginalized individuals will feel a sense of safety, security, acceptance, and belonging.
Annette Griffith

Applied Behavior Analysis

Dr. Annette Griffith, BCBA-D, IBA has been with The Chicago School since 2016 and currently serves as the Associate Department Chair for the PhD program in Behavior Analysis for the Online Campus. Dr. Griffith has over 20 years of experience in the field of behavior analysis, having worked as a clinician, researcher, administrator, and educator. She has taught at both the undergraduate and graduate levels and has engaged in work to support student advocacy through student representative boards, peer mentor programs, and first gen programming. As a proud first gen graduate herself, Dr. Griffith takes pride in her work supporting and mentoring students who may be underrepresented in the field of behavior analysis.

Victoria Liu

Counseling Education

Dr. Victoria Liu is a Licensed Professional Counselor Supervisor (LPC-S) in the state of Texas, a National Board-Certified Counselor (NCC), and a Board Certified TeleMental Health Provider (BC-TMH). Dr. Liu is a full-time Assistant Professor in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology teaching next generation counselors. Dr. Liu serves the Houston, TX, community as a bilingual (English and Mandarin Chinese) mental health clinician since 2013 and continues to support the culturally diverse community through her private practice in Houston. Dr. Liu had intensive training in Family System approach and Gottman’s approach in relationship. Her research and clinical interests are in the areas of Collaborative Therapy outcome measurement, counselor education and professional identity in minority students, and relationships with others and self from the Collaborative/Narrative aspect. In addition, Dr. Liu serves as doctoral mentor at the National Board Certified Counselor (NBCC) Foundation Minority Fellowship Program (MFP), and several campus wide committees including Diversity Action Board and Academic Standards Advisory Committee. Dr. Liu is passionate about training future mental health counselors, focusing on a strong desire in supporting minority and bilingual students.
Etai Mizrav
Education

Etai Mizrav is a Ph.D candidate, researcher, and consultant who focuses on educational policy and inequality. His research investigates 21st century drivers of educational inequality and explores how discriminatory educational policies and practices contribute to the formation of opportunity and consequently achievement gaps. Etai’s original model, the SDS Triangle (Segregate, Discriminate, Signal), serves as the conceptual basis for his dissertation he is working to complete at the George Washington University. It provides a unique perspective on the interdependent relationship between segregation, discrimination, and inequality. The model was recently published in the Educational Policy peer-reviewed journal. Etai has extensive experience and expertise in developing policies and implementing programs that promote educational equity. He has conducted multiple equity reviews for large districts across the country. In addition, Etai is an expert in addressing educator shortages and diversifying the teacher workforce, and he has worked with dozens of states and districts, and internationally, to develop plans on these issues. He has designed several tools that practitioners in numerous states, districts, and schools have used to identify equity gaps, and he has presented his findings at national forums. Previously, Etai served as a Senior Technical Assistant Consultant at American Institutes for Research (AIR) and as Manager of Education Policy and equity for the Washington, DC, Office of the State Superintendent of Education.

GJ Sevillano
American Studies

GJ Sevillano (he/him/his) is a doctoral candidate in the Department of American Studies at The George Washington University. His research is at the nexus of Asian American studies, critical food studies, material culture, and cultural theory. Looking at the literature of food or “gastropoetics” of Filipino America, his dissertation unpacks the historical formations of diasporic, transnational, and digital Filipino American foodways. His work on Filipino American cookbooks has been published in Alon: Journal for Filipinx American and Diasporic Studies and is forthcoming in Verge: Studies in Global Asias. While at GWU, GJ has served as the doctoral representative of the inaugural Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council for the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences and is an advocate for the expansion of Asian American studies on campus. He was recently named a Bulosan Center Affiliate by the Carlos Bulosan Center for Filipino Studies at U.C. Davis. He holds a M.A. in American Studies from GWU and a B.A. in Politics and certificate in American Studies from Princeton University. At Princeton, he was a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow, Institute for Recruitment of Teachers Associate, and alumnus of the Leadership Alliance-Mellon Initiative program. He also received the 2019 Spirit of Princeton Award, which recognizes positive contributions and strong commitments to the university community. As a queer, first-generation, low-income Filipino American student and scholar, he hopes to utilize his scholar-activist toolkit to progress towards becoming a social justice-oriented professor and mentor empowering other minoritized students in their pursuit of higher education.
Vernicia Griffie
Public Policy & Public Administration

Vernicia Griffie is a doctoral candidate and recipient of the Provost’s Diversity Assistantship and Fellowship in the Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration at George Washington University. Her dissertation research centers on measuring the impact and efficacy of state-sponsored social welfare programs in the United States. Her other recent research explores the micro-level interplay between race and political decision-making, as well as the broader conceptualization of race within social science literature. In her time at GW, Vernicia has worked as both a graduate research assistant and lecturer, teaching classes in applied statistics and public values. She recognizes the value of service both in and out of the classroom, which has led her to volunteer in several capacities at the university. Examples of this service include speaking on a panel of PhD students for a recent Minority Leadership Program event, serving as a discussion leader at new-student orientation, and volunteering as a statistics and microeconomics tutor for MPP students. Post-graduation, Vernicia plans to pursue a career in academia, where she hopes to help increase the representation of Black women researchers and instructors in the social sciences.

Rachel Nelson
Center for the Advanced Study of Human Paleobiology

Rachel S Nelson is a PhD candidate in the Center for the Advanced Study of Human Paleobiology, with a focus on primate behavioral ecology. Her research investigates how female chimpanzees in Tanzania stay hydrated during lactation, which causes a prolonged hydration burden on mothers. She is a NSF Graduate Research Fellow, and has received research funding from the American Society of Mammalogy and the NSF Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant. In her department, she has acted as a PhD student representative on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force and the Curriculum Committee, serving as an advocate for graduate students and working to create an inclusive and welcoming graduate environment. She received a Bachelors in Biology form Waynesburg University, a small teaching college, where she developed a passion for mentoring and education. She has carried this excitement for teaching to her graduate career, where she enjoys working with undergraduate students as a teaching assistant and mentoring interns in the Primate Behavioral Ecology Laboratory. She is also working to make primatology a more inclusive field by centering and advocating for researchers who reside in the same country as her study species. After completion of her PhD, Rachel hopes to continue teaching at the undergraduate level and working with the next generation of scientists.
Simone Blaire Sawyer
Social and Behavioral Sciences in Public Health

Simone Blaire Sawyer is a candidate for the Ph.D. in Social and Behavioral Sciences in Public Health at The George Washington University. Her research focuses on reducing health disparities through community-based participatory research, within the areas of mental, sexual and reproductive health among youth and young adults. Simone is a Graduate Research Assistant at The Center for Health and Health Care in Schools, where she leads a multi-sector, youth-adult partnership group to promote youth leadership and innovation within DC's school mental health system. Simone is also an inaugural TASHI Fellow and Graduate Student Lead for the DC Center for AIDS Research - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Pipeline Initiative: ensuring the next generation of scientists are diverse and prepared to address the preventable health inequities facing communities. Simone has published her work in multiple peer-reviewed journals, as well as presented at both national and international conferences. Simone works closely with local youth serving nonprofits in Washington DC and Baltimore City to ensure her research, publications and presentations are advocating for and meeting the needs of the youth and young adults it is intended to serve. Simone received a MS in Public Health degree from The Johns Hopkins University, Bloomberg School of Public Health and a BA in Psychology from The Spelman College. Simone’s professional mission is to always be involved in work where love, humanity and action are at the core; using her skills, knowledge and resources, in partnership with others, to make a positive and lasting impact on the world.

Vinaya S. Murthy
Translational Health Sciences

Vinaya S. Murthy is a candidate for the Ph.D. in Translational Health Sciences at The George Washington University. Vinaya's passion for education began when she delivered genetics education to communities in rural Montana, Indigenous tribes in Montana and India, and African-Americans in Pittsburgh, PA. Today, her research focuses on genomic medicine training in graduate medical education to increase uptake of genomic medicine in clinical practice. She is motivated to implement and evaluate programs through implementation and team science, particularly related to cancer and rare disease. Presently, Vinaya serves as a co-chair for the National Organization for Rare Disorders Center of Excellence Medical Professional Education Workgroup, as a co-director for the Indiana University School of Medicine Scholarly Concentration Program - Genetics in Medicine, and a committee member for the Genomics Education Resource Center (GenomeEd) Review Committee for the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI). She is active in these programs, as well as with NHGRI ISCC-PEG’s Rare Disease and Nursing Genomics Project Groups. Vinaya also enjoys mentoring genetic counseling graduate and medical students. She values her role as an inclusive educator and has completed various trainings and delivered education sessions to faculty and students. She encourages student projects that incorporate diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice efforts to increase health equity and broaden awareness of the genetic counseling profession. Vinaya aspires to work at the intersection of genomics, education and mentorship, and implementation and team science to address health disparities and health equity.
Alison Ramirez
Sociology

Alison Ramirez is a citizen of the Tohono O’odham Nation from the Wa:k Community. She has earned undergraduate degrees from Pima Community College and the University of Arizona and holds an M.A. in Sociology from UCLA. She is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Sociology at UCLA, where she is completing her dissertation on the legacy of water management in Southern Arizona and its impact on the Tohono O’odham Nation. In her dissertation research, Allison centers on the role of power in local and national discussions of water management and Indigenous sovereignty. Allison is a founding Tohono O’odham Nation Institutional Review Board (TON IRB) member and has previously served as the board’s vice-chair. Her academic and professional aspirations lay at the intersection of research and government as she strives to create lasting social change through rigorous sociological investigation capable of altering law and policy for the betterment of society.

Anthony James Williams
Sociology

Anthony James Williams is a Black queer abolitionist sociology PhD candidate in the UCLA Department of Sociology. Their research interests include race/racism, urban sociology, and punishment. Their dissertation, “Us Vs. Them: How California State Prisons Justify Solitary Confinement,” uses mixed methods to examine the arbitrary reasons for placement in solitary confinement and how these practices disproportionately impact Black and Latinx populations in California.

Ernesto Arciniega
Hispanic Literatures

Ernesto Arciniega is a PhD candidate in Hispanic Literatures at UCLA. He graduated from UC Berkeley with a BA in Spanish Literatures (summa cum laude, Phi Betta Kapa). Ernesto’s research interests are Contemporary Latin American, Mexican, and Chicano/a/literatures and cultures, immigration law in the U.S., border studies, and protest art. His dissertation studies the anti-Mexican sentiment in the United States through Chicano/a literary works, as well as the production of protest and urban art in light of anti-immigrant rhetoric. Ernesto has been recognized as a UC National Center for Free Speech Fellow, as a Mellon-EPIC Fellow, and is a five-time recipient of the Hispanic Scholarship Fund. Ernesto is a strong advocate for social justice, immigrants’ rights, and student basic needs. He has served as board member on the ASUCLA Board of Directors, as Student Advocate (STAR) to the UC Board of Regents, and is the current Vice President of External Affairs at UCLA GSA and Vice Chair of UCGPC, the systemwide organization representing all graduate and professional students from the ten campuses of the University of California. At UCGPC, Ernesto works towards supporting undocumented students, improving mental health services, and elevating students’ voices and needs UC-wide, statewide, and nationwide. Ernesto is an elected Councilmember for the North Westwood Neighborhood Council, 5th District of Los Angeles, where he advocates for improving public transportation, building student affordable housing, and supporting Westwood’s disfranchised. His most recent publication is “Lighting the Way for Undocumented Students at UC: Free Speech, Civic and Political Engagement.”
Flavia Maria Lake
Geography

Flavia Maria Lake is a Ph.D. candidate in Geography at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Her research interests include placemaking, migrant entrepreneurship, and community formation. Specifically, her dissertation examines how small Brazilian-owned restaurants serve as sites where community can coalesce—ultimately observing the ways in which this process is shaped by power relations. Her project foregrounds the social and spatial impacts of migrant-owned small businesses, showing that entrepreneurs are more than economic agents. Flavia’s research has been supported by UCLA’s Eugene Cota Robles Fellowship and a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship. At UCLA, Flavia has been organizing and advocating for first-generation students in graduate school since 2018. Through the graduate student organization, First-Generation Graduate Student Council, she has collaborated with campus partners and fellow first-generation students to cultivate spaces of community care. As a future faculty, Flavia is committed to highlighting the experiences of everyday placemakers like migrant small business owners in her research, as well as building equitable and welcoming classrooms.

Mildred Galvez
Molecular and Medical Pharmacology

Mildred is originally from San Diego, CA where she grew up along the US-Mexico border. As the first in her family to pursue higher education, she graduated with Honors from UC Berkeley with a BA in Molecular and Cell Biology and a minor in Anthropology. She then matriculated into the Charles R. Drew/UCLA Medical Education Program and the UCLA-Caltech MSTP program. She is currently a PhD candidate in the Department of Molecular and Medical Pharmacology in the laboratory of Dr. Antoni Ribas. Her research involves characterizing class I antigen presentation defects in melanoma in the context of immune checkpoint blockade therapy resistance. The goal of her work is to help identify alternative therapeutic strategies for the elimination of MHC class I-defective tumors. Mildred has presented her work at the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Annual Conference for which she was awarded the 2022 AACR Minority Scholar in Cancer Research Award. In addition to her work in the laboratory, she is currently co-chair of the MSTP Diversity and Outreach Efforts Committee and mentors for several programs aimed at assisting first-generation and underrepresented students. After graduating, she intends to pursue residency and work toward becoming an independent investigator. As a future physician-scientist, her goal is to help develop new cancer treatment strategies and to serve patients from disadvantaged communities and backgrounds.
Jeramy L. Dedrick
Oceanography

Jeramy L. Dedrick is a Ph.D. candidate in Oceanography with a concentration in Climate Science at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at University of California, San Diego. He received bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Meteorology and Ocean Science from Texas A&M University in College Station. Jeramy’s research centers on the complex interactions of small particles (aerosols) produced by manmade and natural processes that form and alter the characteristics of clouds as well as their implications in a warming global climate. Motivated by his research interests, Jeramy engages with historically underserved communities that are more susceptible to the effects of climate change through mentorship and educational outreach in the greater San Diego area and his home state of Texas. He also advocates for his community through his service on committees dedicated to diversity and inclusion at the institutional level. Jeramy hopes to use the training gained during his Ph.D. to increase the participation of minority students in environmental science fields by helping to lead the deconstruction of systemic institutional barriers to research access in a future academic career.

Alexis Meza
History

Alexis Meza is a candidate for the Ph.D. in the Department of History with a specialization in relational Race and Ethnic United States history at UC San Diego. Her research focuses on silence, memory, and politics in the Salvadoran diaspora in Los Angeles. Alexis has been recognized as a Ford Foundation Fellow, a UC San Diego Arts and Humanities Integrated Fellowship Initiative Fellow, a New York Faculty First Look Scholar, and received a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Distinguished Teaching Award from UC San Diego. She received a Bachelor of Arts with honors in History and Latin American and Iberian Studies from UC Santa Barbara, where she was a McNair Scholar. Alexis is committed to teaching and making scholarly contributions to Ethnic Studies, Latina/o Studies, and History. She is co-author of the chapter titled “No Estan Solxs: Mourning Migrant Suffering and Death through Commemorative Art at the US///Mexico Border” in the forthcoming anthology Violence, Migration, and Detention during Trump’s Reign of Terror and Beyond (University of Arizona Press, 2024). Through her community engagement, she draws on her academic training and knowledge to further community-responsive research and foster community-based learning spaces.
Maya Rowell  
*Bioengineering*

Maya Rowell is a Ph.D. candidate in bioengineering with a concentration on cancer cell migration at the University of California, San Diego. Her research focuses on the development of a microfluidic model system to study metastatic cancer phenotypes and their migration patterns. Maya received an NIH Quantitative Integrative Biology (QIB) training grant in her first year of her PhD, and was recently awarded the Galvanizing Engineering in Medicine INclusion Initiative (GEMINI) Fellowship. She obtained her Bachelor of Science in chemical and biomolecular engineering from New York University, where she was a recipient of the University Honors Scholarship and the National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering (NACME) Scholarship. Maya is thoroughly involved within the engineering community, and she is passionate about making graduate education more accessible and inclusive.

Jada Wiggleton-Little  
*Philosophy*

Jada Wiggleton-Little is a Ph.D. Candidate in Philosophy at the University of California San Diego. (UCSD). Her research focuses on pain communication, particularly in the context of racial and gender disparities in pain management. Jada has been recognized as a Ford Foundation Predoctoral Fellow and as an inaugural Sadler Scholar with the Hastings Center. In 2021, she was selected to be a visiting scholar with the Program for Neuroethics and Clinical Consciousness (at the John J. Lynch, MD Center for Ethics at Medstar Washington Hospital. Her work has been published in the Journal of Hospital Ethics, the HealthCare Ethics Committee (HEC) Forum, and is forthcoming in the Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal and the Australasian Journal of Philosophy. She served as a board member for UCSD’s Black Graduate and Professional Students Association for three years.
Alicia M. Wright is a Ph.D. candidate in Anthropology with a concentration in linguistic anthropology at University of California San Diego (UCSD). Their research examines the relationships between Black Deaf signers and hearing interpreters in the United States with a focus on questions of identity, ideology, neutrality, and language access. Alicia has been recognized as a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellow, received dissertation research support from the Wenner-Gren Foundation's Dissertation Fieldwork Grant, and is currently a Sara Clark Kaplan Dissertation Fellow with UCSD's Black Studies Program. Previously, they graduated with honors and earned a double Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology and Linguistics from University of Chicago, where they were an African Studies Program Research Fellow and recipient of the university's Odyssey Scholarship. Through their work and service responsibilities, Alicia has shown a deep dedication and commitment to advancing the needs of underrepresented students in higher education. While in undergrad, they served as president and board member of two LGBTQ student groups that maintained safe spaces for LGBTQ students particularly LGBTQ students of color. At UCSD, they have served as the Chair of their department's Graduate Student Association for two years. While in this role they advocated for better working and learning conditions for anthropology graduate students. They continue to provide formal and informal mentorship to graduate and undergraduate students through their position as Graduate Writing Consultant. In their future research and educational career, Alicia plans to continue serving, advocating for, and supporting students through mentoring and service.
Matthew Paul Cowley

Curriculum and Instruction

Matthew P. Cowley successfully defended his dissertation in March 2023 and will graduate in May with his Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Florida with specializations in Social Foundations of Education and Critical Studies of Race, Ethnicity, and Culture. His scholarship examines the intersections of race and higher education policy, curriculum, and outcomes. Specifically, Matthew deeply desires for his scholarship to contribute to positive postsecondary outcomes for racially marginalized students and the development of antiracist citizens through higher education curriculum and pedagogy. Matthew currently serves as the Director of Career Development Services at Old Dominion University – the institution’s centralized career services unit. Additionally, Matthew is an active and nationally recognized career services professionally, having received dissertation research funding from the Southern Association of Colleges & Employers (SoACE), served on several committees for both SoACE and the National Association for Colleges & Employers (NACE), and facilitated several DEI trainings for national career services audiences. He earned his Master of Education in Administration of Higher Education and a Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration from Auburn University in 2013 and 2011, respectively. Ultimately, Matthew plans to continue his career as a leader and administrator in higher education while teaching and contributing to academic research.

DeVant'e Duran Dawson

Interdisciplinary Ecology

DeVant'e Duran Dawson is a candidate for a Ph.D. in interdisciplinary ecology with a concentration in microbiology at the University of Florida. His research focuses on intersecting microbial ecology and bioinformatics to answer fundamental issues regarding the interaction between environmental stressors and the structure of the coral microbiome. He received two Bachelor of Science degrees in biology (pre-health) and marine biology and a Master of Science in biology from Tuskegee University. DeVant'e has been named an Inland Ocean Ambassador, an American Society for Microbiology (ASM) Future Leaders Mentoring Fellow, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Directorate (USFWS) Fellow, and a Stanford Postdoctoral Recruitment Initiative in Science and Medicine (PRISM) Fellow. He intends to pursue a career in marine policy to protect and restore an essential environment while eliminating challenges to the retention and progress of under-represented and overburdened groups. DeVant’e is a member of several organizations, including the International Coral Reef Society's Student and Early Career Chapter Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion subcommittee (ICRS SECC EDI), Black Microbiologists Association, Race + The Ocean BIPOC Causes, and Black in Marine Science, in the hopes of continuing this path of advocacy. His journey continues with a postdoctoral position at the Hopkins Marine Station at Stanford University. Using science standardization, long-distance mentoring, and community involvement, he intends to develop tools that can predict, show, and protect heat-resistant corals and make them available to communities in the tropics that depend on reefs.
Elder Garcia Varela

Health and Human Performance

Elder Varela is a first-generation Latina doctoral candidate pursuing a Health and Human Performance degree with a concentration in Health Education and Behavior and a minor in Research and Evaluation Methodology at the University of Florida. Elder received her BA in Criminology, MA in Political Science, and an MS in Health Education and Behavior from the University of Florida. She also received an MPS in Legislative Studies from The George Washington University. Elder is a certified health education specialist (CHES) and research fellow at the Early Childhood Work Group at the Nutrition and Obesity Policy Research and Evaluation Network (NOREN) Healthy Eating Research (HER). Elder is also a research assistant at the Nutrition Education and Behavioral Science (NEBS) lab and the Shelnutt Research Group, where she supports developing and evaluating nutrition promotion and obesity prevention interventions. Her research goal is to better understand the multiple influences on dietary behavior and develop nutrition education and behavioral interventions to reduce health disparities and improve health outcomes in vulnerable populations, specifically food-insecure households with young children. Her current research explores how young children’s (i.e., children under three years) environments can be feasibly changed to promote programs and policies that support healthy eating behaviors and nutrition security. Elder’s dissertation study focuses on informing the development of an evaluation tool to measure the impact of policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) approaches in early childhood nutrition-related behaviors and health outcomes. Elder aims to continue her research as a faculty member at a higher education institution.

Adania Flemming

Biology & Florida Museum of Natural History

Adania Flemming is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Florida (UF) department of biology and the Florida Museum of Natural History. She also serves as a research assistant with iDigBio. She studies the ecology of fishes, their life history, and how form relates to function. She is also interested in using natural history collections as a resource to introduce students of diverse backgrounds, particularly those most marginalized in STEM, to the field of Ichthyology and other sciences. Before joining UF, she earned a Bachelor of Science in marine biology from the University of Tampa. She completed a Master of Science in zoology from the University of Florida. Her Ph.D. research combines her interest in education with Ichthyology, through an interdisciplinary research project evaluating the impact of experiential learning within collections on students' understanding of science, development of science identities and interest in science careers. Adania has worked arduously to serve as a role model and create opportunities to inspire others to gain experiences and follow their passions. She has created and curated many spaces within academia (e.g. cofounding the iDigTRIO biological conference and fair or establishing undergraduate academic research awards) and outside of academia (e.g. founding the non-profit BlackInNaturalHistoryMuseums, and implementing a change to her academic journal name). She was recently awarded the Madelyn Lockhart Dissertation Fellowship, The UF Alumni Association’s inaugural Leadership Award for DEI, and the Dr. J. Michael Rollo award. Ultimately, Adania inspires to work at the intersection of science and education.
National Bouchet Graduate Honor Society Inductees

University of Florida 2023

Abigail Carissa Lindo
Ethnomusicology

Abigail Carissa Lindo is a Jamaican-born social scientist, vocalist, and educator whose academic interests include Black sonic expression and identity, Jamaican popular music, community music-making, gender and feminist studies, and Portuguese popular music consumption and festival culture in the Azores - the focus of her forthcoming dissertation. As a PhD candidate in ethnomusicology at the University of Florida (UF), Lindo is also completing graduate certificates in modern European studies, instructional design, and gender and development while teaching a hip-hop studies course as an adjunct professor. She is spending the 22-23 academic year in Portugal to complete dissertation fieldwork as a Fulbright Fellow, instructing students in language and culture at the University of the Azores (UAç). She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in music from New College of Florida and her Master of Music in music education from UF while working as a K-12 educator for 6 years. She has published research on audiovisual culture and Black Lives Matter, identity in ethnographic research, and Black female presence in American popular music. Her work has been presented nationally and internationally, supported by funding from the UF Center for European Studies, the UF College of Education, the American Musicological Society, the Society for Ethnomusicology, UAç, and the Fulbright Commission of Portugal. Following the completion of her PhD, Lindo aspires to positively impact academia by instructing courses that blend interests in sound studies, Black feminism, and education, producing accessible public-facing media about sociocultural realities that permeate societal and political discourse through music.
BreAnne Young
*Prevention Science & Community Health*

BreAnne Young is a PhD candidate in Prevention Science at the University of Miami. Her public health training and research experience has been devoted to mitigating the gap in HIV outcomes for minority populations. Through this work, she has gained valuable field-based experience as a certified HIV counselor, training in the logistics of implementing a community-based program, and practice in data management and analysis for multi-level interventions designed to address the full continuum of care. When not working on her own research, BreAnne as an instructor for the Jay Weiss Institute Health Equity Pathway, mentoring medical students on the application of CBPR methods in social medicine and co-authoring several manuscripts and conference presentations with students over the last five years. She is also an instructor for in the Office of Diversity's Summer Pipeline Programs, teaching health equity research to underrepresented minority scholars.

Caroline Velez
*Chemistry*

Caroline Velez is a Ph.D. candidate in Chemistry specializing in computational chemistry at the University of Miami. Caroline was awarded a McKnight Doctoral Fellowship by the Florida Education Fund in 2018 to pursue her doctorate. Her research examines a family of enzymes called protein arginine methyltransferases (PRMTs), which act in pathways for DNA repair, transcription, apoptosis, and cell proliferation. Caroline applies enhanced computational tools to understand the link between PRMT dysregulation and cancer. Concurrently, Caroline explores the role an environmentally friendly set of solvents called deep eutectic solvents may play in the creation of biofuels as an alternative to current fossil fuels. Caroline was awarded the 2022-2023 University of Miami College of Arts and Sciences Dean’s Academic Year Dissertation Award for her research efforts and publications, and received numerous awards and honors including a Ford Foundation Predoctoral Fellowship Honorable Mention and a NSF GRFP Honorable Mention. Caroline is active in student government, serving as a graduate student senator and as secretary of the Chemistry Graduate Student Association at her home institution. Caroline is passionate about accessible education for all. She is a founding member of the Younger Chemists Committee (YCC) of the South Florida Section of the American Chemical Society. As part of the YCC, she has hosted social events, mental health webinars, science exhibitions for children at local science museums, and organized accessible STEM-at-Home events for children. Ultimately, Caroline aspires to become a research professor and continue promoting accessible education for financially disadvantaged and BIPOC populations.
Christian McDonald
Microbiology & Immunology

Christian McDonald is a Ph.D. candidate in Microbiology & Immunology with Translational Focus at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. His research interest in viral oncology has been a convergence of cancer biology and infectious diseases, which has shaped his current dissertation work focusing on KSHV, one of the seven known oncogenic viruses in humans. Specifically, his dissertation examines the molecular interactions between KSHV and host-cellular machinery used during protein synthesis. Christian seeks to elucidate these previously undescribed mechanisms during KSHV infection to identify novel therapeutic targets for improving the limited efficacy of current therapies. Christian is a recipient of a McKnight Doctoral Fellowship and he has been an active member in his university chapter, recently serving as a co-president for the organization. He has worked diligently as a leader within his department, using his position as President to advocate for graduate students and ensure they have access to career and professional development resources. In his role as the ASM Young Ambassador for Florida, he works with faculty at several institutions to develop programming for advancing the microbial sciences and has raised funds for students from historically excluded groups to present at conferences. He has dedicated time to aid undergraduate students in navigating the process of embarking in a graduate school program as a guest speaker at freshman seminars and more recently as a SURF mentor. He has published research papers on two human pathogens in peer-reviewed journals as well as a journal news article.

Lamis Amer
Industrial & Systems Engineering

As a PhD candidate at the Industrial and Systems Engineering (ISE) at the University of Miami, Lamis’ research focuses on sea-level rise adaptation and enhancing community resilience, particularly through the adaptation of onsite wastewater treatment systems mostly located in rural and underdeveloped areas. Lamis is highly respected by her peers and students, having been recognized as the best teaching assistant in the ISE department and mentoring senior design classes for the past 3+ years. She is an engaging speaker and has been a 2nd runner-up in the College of Engineering’s three-minute thesis competition in 2022. For her master’s work in green logistics, Lamis has been nominated for prestigious awards that promote adopting operations research in applications that advocate for better futures and ethical causes. Lamis is also a volunteering member of the Resilience Youth Network (RYN), a non-profit organization, where she helped develop the fellowship curriculum on resilience and climate adaptation and lead two sessions on “Disaster Resilience” and “Sea-Level Rise Adaptation”. In addition, she is the ISE Students’ senator and a volunteer in the racial justice and disability group in the Graduate Students Association Network, working to ensure educational resilience for disabled and indigenous students. With her passion for knowledge and drive to make a difference, Lamis is willing to leave a lasting impact in her field and the surrounding community.
Roberto L. Roman Laporte

*Nursing*

Roberto L. Roman Laporte is a candidate for the Ph.D. in Nursing Science at the University of Miami. His research focuses on making healthcare environments more inclusive to address health disparities in sexual gender minority populations. Roberto has been featured as the resident expert representing Florida by the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, www.unitedstatesofnursing.org. He was recently inducted into the inaugural chapter of the National Society of Leadership Success at the University of Miami. He is also a 2022 recipient of the Edith Anderson Leadership Grant from Sigma Theta Tau International. He is a Jonas Nurse Leader Scholar from Johns Hopkins, where he earned his doctorate in nursing practice in 2018. Roberto is passionate about healthcare and evidence-based practice. He is among the first 40 people globally to have achieved certification in the specialty area of evidence-based practice awarded by the Helene Fuld Health Trust National Institute for Evidence-based Practice (EBP) in Nursing and Healthcare. He has been certified in medical-surgical nursing for over eight years of his nursing career. His scholarly work at the University of Miami has covered areas such as aromatherapy for patients receiving moderate to high emetogenic chemotherapy, health outcomes related to socioeconomic factors in primary care settings, parental acceptance of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender youth, parent and child communication about risky behaviors, and culturally adapting an evidence-based relationship program for Latino sexual minority men. He continues to give back by mentoring others and collaborating with colleagues to improve healthcare in various settings.

Roger M. Leblanc

*Chemistry*

Roger M. Leblanc is a faculty member in the Department of Chemistry at the University of Miami (UM), Miami, Fl. His teaching and research are oriented in Physical Chemistry, Surface Chemistry, and the Principle of Spectroscopy in the Ph.D. graduate program. In Dr. Leblanc's career, more than 100 Ph.D. students (plus postdoctoral fellows) were awarded a Ph.D. degree from 1994 to present. To support this assessment, in 2014 he received the “Faculty Mentor Award” from the Miami Graduate Ph.D. Program. This award is competitive among all the Colleges, including the Miami School of Medicine. Dr. Leblanc's research activity is multidisciplinary encompassing chemistry, biochemistry, molecular biology, and engineering. Since his arrival at UM in 1994, he has experienced that diversity is highly valued as it strengthens both social groups and workplaces. Additionally, the objective of any project in his team must have strength of the project without disparity on either gender or race. The most important award regarding education is namely: (1) Cooper Fellowship from the College of Arts & Sciences at UM in recognition of the excellence in contributing to the core missions of scholarship, teaching and service (2011); (2) “2006 Florida Award” of the American Chemical Society in recognition of the significant and meritorious achievements of prominent Florida Scientists; (3) Provost's Award for Scholarly activity in recognition for excellence in research (2002). Dr. Leblanc served as Chairman of the Department of Chemistry at UM from 1994-2002 and again from 2013-2021.
Uzma Khan
Marketing

Uzma Khan is an associate professor of marketing at University of Miami. She received her Ph.D. from Yale School of Management. Prior to joining University of Miami, she was faculty at Stanford Graduate School of Business and at Carnegie Mellon University. She is an expert on consumer behavior, marketing strategy, and decision-making. Her research focuses on corporate diversity, equity and inclusion, consumers goals and motivation, risk perception, and choice architecture. Dr. Khan has published in top journals including Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of Marketing Research, Management Science, Journal of Academy of Marketing Science, Journal of Experimental Psychology-General, and Psychological Science. Her research has won several prestigious awards including AMA Doctoral Dissertation Award, SCP-SHETH Doctoral Dissertation Award, Frank A. & Helen E. Risch Faculty Development Professorship in Business Chair, CMU, Ormond Family Faculty Scholar, Stanford GSB, Hillel Einhorn New Investigator Award, Marketing Science Institute's Young Scholar, and multiple Provost Research Awards at the University of Miami. Dr. Khan serves on editorial review boards for Journal of Marketing Research and Journal of Consumer Psychology, and has served in important leadership roles at the University of Miami, including Chair of the Academic Standards Committee of the Faculty Senate and as member of the Business School Council. She teaches graduate and executive-level courses, and has won multiple awards for her teaching excellence and mentorship. She has consulted for clients in finance, startup, airline, consumer packaged goods, education, and high-tech industries.

Jason D. Mizell
Language and Literacy Education

Dr. Jason D. Mizell is a faculty member in the Department of Teaching and Learning at the University of Miami. His scholarship, research, teaching, and service agenda lies within four distinct, yet interrelated areas. He focuses on cultivating and providing a platform for minoritized youth civic literacies, languaging equity, dismantling deficient frameworks regarding the languaging and literacies practices of racialized students, and the expansion of the representation of Afro-Latinés in children's literature. As a praxis-oriented activist-scholar, Dr. Mizell collaboratively developed and implemented a community-driven literacies project that became an integral part of two summer K-8 camps and various afterschool programs. Those projects incorporated youth participatory action research and Culturally Sustaining Systemic Functional Linguistics. He uses those lenses to apprentice youths, pre-and in-service teachers, and their community accomplices in order to learn that that language is a socially constructed tool that evolves to meet the needs of its speakers, while also explicitly teaching them about the value of languaging equity and diversity, register shifting, and translanguaging. Dr. Mizell has been recognized as a 2022-2024 Literacy Research Association Stars Fellow, 2022 North American Systemic Functional Linguistics Association Promising Scholar, and a 2022-2023 University of Miami Engaged Faculty Fellow. He is a faculty affiliate with the University of Miami Center for Global Black Studies. Additionally, Dr. Mizell volunteers at a local elementary school in Miami-Dade County. In addition to working with students and teachers in the United States, he also leads an intergenerational community-based research project with an Afro-descendant community in Ecuador.
Shouraseni Sen Roy
*Geography*

Shouraseni Sen Roy is a Professor in the Department of Geography and Sustainable Development, University of Miami. She received her pre-doctoral education from the University of Delhi, including B.A., M.A., and M.Phil. She completed her Ph.D. in 2005 from Arizona State University and joined the faculty in University of Miami. Her core area of research over the last two decades has concentrated on expanding our understanding of long-term trends in climatic processes and impacts of climate change. Her research footprint includes the USA, India, China, South Africa, Burundi, and Iran. She has recently published a book on the gendered impacts of climate change in the Global South. Currently she is working on the understanding the local-level vulnerability to the impacts of climate change in the low-lying islands of the Indian Sundarban Delta. Her research has been funded by the National Geographic Society, Fulbright Fellowship, American Institute of Indian Studies, American Association of Geographers, and National Science Foundation. She teaches courses on climate change, spatial analysis, and crime mapping. She regularly publishes with her students on collaborative research projects. She was a member and chair of the Equity and Inclusion Committee (formerly Women and Minorities Committee) at the University of Miami. During her tenure in this committee, she worked actively to make the university more equitable and inclusive, including the creation of an ombudsperson position, paid parental leave benefits, and a university wide salary analysis. She aspires to continue working on various initiatives on equity and inclusion.

Helena Solo-Gabrielle
*Environmental Engineering*

Helena Solo-Gabrielle is a Professor in the Department of Chemical, Environmental, and Materials Engineering at the University of Miami, where she teaches courses in environmental measurements, environmental engineering microbiology, and design of water quality control systems. Her research focuses on evaluating the transport of contaminants in the environment for the purpose of evaluating impacts on human health. She leads local, state and federally funded grants that evaluate infectious disease spread from measurements of wastewater, that evaluate sources of microbes to coastal environments, that evaluate contributions of the chemical PFAS to the environment from landfills, and that assess children's exposure to contaminants in the home through dust. Her research teams are diverse and her studies are inclusive of under-represented communities. Dr. Solo-Gabriele has published over 160 peer-reviewed journal articles receiving numerous awards for her scholarship. She is a Fellow of the American Society of Civil Engineers. Throughout her research endeavors, Dr. Solo-Gabriele has shown a commitment to graduate education by serving throughout her career in service roles inclusive of the graduate coordinator for her Department (5 years), College representative on the University level Graduate Council (6 years), and as the Associate Dean for Research (16 years) where she facilitated the implementation of new graduate and undergraduate programs. Dr. Solo-Gabriele currently chairs the Exemplary Scholar Hires in Engineering (ESHE) committee within the College. The goal of the ESHE committee is to facilitate the hiring of exemplary and diverse candidates within the College of Engineering Departments by encouraging applications from under-represented minorities.
Ayza Philomena Croskey
Chemical Biology

Ayza Philomena Croskey is a candidate for the Ph.D. in Chemical Biology at the University of Michigan. Her research focuses on developing a novel high-throughput screening methodology to discover potential therapeutics that target a class of cellular proteins commonly dysregulated in numerous diseases. Ayza has been recognized as a Chemistry-Biology Interface Training Program (CBI TP) Fellow and a Rackham Merit Fellow as well as retains memberships in the Sigma Xi and Phi Beta Kappa Honors Societies. She developed a proclivity for teaching while working as a Mathnasium instructor and a Chemistry Department tutor during her undergraduate career. Ayza graduated summa cum laude from Howard University with two Bachelor of Science degrees, one in Chemistry and the other in Human Performance (concentration in Sports Medicine). As an HBCU alumnus, Ayza has been dedicated to supporting and cultivating a sense of belonging for underrepresented groups on and off-campus. She holds leadership positions in the organizations NOBCChE-UM, GSBES, and commUNITY, which are all designed for the advancement of underrepresented undergraduate and graduate students. Ayza also acts as a mentor for U-MYSci, a student outreach organization that guides minority 8th grade students from the metro Detroit area through scientific experiments and facilitate discussions pertaining to science careers and research. Additionally, she performs independent outreach to recruit diverse STEM students from the DC area. Ultimately, Ayza aspires to have a multifaceted career as a principal investigator with the intention of being actively involved in teaching, mentoring, and recruiting.

Gabrielle Elizabeth Bernal
Educational Studies

Gabrielle Elizabeth Bernal is a University of Michigan candidate for a Ph.D. in Educational Studies focusing on teaching, teacher education, and mathematics education. Her research interests include questions of race, dis/ability, teaching, learning, mathematics, and social action. More specifically, her research explores the embodiment of Indigenous and Latine teachers and students in the context of home, community, and school mathematics. Her work is interdisciplinary, pulling from disability justice, performance studies, and critical educational studies. As a former K-12 special education teacher and current teacher educator, her research, teaching, and service have been shaped and informed by her experiences. Gabrielle is a California State University Doctoral Incentive Program (CDIP) Fellow in the Department of Special Education in the College of Education at San José State and has earned a Certificate in World Performance Studies (CWPS) during her time as a University of Michigan CWPS Fellow. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Psychology from California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly) San Luis Obispo, where she was a mentor and coach with justice-involved youth. She earned her M.Ed. from Notre Dame de Namur University while mentoring and supporting teacher interns full-time. Gabrielle believes in sharing a love for mathematics and community through her teaching, service, and research. Ultimately, Gabrielle aspires to be a teacher educator in California, working closely and collaborating with community experts, focusing on special education and mathematics education, to improve the schooling and preparation experience of Students and Teachers of Color.
Michole Washington

*Mathematics Education*

Michole Washington is a candidate for the Ph.D. in educational studies with a concentration in mathematics education at the University of Michigan. Her research focuses on the design of extracurricular STEM activities for Black girls. Michole has been recognized as a Ford Foundation Fellow, STEM Success Summit Mathematician of the Year Nominee, UM Learning Levers 2021 Grand Prize recipient, a Georgia Institute of Technology 40 under 40 alumni, and a NASA Office of STEM Engagement Doctoral Intern. As well, she received a Bachelor of Science in mathematics from the Georgia Institute of Technology, where in 2016 she graduated as the 9th Black woman to earn a BS in math in the university’s 131 year history. She has also earned her Master of Science in Mathematics from the University of Michigan while working on her Ph.D.. Michole believes in making STEM spaces equitable and comfortable for those who have been historically shut out. She is the founder and lead designer for her company, STEMulation, where her teams designs culturally relevant STEM experiences, like escape rooms, for Black and Brown families. Ultimately, Michole aspires to continue working towards designing and improving Black girls’ out-of-school STEM experiences in a way she never got to experience as a former Black girl.

Saraí Blanco Martinez

*Education & Psychology*

Saraí Blanco Martinez is a Ph.D. candidate in the Combined Program of Education and Psychology and is also getting her master’s in social work, with a focus on Community Change at the University of Michigan. Prior to starting her graduate programs, she received her Bachelor of Arts, with a minor in Social Work from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Saraí grounds her research in practices of cultural strengths, love, joy, and healing to answer questions about how Latinx immigrant communities keep their heritage traditions and customs alive, how immigrant origin youth learn about their identities, and how youth learn from their families about what it means to be active agents of change advocating for the rights of their communities. Her research focuses on the ethnic-racial and sociopolitical socialization processes and how these contribute to the radical healing efforts of Latinx mixed-status immigrant families and communities. Saraí’s research has been published in the American Journal of Community Psychology, Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, and New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development journals. In addition to being an academic, Saraí has always been an active and strong advocate for Latinx immigrant communities through her collaborations with The Center for New North Carolinians, Mexiquenses en Michigan, and the Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights. Ultimately, Saraí aims to be a community-oriented scholar who incorporates critical and asset-based perspectives to disrupt systems of oppression and uplift and support the healing and transformative efforts of communities and scholars of color.
Laura-Ann Jacobs  
National Center for Institutional Diversity  

Laura-Ann is a postdoctoral research fellow with the National Center for Institutional Diversity (NCID) Stepping uP Against Racism and Xenophobia (SPARX) Project. Laura-Ann graduated in 2021 from the University of Michigan with a doctorate in Educational Studies with a specialization in Literacy, Language, and Culture. In her time as a doctoral student, Laura-Ann co-founded Women of Color and the Academy (WOCATA), which is a group that brings together education scholars and practitioners to examine issues related to race, research, and representation while centering the voices and experiences of women of color. Prior to her doctoral program, Laura-Ann taught public high school English in South Carolina for six years. Laura-Ann grounds her work in the qualities of creativity, compassion, and connectedness, and her research pursues questions about how people learn about their identities, how they choose to share their stories, and how they make their mark on the world. Her research primarily focuses on preparing secondary English Language Arts teachers for antiracist pedagogical change for the purposes of disrupting educational inequity and creating spaces for students to explore and express themselves. Her current work centers around how people individually and collectively translate our stated commitments of justice into action for the purpose of social change.

Nagash Clarke  
Engineering Education  

Nagash Clarke is currently a Doctoral Candidate in the Engineering Education Program. His research involves white male racial allyship in STEM, where he is exploring how white male develop and enact racial allyship. This is towards the goal of increasing and sustaining minoritized persistence in STEM fields. He graduated with a Bachelor degree in Chemistry from Pace University in Pleasantville, NY. He received a Master’s degree in Chemical Engineering from the University of Michigan. He worked for four years as a Chemical Engineer at Dupont Automotive Company. He left that position and started teaching chemistry at various local colleges, like Eastern Michigan University, Oakland Community College, and Washtenaw Community College. He has been heavily involved in programs geared towards minoritized student engagement in Higher Education, especially in STEM. For example. He was a teacher in Detroit Area Pre-College Program; Initiator and Coordinator of Pre-College STEM initiative; lead teacher in College Is My Future; and Co-coordinator of Black Male Initiative. Nagash has presented at numerous conferences such as STEMtech, Innovations, Trends, and American Society of Engineering Educators (ASEE). He has published two conference papers at ASEE, has a publication in the international Journal of Engineering Social Justice and Peace, and has a paper under review in Journal of Computing in Higher Education. Along with his dissertation research he is involved in mentoring research where he studies mentoring of marginalized populations.
Adriana Ponce
Sociology

Adriana Ponce is a Ph.D. candidate in sociology at the University of Michigan. Her feminist research—which focuses on shared parenting experiences in contemporary family forms utilizing qualitative methodology—has been awarded by the American Sociological Association. More specifically, Adriana’s dissertation centers on child custody arrangements and her most current project examines stepfamilies. This work has been supported by various interdisciplinary fellowships through the Institute for Research on Women and Gender and the Sweetland Writing Center at the University of Michigan (U-M). As a leader on campus, Adriana has taught across twelve semesters in four different disciplines and holds two equity-based teaching certificates including Preparing Future Faculty. She is an advocate for the success of women in the academy and is a mentor to first-generation students—work that has been recognized by Rackham Susan Lipschutz, Margaret Ayers Host, and Anna Olcott Smith Award. Adriana’s service work on campus includes bolstering diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives as a staff assistant for the U-M DEI Certificate Program where she supported other graduate students also seeking to make higher education more accessible. Adriana earned her master’s degree in sociology from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and bachelor’s degree in sociology from the University of California, Berkeley. Her academic accomplishments and determination as an underserved student have been highlighted by the Center for Education of Women. She will begin her tenure-track assistant professor position at a liberal arts institution this summer upon defending her dissertation.

Aaron J. Neal
Clinical Science

Aaron J. Neal (he/him) is a candidate in the Clinical Science Ph.D. Program within the Department of Psychology at the University of Michigan - Ann Arbor. His research focuses on the impacts structural racism has on the mental health, well-being, and development of Black youth. He recently co-authored a commentary, “Measuring institutional and structural racism in research on adolescence and developmental science”, that he hopes will aid the field in improving conceptual understanding and measurement of structural racism. His research has been supported by the Ford Foundation, The Society for Research in Child Development, and The National African American Child and Family Research Center at Morehouse School of Medicine. In addition to his research endeavors, Aaron also serves as a mental health therapist at The Corner Health, a community mental health clinic that provides therapy to youth and young adults. Aaron earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University as well as a Master of Science in Neuroscience and Education from Teachers College Columbia University where he was an Arthur Zankel Urban Education Fellow. In all his efforts, community is at the center. He works in collaboration with community members, patients, students, and researchers to combat structural oppression and its impacts on society. Aaron looks forward to using all of his skills to be a resource and support to communities through research, therapy, teaching, service, and advocacy.
Sierra A. Nance
*Molecular & Integrative Physiology*

Sierra A. Nance defended her dissertation in March 2023 and obtained her Ph.D. in Molecular & Integrative Physiology from the University of Michigan. Her research focuses on the role of adipose tissue macrophages in the pathogenesis of obesity-associated Type 2 Diabetes. She recently published a review article on Adipose Tissue macrophages: regulators of adipose tissue immunometabolism during obesity in Molecular Metabolism. Sierra is a recipient of the Benard Maas Merit Fellowship, Rackham Merit Fellowship, and the NIH Ruth L. Kirchstein Predoctoral National Service Award. Also, she received a Bachelor of Science in chemistry from Winston Salem State University, where she was a recipient of the Chancellor’s Scholarship. Sierra is passionate about mentoring and increasing diversity in STEM. She has helped develop the Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) Connect initiative within Rackham Graduate School and serves as Executive Director of HBCU-DAP, Inc – a non-profit organization she founded to support students from historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) on their journey to a Ph.D. Ultimately, she aspires to continue contributing to the advancement of society by increasing diversity in clinical trials to close the health disparity gap in obesity-associated Type 2 Diabetes and honors Bouchet’s legacy by mitigating the higher education racial disparity by mentoring the next generation of Black scientists and advocating for HBCUs.

Shana D. Littleton
*Clinical Pharmacy and Translational Sciences*

Shana D. Littleton is a 3rd year Ph.D. candidate in the Clinical Pharmacy and Translational Sciences Program at the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor. Her research aims to distinguish between genetic and social factors that play a role in the racial disparity of treatment outcomes in heart failure patients. Shana received her bachelor’s degree in Molecular and Cellular Biology from the University of Illinois at Urbana - Champaign. Since an undergraduate student, she has served as a leader in her communities including being vice president of the student organization Her Essence. This group worked to empower and promote the professional advancement of women. Now, at the University of Michigan, Shana is the president of Students of Color Of Rackham (SCOR). SCOR hosts a wide range of events geared towards networking, professionalism, research, activism, volunteer service and social needs of minoritized graduate students. This group helps to create community and foster relationships among students across the different graduate and professional schools at University of Michigan. Shana aspires to expand her work in the field of precision medicine by using the latest tools, such as genetic screenings, to advance care and address racial health disparities facing communities of color. Knowing that biomedical research often lacks representation from underserved and underrepresented communities, she hopes to use aspects of social and genetic research to implement precision health for these individuals.
Lisandra Flores-Aldama
*Neuroscience*

Lisandra Flores-Aldama is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Department of Neuroscience of the University of Wisconsin-Madison working in the laboratory of Dr. Gail Robertson. She earned her BSc in Biochemistry at Universidad de La Habana, graduating summa cum laude in 2011. As an undergraduate student, she worked at the Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, Havana, Cuba, focusing on defining the molecular mechanism underlying the antitumoral effect of synthetic peptides by proteomics approaches, work that contributed to a publication. In 2014 Lisandra enrolled in a Ph.D. in cell and molecular biology at the Universidad Austral de Chile. Guided by Dr. Sebastian Brauchi, her dissertation work contributed to understanding the evolutionary structural-functional correlation of the calcium-dependent inactivation of TRPV5-6 channels. She also collaborated in defining the transport mechanism of the human AE4 Cl-/HCO3-exchanger. She contributed as the first (co)-author of three articles and was awarded three scholarships and two grants as principal investigator. After graduating with her Ph.D. summa cum laude, Lisandra joined Dr. Gail Robertson’s laboratory to pursue ion channel biophysics in cardiovascular research. Her postdoctoral work aims to uncover the biogenesis of hERG1 channels and the molecular mechanism underlying this channel gating at the plasma membrane. As a postdoc, Lisandra earned a slot on an institutional T32 grant. She co-founded Black in Biophysics and co-organized Black in Biophysics Week, an initiative aiming to highlight black biophysicists. She also volunteers at the Biophysical and General Physiologist Societies. Lisandra aims to become a successful scientist in biophysics and cardiovascular research.

Pilar Gauthier
*Counseling Psychology*

Pilar Gauthier is a Ph.D. candidate in Counseling Psychology. Her Native American worldview and service to the community are evident in her research approach. She advocates for indigenous ways of knowing and doing as legitimate sources of knowledge and scientific inquiry within academia. Pilar developed an epistemic framework and methodology that centers on her Menominee cultural values. In doing so, her research practices respect Menominee tribal sovereignty and linguistic and cultural intellectual property. Pilar’s research aims to improve psychological practice among underrepresented populations, including exploring racial and gendered experiences of Native and non-Native women across life roles, career readiness among BIPOC students, and decolonization within psychotherapeutic practice and education. Her dissertation proposes that the vocational lives of Native American women require an expansion of current Western/European vocational theories to capture the complex histories and nuanced social contexts these women experience as they engage in work while taking into consideration the history of racism, sexism, economic structures and exploitation implicated in Western research. She is also working on a collaboration project with the Native Justice Alliance to explore how Native people living in the Great Lakes region experience and heal from racial injustice. In addition, she collaborates with the Great Lakes Native American Elders Association and academic allies at the William S. Memorial Veteran's Hospital to support culturally congruent care to elders and older adults experiencing end-of-life concerns, including dementia. Her research has been formally reviewed and endorsed by her tribe’s legislative body.
Aicha Quamine
*Cellular and Molecular Biology*

Aicha Quamine is a Ph.D. candidate in Cellular and Molecular Biology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her research focuses on combining cancer biology and immunology approaches to develop a multimodal immunotherapy by enhancing innate immune effector cells called Natural Killer (NK) cells for the treatment of relapsed or refractory neuroblastoma. Aicha received her B.S. in Pharmaceutical Sciences with a specialization in medicinal and biological chemistry from Cleveland State University. As an undergraduate student she joined the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program where she participated in phytochemical drug synthesis and small molecule inhibitor optimization which led to co-author status on two peer-reviewed papers. Aicha is a recipient of the Science and Medicine Graduate Research Scholars (SciMED-GRS) fellowship, the National Science Foundation (NSF) funded Wisconsin Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (WiscAMP) Fellowship, and the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP), and her thesis research has resulted in 4 additional co-authorships and a first-author review on enhancing NK cell-based immunotherapy. In addition to her research, Aicha is dedicated to scientific outreach and communication with the long-term goal of broadly increasing scientific literacy and making STEM accessible her community at all ages, backgrounds, and education levels.

Adati Tarfa
*Health Services Research in Pharmacy*

Adati Tarfa is a pharmacists and Health Services Research in Pharmacy PhD Candidate at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-Madison) School of Pharmacy. She earned a Doctorate in Pharmacy from Drake University with academic and leadership honors. Adati’s research integrates health equity, substance use disorder (SUD), medication adherence, and digital health into examining the care of people living with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). She was selected by the Office of Minority Health (OMH) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as a research Health Equity Fellow. Her research addressing the national priority of ending the HIV epidemic using interdisciplinary perspectives of pharmacists and social workers has been published at key pharmacy journals. Adati is mentored by Dr. Olayinka Shiyanbola, a National Institutes of Health (NIH) Disparities Research Scholar, on the design and implementation of a culturally tailored peer support intervention – the Peers Supporting Health Literacy, Self-efficacy, Self-Advocacy, and Adherence (Peers LEAD) program – to improve medication adherence among African Americans. Using her training in medication adherence support, Adati’s dissertation is exploring medication adherence among people with HIV and SUD using a computer-mediated discourse analysis of participants using the Addiction Comprehensive Health Enhancement Support System (A-CHESS) mobile health application. In addition to her research, Adati is passionate about mental health. She regularly facilitates National Alliances of Mental Health (NAMI) support groups and was awarded the NAMI Dane County 2022 Award of Excellence. Adati also received the UW-Madison Graduate Women in Science Award for her research, academic, and leadership excellence.
Paris Wicker is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis with a doctoral minor in Sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Using multi and mixed methods, her research explores three areas: (1) the connection between education and well-being, (2) The role of racism and anti-racism within higher education policy and practice, and (3) relational frameworks for organizational change. She is a Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellow and incoming Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy at The State University of New York at Buffalo. Her dissertation is a social network analysis of well-being for Black and Indigenous college students, with the aim to elevate well-being and relationships as primary components of student success, and to uncover how institutions of higher education aid or impede the well-being of their constituents. Recent publications include “Well-being consciousness and college access borderlands,” which explores how college access program staff used well-being practices to prepare Black and Indigenous students for higher education, and “A Critical Policy Review of Well-Being and Equity Policy at Historically Black, Tribal, and Predominately White Colleges and Universities.” Before the doctoral journey, Paris had ten years of experience as a practitioner within college admissions and student affairs, facilitating student success and building relationships and supportive campus climates. Paris holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Vocal Music and French and Francophone studies from Lawrence University, a Master of Science in Education in Professional Counseling from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, and is originally from Chicago, Illinois.
Giuseppe Cotardo is currently a postdoctoral associate in mathematics at Virginia Tech. He completed his Ph.D. at University College Dublin, Ireland, supported by an Irish Research Council (IRS) grant. His research interest is algebraic coding theory, the mathematical theory behind reliable digital communications. His work mainly focuses on rank-metric codes and their algebraic and combinatorial properties. This research area is highly interdisciplinary. It connects mathematics with information theory, cryptography, electrical engineering, and computer science. Giuseppe has six papers, three of which have been published. He was a nominated student member of the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics (SIAM) and received several grants to support his research and teaching/academic initiatives. For Giuseppe, service, leadership, and advocacy are intertwined. He is one of the organizers of an international seminar for Ph.D. students and postdocs. He is committed to inviting speakers of different ethnicities, genders, and geographic areas to create a diverse and inclusive community of junior researchers. He was and is currently involved in organizing other academic events for women in mathematics to inspire students to pursue a mathematics career and equip them to thrive in the discipline. Giuseppe is aware of the importance of being consistent in work, persevering in goals, and understanding students' difficulties in a competitive research environment. Therefore, he will strive for excellence in his work and keep helping future researchers to be represented in the community and become part of the academic world.

Catherine L. Cotrupi is a Ph.D. candidate in Higher Education at Virginia Tech. Her research focuses on how and to what extent white faculty members resisted upholding Whiteness and white supremacy culture during a critical event in their service learning and community-engaged (SLCE) practice. Catherine's current Graduate Research Assistantships have her working with two faculty members on their community-engaged research and outreach efforts; one funded by an NSF CAREER award contributing to knowledge of students' pathways into engineering influenced by collaborations between P-12 schools, industries, and higher education; the other funded by an NSF CIVIC award supporting the planning and implementation of innovative civic technology-based efforts to improve organizational capacities of communities to respond to the problem of extreme heat events, which disproportionately impact low-income communities. It is Catherine's life's work to educate herself and others on how to have a positive, sustainable, and critical impact through the shared work of campus-community engagement. She has taught an undergraduate course on the best practices of SLCE for the past eight years, a graduate-level course for two, and she is currently the only non-faculty member of a team working to develop a graduate certificate in community engagement at Virginia Tech. Catherine has been recognized as a Diversity Scholar by the Graduate School at Virginia Tech and leads multiple workshops each semester on and off campus on CRT, Critical Whiteness, and critical community-engaged praxis. She is deeply involved in her local and regional community and serves on multiple boards and commissions, chairing two.
Tuwanda L. Green
*Architecture*

Tuwanda L. Green is a postdoc in architecture focusing on Human-Centric Design Theories and Methods (HCD) at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Upon graduation, she accepted an invitation to teach the core principles of her dissertation at Virginia Tech's Washington-Alexandria Architecture Center. Her self-created HCD course is based on theories, basic biology, scientific methods, and design processes to help justify the need for human focused built environments, while simultaneously promoting empathy and equity in design. Tuwanda has been recognized as Virginia Tech's first African American female doctorate to graduate from the College of Architecture and Design Research in 2021. She is also an Academy of Neuroscience for Architecture (ANFA) member and educator actively working with her cross-disciplinary colleagues. Tuwanda passionately pursues knowledge through teaching, writing, researching, and building new research collaborations. She believes in growth through rejections and seeks opportunities to share lessons learned – especially through teaching and mentoring. She is working with Washington DC public schools to develop a volunteer program that provides a broader exposure of architecture careers to underrepresented elementary through high school students. Tuwanda's architectural vision is a world where design of every built environment promotes human health and equity.

June Ann Jones
*Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Thought*

June Ann Jones is a political theorist and doctoral candidate in the Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Thought (ASPECT) at Virginia Tech. She holds an M.A. in political science from Vanderbilt University and a B.A. in government and psychology from the University of Maryland. She has taught courses in political science, philosophy, and environmental issues. Her research focuses on food systems and environmental politics, with her dissertation pertaining to farmer representation and settler colonial institutional power in agriculture in the United States. June continues to combine her practical agricultural experience, her research, and her teaching, as they all inform her perspective on sustainable agriculture policy and the issues facing the prospects of post-industrial society in the face of climate change. Her background in agriculture, as a small farmer, has motivated her advocacy for this community and has led to advocate for farmer wellbeing in her scholarship and in the Maryland State Assembly in drafting legislation. Her critical approach to research aims to empower small farmers in dealing with climate justice issues, fighting against the corporatization of the food system, and protecting access to agricultural land. As an advocate and teacher, she has given invited talks on the topic of sustainable development in agriculture and against corporate greenwashing. Speaking across diverse audiences, she takes seriously the call to make scholarship accessible to the public and believes that this enhances the quality of her teaching and research, as it simultaneously demonstrates the valuable service of universities in our democratic society.
Kelsey Reed
Horticulture

Kelsey Reed is a PhD candidate in horticulture at Virginia Tech and previously received her Bachelor of Science in plant biology from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. Her dissertation research focuses on plant tissue culture and genetics, specifically how to enhance single cell plant regeneration using morphogenic transcription factors. She is first author on a literature review on protoplast regeneration and a co-author on two additional papers. Kelsey is a leader in both the university and community, currently serving as co-president of the Translational Plant Sciences Center (TPSC) graduate student group as well as encouraging her lab to volunteer at local events, including science fairs. Kelsey has been recognized as a Fulbright scholar, TPSC Graduate Mentor of the Year, and her department’s Outstanding College of Agriculture and Life Sciences PhD student nominee. She has been an advocate for mentoring, having mentored 8 undergraduate and 2 high school researchers during her time at Virginia Tech as well as being a Diversity Scholar with the project titled “Quantifying the Effectiveness of Mentorship Training.” Additionally, she has been awarded for her science communication skills during poster presentations, receiving first place at the School of Plant and Environmental Sciences poster competition in 2022 and second place at the TPSC Symposium in 2023. In the future, Kelsey plans to continue working at the forefront of scientific communication either in industry or government to help provide solutions for global food security.

Joao F. Santos
Electrical and Computer Engineering

Joao F. Santos is a postdoctoral researcher investigating software-defined wireless networks at the Commonwealth Cyber Initiative, a research institute headquartered at Virginia Tech. His research interests include radio resource management, radio virtualization, network slicing, and end-to-end network orchestration. Joao is an advisory board member of Virginia Tech’s Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL). He received his Ph.D. in electronic and electrical engineering from Trinity College Dublin, Ireland, where he mentored STEM students from underrepresented minority communities, and was an avid volunteer at the DU Gamers Society. Previously, he received his B.Sc in telecommunications engineering from Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brazil, where he was a recipient of the CAPES Science Without Borders Scholarship. Ultimately, Joao aspires to make higher education and high-impact research more accessible to disadvantaged students, filling skill gaps from members of underrepresented minority communities to build an equitable and inclusive cyber-ready workforce.
Welington Santos

Mathematics

Welington Santos is a postdoctoral associate working in the Applied Algebra Research Group at Virginia Tech. His research focuses on fractional decoding of algebraic geometry codes, codes in the NRT metric space, and applications of algebraic-geometry codes to secure distributed matrix multiplication. Dr. Santos received his Ph.D. in mathematics from the Federal University of Paraná in 2019. His Ph.D. thesis was recognized with the best doctoral thesis award at the Federal University of Paraná. Since starting his postdoctoral appointment, Dr. Santos has participated in and led outreach programs around coding theory and cryptography to increase underrepresented groups' representation in mathematical sciences graduate programs. Dr. Santos also organized research events to allow young researchers to meet, talk and collaborate with outstanding researchers. Ultimately, Dr. Santos aspires to work at the intersection of research and education, with a passion for learning and sharing new ideas and experiences to include more students in the scientifique research life.
David Balmaceda Marenco
Applied Linguistics

David Balmaceda is a candidate for the Ph.D. in applied linguistics at Washington University in St. Louis. David's interdisciplinary research focuses on second language acquisition and use. His scholarship draws on theories in applied linguistics, social psychology, and higher education. He studies socio-psychological factors influencing language enrollment decisions, particularly beliefs, attitudes, and gender, and their impact on the enrollment decline of Spanish programs in the U.S. David's research aims to foster a positive outlook towards language learning, multilingualism, and linguistic diversity with the aim of enhancing understanding of diverse cultures and the ethnic communities that are associated with them. Previously, David collaborated on research projects in health literacy with linguistically diverse patients and is currently exploring the role of second language learning and transnational mobility in developing countries amidst socio-political crises. During his graduate studies at Washington University in St. Louis, David helped develop an online reading program for new refugees and immigrants in St. Louis. He designed and co-coordinated the CDI Fellows Program, which enables graduate and undergraduate students to implement DEI projects on campus. He has received two professional certificates and fellowships from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and is dedicated to advancing knowledge and diversity in academia.

Rosie Dutt
Imaging Science

Rosie Dutt is a candidate for the Ph.D. in imaging science at Washington University in St. Louis. Her research interests focus on neuroimaging analysis techniques in the context of mental health conditions and psychiatric disorders. Prior to moving to the US, Rosie graduated from St George’s University of London with a BSc in Biomedical Sciences, specializing in Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience. Since then, she has completed a MSc in Cognitive Neuroscience at Durham University and an MRes in Bioimaging Science from Imperial College London. Alongside her academics, Rosie has mobilized scientists and engineers across the country to apply their skills on a local, national and international scale, sitting on the leadership teams of numerous national organizations. Her roles include serving as Editor-in-Chief for the Journal of Science Policy and Governance, Writer/Editor for 500 Women Scientists. Lastly, Rosie’s desire to inspire the next generation of scientists has led her to seek our several teaching roles at various university in the United States.
Dominique A. Horton  
*Social Work*

Dominique Horton is a candidate for the Ph.D. in social work at Washington University in St. Louis. Dominique’s scholarship, teaching and community work aims to educate, equip and empower those committed to dismantling systemic racism in and around schools. Her work seeks to expand the ways urban educators, parents, community stakeholders, other researchers and policymakers think about how racism impact academic, social-emotional and family well-being outcomes, particularly for African American families and their children. Bringing over a decade of experience as a Chicago educator and school social worker to research, Dominique’s dissertation work explores reimagining how schools engage with Black families and its potential implications for these outcomes in addition to broader educational and social policy reform. In addition to teaching and research, she has served as a mentor for incoming doctoral students, been a member of the Center for Teaching and Learning Graduate Advisory Council, collaborated with education developers on campus to support faculty incorporating anti-racist pedagogy and volunteers with St. Louis Public Schools.

Maurice Tetne  
*French Language & Literature*

Maurice Tetne is a Ph.D. candidate in French Language and Literature at Washington University in St. Louis. His dissertation project explores regional French and its transcription into literature and cinema, focusing on a comparative study of two francophone areas: Louisiana and francophone Africa. His research examines literature and film from the nineteenth century to the present, with the aim of demonstrating how the multiethnic nature of these French-speaking regions informs the stylistic approaches adopted by authors and filmmakers in their use of the French language. Literature and cinema serve as meeting places for multiple linguistic components expressed through a domesticated French that diverges from the grammatical and semantic norms of Parisian French. Tetne has made contributions in both creative and critical writing. In June 2020, his collection of poems and short stories was published by Les Éditions Saint Honoré in Paris. His poem Fatale dissemblance won first prize in the American Journal of French Studies[1] writing contest in 2021. He was also awarded the “Silver critical essay prize” by the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures in 2022, and his article Le noir et le blanc du Fils d’Agatha Moudio, discours sur l’altérité et le mêmeté was published in Voix Plurielles, Vol. 19.1. His most recent work is a contribution to a book project with a chapter titled Français, argot et vernaculaire: une zone de confort linguistique en littérature africaine?, which will be published in March 2023 by Les Presses Universitaires de Montréal. The book won the prestigious “Langues en dialogues” prize awarded by the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF).

William D. Shipman

*Dermatology*

William D. Shipman III MD, PhD is a Dermatology resident and postdoctoral fellow in the Yale Department of Dermatology. His research and clinical interests focus on skin of color, wound healing, and hidradenitis suppurativa. He is originally from North Carolina and is a proud graduate of Morehouse College in Atlanta, GA, obtaining a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology. From there, he completed an MD-PhD program at the Weill Cornell/Rockefeller/ Sloan-Kettering Tri-Institutional program in NYC, receiving a PhD in Immunology- studying autoimmune skin diseases and specially discovering that immune cells are dysfunctional in lupus skin, working with Dr. Theresa Lu- a Yale Medicine MD/PhD alumna. During graduate school he also worked on projects in skin fibrosis and lymph node fibroblast function in immunity. At Weill Cornell he was involved in creating the Black and Latino Men in Medicine organization, which has since resulted in consultation from other academic centers. He completed a preliminary year in Internal Medicine at Yale-New Haven Hospital and is currently completing his residency in Dermatology with a combined postdoctoral fellowship component. His postdoctoral work will be done with Dr. Henry Hsia- Professor of Plastic Surgery and Founder of Yale Regenerative Wound Healing Center, studying the role of extracellular vesicles in wound healing and hidradenitis suppurativa. In addition to his clinical and research efforts, Dr. Shipman serves as an advocate to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within his department and within Dermatology nationally.

Eric M. Glover

*Dramaturgy and Dramatic Criticism*

Eric M. Glover, MMUF PhD, is an assistant professor adjunct at Yale David Geffen School of Drama, where he practices dramaturgy and dramatic criticism. Glover is the author of African-American Perspectives in Musical Theatre (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2023), where he reads representative musicals by and about Black people--from Pauline Elizabeth Hopkins to Stew--closely. Glover is also editing Manifestos for BlackTheatre, Then and Now, a special section of TheatreHistory Studies, with Isaiah Matthew Wooden at Swarthmore. A member of the advisory board for the Web site Extended Play: TheaterBeyond the Theater and also a member of the editorial board for the scholarly journal Studies in Musical Theatre. Glover is also serving as a production dramaturg at Yale Repertory Theatre for Christina Anderson's play the ripple, the wave that carried me home. Black Theater History in the Making at Yale School of Drama, Black Women Playwrights, Race and the American Musical from Jerome Kern to Jay Kuo, and Topics in Casting comprise courses taught. Glover is also proud to be the first-ever self-identified African-American dramaturgy and dramatic criticism faculty member at the School of Drama in its history.
Ngozi Akingbesote  
*Cellular and Molecular Physiology*

Ngozi is a candidate for the Ph.D. in Cellular and Molecular Physiology with a concentration in Cancer Metabolism at Yale University. Her research focuses on uncovering the mechanisms by which exercise improves therapeutic responses to immunotherapy in triple-negative breast cancer preclinical models. Her first author paper revealing, “A precision medicine approach to metabolic therapy for breast cancer in mice,” is published in Communications Biology. Ngozi was awarded the Yale President’s Public Service Fellowship in 2021, where she got the opportunity to work with the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America (Michelle’s House), a Connecticut-based organization that seeks to use prevention strategies to enhance the quality of life and well-being of the community affected by sickle cell disease (SCD). Additionally, Ngozi was awarded one of the Yale Dean’s Emerging Scholars Research Awards in 2022. Currently, Ngozi serves as the Outreach chair for the Yale BBS Diversity and Inclusion Collective (YBDIC) where she works to leverage resources within Yale’s network to create STEM education opportunities for minority undergraduate, community school, and post-baccalaureate students. Ngozi also serves as a Public Service Fellow with Yale McDougal Graduate Student Center, where she helps create opportunities for graduate students to interact with the New Haven community through community service.

Sandy Chang  
*Telomere Biology and Molecular Diagnostics*

Dr. Sandy Chang is a physician-scientist with a research focus on telomere biology and a clinical interest on molecular diagnostics. He has been an important contributor for over two decades in advancing our understanding of how telomeres, repetitive sequences that cap the ends of eukaryotic chromosomes, protect chromosomal ends from being recognized as damaged DNA. The Chang lab has generated many unique mouse models of telomere dysfunction to address innovative questions in both the aging and cancer fields. For example, his lab was the first to generate a mouse model of human Werner Syndrome that recapitulated many of its clinical aging phenotypes. His lab has published their findings in prestigious scientific journals including Nature, Science and Cell. Dr. Chang has been a direct mentor to many PhD students who have gone on to have productive academic research careers. At Yale College, he teaches two First Year Seminars, Topics in Cancer Biology and Perspectives in Biological Research. In both classes, students learn to read and present primary scientific literature and write research proposals that they use to secure summer research funding. As the Associate Dean of STEM Education at Yale College, Dr. Chang is also the director of the Science, Technology and Research (STARS) Programs. STARS supports successful integration of women and underrepresented minorities into Yale STEM classes and laboratories through peer mentorship, professional development workshops and experiential research opportunities. In this capacity, Dr. Chang has increased by over 300% the number of URM and FGLI undergraduates participating in STARS Programs.
Mariam Fofana
Epidemiology of Microbial Diseases

Mariam O. Fofana is a Postdoctoral Associate in the Department of Epidemiology of Microbial Diseases at the Yale School of Public Health and a Clinical Instructor in Emergency Medicine at the Yale School of Medicine. Her research focuses on the application of quantitative epidemiologic methods such as mathematical modeling to guide the control of infectious disease threats in under-resourced settings and marginalized populations. Her previous work includes estimating the cost-effectiveness of interventions to prevent and treat HIV in South Africa and quantifying the impact of changes in tuberculosis treatment delivery on transmission. Her current work focuses primarily on immune responses, transmission dynamics and socioeconomic impact of SARS-CoV-2 in an urban informal settlement in Brazil. She is determined to make global health more equitable and sustainable through her research as well as education and advocacy efforts.

Paola Figueroa-Delgado
Cell Biology

Paola Figueroa-Delgado is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Cell Biology at the Yale School of Medicine. Her research focuses on studying the underlying mechanisms mediating neuronal remodeling in Caenorhabditis elegans. Her thesis work will increase our understanding of fundamental processes that shape the nervous system and will provide insights into how neurodevelopmental disorders may arise. Paola is a recipient of the National Institutes of Health National Research Service Award Predoctoral Fellowship which supports her thesis work and training. In addition, she is the recipient of Yale’s Annie Le Fellowship for her contributions to science and to the Yale community. Beyond her thesis work, Paola serves as the Director for the Yale Biological and Biomedical Sciences Diversity and Inclusion Collective (YBDIC), an initiative that aims to engage, empower and advance underrepresented minorities in the biological and biomedical sciences. Through YBDIC, Paola developed and launched programs that provide science education and communication opportunities to community college, undergraduate, and post-baccalaureate students. Among them: mentoring programs (matching over 70 local and national students with current Yale students); a science communication series; and, most notably, a research symposium which hosted 60 local and national students at Yale. In addition, Paola is Student Coordinator for the Yale BioMed Amgen Scholars Program, where she has mentored and supported over 40 undergraduates pursuing a Summer research experience at Yale. Her work in service to Yale and her community have awarded her the Yale-Jefferson Award for Public Service and the Vanderbilt Basic Sciences’ Hispanic and Latin Heritage Graduate Leader Award.
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