



2021Science

CAREER SYMPOSIUM

FOR POSTDOCS, GRADUATE STUDENTS, AND ALUMNI

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2021

3:30-5 pm | ZOOM

**FEATURING ZOOM BREAKOUT ROOM
DISCUSSIONS LED BY PHD
PROFESSIONALS REPRESENTING A
VARIETY OF EXCITING CAREER PATHS**



Whether you are a medical or graduate student just starting advanced study in your chosen field; a postdoctoral fellow, resident, or clinical fellow embarking on even more specialized training; or a junior-level faculty member serving as a teacher, researcher, or clinician, we want to help you achieve your professional potential.

Visit oacd.pitt.edu or email oacd@pitt.edu to learn more about the academic career development programs and resources available to help guide you on your journey toward a professional life.

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PROGRAM

3:30 pm Zoom

INTRODUCTION

Darlene Zellers, PhD

*Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Career Development,
Health Sciences*

Director, Office of Academic Career Development, Health Sciences

Director, Center for Postdoctoral Affairs in the Health Sciences

Associate Dean for Postdoctoral Affairs, School of Medicine

OPENING REMARKS

Laura Miller, PhD

Associate Director,

Office of Academic Career Development

3:45 – 4:45 pm Zoom

BREAKOUT ROOM DISCUSSIONS

Participate in four, 15-minute virtual roundtables where you will meet and interact with PhD professionals from science-related fields who will discuss their careers across a range of employment settings, such as academia, industry, and government organizations. Review the table and bios below to plan out your individualized experience.

4:45 - 5 pm Zoom

FINAL DISCUSSION

Return to the main room where you will be invited to share insights gained from this experience. What surprised you? What reaffirmed or changed your thoughts about a future career? What steps do you plan to take that came from ideas shared today?

SPEAKER INDEX

#	Topic	Speaker	Title & Company	Email
1	Academic - Primarily Research/TT	Samantha Rosenthal, PhD	Assistant Professor, Department of Oral and Craniofacial Sciences, University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine	slr61@pitt.edu
2	Academic - Research Development	Julie Myers-Irvin, PhD	SSoE Grant Developer, University of Pittsburgh	JMM30@pitt.edu
3	Academic - Technology Transfer	Ayantika (Annie) Ghosh, PhD	Licensing Analyst, Purdue University	aghost@prf.org
4	Academic - Undergraduate Education	Megan Bertholomey, PhD	Assistant Professor of Psychology & Neuroscience, Allegheny College	mbertholomey@allegheny.edu
5	Industry - Clinical Trials Management	Karen Schmidt, PhD	Manager, Pharmacovigilance Research and Planning, BeiGene USA	karenlyneschmidt@gmail.com
6	Industry – Pharmaceutical	Myriam Attar, PhD	Team Lead of Field Medical Dermatology, Pfizer	myriamattar@gmail.com
7	Industry - Pharmaceutical Research	Alex Prokopenko, PhD	Senior Clinical Pharmacologist, Takeda Pharmaceuticals	aprokor5@gmail.com
8	Industry - Product Management	Karen Carney, PhD	Product Manager at Elsevier and Senior Commercial Translation Associate at PittSciVelo, University of Pittsburgh	kcarney@scivelo.pitt.edu
9	Medical Science Liaison	Benjamin Matta, PhD	Medical Science Liaison, G1 Therapeutics	benmatta@hotmail.com
10	Patent Agent	Marissa Kuzirian, PhD	Patent Agent, Troutman Pepper	Marissa.kuzirian@gmail.com
11	Postdoctoral Training	David Gau, PhD	Postdoctoral Scholar, University of Pittsburgh	dave.gau@pitt.edu
12	Public Policy	Natalie Ernecoff, PhD	Associate Policy Researcher, RAND Corporation	nernecof@rand.org
13	Science Writing	Anastasia Gorelova, PhD	Science Writer and Media Relations Manager, UPMC	gorelovaa@upmc.edu
14	Science Policy	Eileen Wong, PhD	Health Program Analyst, LA County of Public Health	eileenazwong@gmail.com

CAREER TABLE DISCUSSION LEADERS

Myriam Attar, PhD, is the Team Lead of the Field Medical Dermatology at Pfizer, Inc. She oversees an MSL team covering the East of the US. Myriam graduated from Penn State University with a PhD in Biochemistry, Microbiology, and Molecular Biology focused on epithelial cell motility before joining University of Pittsburgh as a postdoctoral fellow in breast and lung cancer. She leveraged her interests in bench-to-bedside applications into early contributions to Fourth River Solutions as a consultant first, and their Chief Development Officer later all while finishing her postdoctoral training. In 2016, she joined Pfizer's Dermatology field medical team at its inception, as an MSL, and was recently promoted to lead that very same team. Over the past few years, Myriam continued to enjoy her involvement with WIB Pittsburgh MAPS as a mentor, after having been a mentee in her years at Pitt.

Megan Bertholomey, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience at Allegheny College. She earned her BA in Studio Art at Knox College in Galesburg Illinois, followed by a Post-Baccalaureate Fellowship in Psychology. She then earned her PhD in Psychobiology of Addictions at Purdue University, Indianapolis Campus, where her research focused on the effects of stress on alcohol drinking in rats selectively bred for high alcohol consumption. After completing a brief postdoctoral fellowship at Harvard University under the mentorship of Dr. Nancy Mello focusing on sex differences in drug taking in nonhuman primates, Dr. Bertholomey joined the lab of Dr. Mary Torregrossa in the Psychiatry Department of the University of Pittsburgh where she merged these research interests, focusing on the effects of stress on sex differences in alcohol-motivated behavior and other behaviors related to anxiety and depression, including the effects of ketamine on these behaviors. Dr. Bertholomey then spent a year as a visiting Assistant Professor of Biology, teaching Neuroscience at Chatham University, before coming to Allegheny College. Dr. Bertholomey is entering her second year teaching, mentoring, and doing research with undergraduate students, and is thrilled to be back in a liberal arts academic environment, similar to the one that shaped her so education so strongly.

Karen Carney, PhD, is a Product Manager at Elsevier supporting Clinical Path, an oncology-focused clinical decision support and analytics software tool. She manages an Agile Scrum Team to develop and refine features of PathBuildR, a web-based pathway authoring and deployment platform. Collaborating closely with customers, key opinion leaders, and internal teams she also works cross-functionally to define and deliver new product offerings and expand ClinicalPath into international markets. Additionally, Karen works at PittSciVelo as a Senior Commercial Translation Associate. Here she helps researchers commercialize their digital health innovations by defining intellectual property, assessing the market space and regulatory hurdles, developing funding pitches, and driving teams through critical milestones in their commercialization roadmap. Prior to transitioning to industry, Karen was a Postdoctoral Associate in the Department of Neurology at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. Her postdoctoral research explored the role of ion transporters in the progression of glioblastoma multiforme. Using cell and animal models, she tested the therapeutic potential of ion transporter inhibitors to reduce cancer invasiveness and extend survival. She was also actively involved in the leadership of the University of Pittsburgh Postdoctoral Association, the not-for-profit consulting firm Fourth River Solutions, and the Pitt Professional Development Consortium. Karen earned a Bachelor of Science degree in biopsychology from Eckerd College, a Master of Science degree in behavioral and cognitive neuroscience from the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, and two PhDs in molecular neuroscience from the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and the Université de Bordeaux.

Natalie C. Ernecoff, PhD, is an Associate Policy Researcher at the RAND Corporation. Her research focuses on developing, implementing, and evaluating systems-level palliative care, hospice, and home care interventions. Her recent work includes (1) evaluation and refinement of a concurrent hospice-dialysis program, (2) evaluation of home-based serious illness care, and (3) development of an algorithm to identify nursing home residents with late-stage dementia for automated hospice informational referral. Ernecoff also conducts research in healthcare system informatics, electronic health record (EHR)-based interventions, systematic identification of serious illness populations, and collaborative models of palliative care delivery. Her work in serious illness care includes chronic kidney disease, dementia, cancer, and critical illness. She is experienced in qualitative and mixed methods research, implementation science, and clinical research. Ernecoff holds a Ph.D. in health policy and management from the University of North Carolina and an M.P.H. in behavioral and community health sciences from the University of Pittsburgh.

David Gau, PhD, is a Postdoctoral Scholar in the bioengineering department under the mentorship of Dr. Partha Roy and supported by a National Cancer Center Fellowship and Cardiology T32. David's current research evaluates the role of MRTF and Pfn1 in tumor progression and vascular normalization. Dr. Gau earned his BPhil in bioengineering and BS in Mathematics from the University of Pittsburgh in 2012. After, he was awarded a Whitaker Fellowship and Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship to study and work in Australia for a year before returning and completing his PhD in bioengineering at The University of Pittsburgh in 2018. His pre-doctoral research focused on screening and developing novel agents to target aberrant and excessive angiogenesis, or blood vessel formation, was supported by NSF GRFP, Cardiovascular Bioengineering Training Program, and the Provost Development Fund. He continued his work in the Cell Migration Lab at the University of Pittsburgh after defending his thesis on novel compounds that inhibit excessive blood vessel formation. Currently, Dr. Gau serves as the University of Pittsburgh Postdoctoral Association President. He also teaches a bioengineering lab-based course and provides lectures for the cell biology courses. Through these activities, Dr. Gau has gained multiple perspectives on research and life inside and outside of academia. He looks forward to sharing these experiences with young scientists considering their career trajectories.

Ayantika (Annie) Ghosh, PhD, is a Licensing & Business Development Associate at Purdue University-Office of Technology Commercialization. In this role, Annie is responsible for identifying, evaluation and engagement with potential licensees and collaborators- pharma/biotech companies, venture groups and entrepreneurs. She also conducts technology and market opportunity assessments for Purdue-developed technologies and assists with deal flow, licensing agreements and monitors contract compliances. Prior to joining Purdue OTC, she worked at sciVelo, an academic incubator in collaboration with the University of Pittsburgh Innovation Institute where she assisted Pitt inventors with commercialization of their early-stage, top of the funnel technologies. Annie's academic background includes a MS in Biochemistry & PhD in Cell Biology from India and Postdoctoral research experience at the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt). As a scientist, at Pitt she has led several projects that ranged from studying inflammatory pathways involved in inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) and intra-hepatic cholestatic diseases to stem-cell based regenerative therapies for end-stage liver diseases. While at Pitt, she was also actively involved with the University of Pittsburgh Postdoctoral Association, UPPDA and had chaired the Career Development Committee in 2012-2013.

Anastasia Gorelova, PhD, is a staff science writer at the UPMC Media Relations Department who writes about research from UPMC and the University of Pittsburgh Schools of the Health Sciences, including departments of ophthalmology, psychiatry, Center for Vaccine Research, and others. Prior to coming to UPMC, Dr. Gorelova earned her Ph.D. in Molecular Pharmacology from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and worked as a freelance science writer for outlets such as Massive Science, Salon, and Pacific Standard. She credits the start of her writing career to the AAAS Mass Media Fellowship, which allowed her to dip her toes into the world of daily journalism as a business reporter at a daily newspaper the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Dr. Gorelova grew up in Moscow, Russia and immigrated to the United States in 2014.

Marissa Kuzirian, PhD, is a Patent Agent in the Health Sciences Department at the national law firm Troutman Pepper Hamilton Sanders, LLP. Marissa's clients range from academic researchers to large biotech companies and specializes in patent prosecution and intellectual property due diligence for innovations in biotech, pharmaceutical and healthcare IT. Prior to her work at Troutman Pepper, Marissa worked with the Pittsburgh Life Sciences Greenhouse (PLSG), where she advised pharmaceutical and healthcare IT companies in early stage commercialization and business model strategy and evaluated companies for investment by PLSG. She also worked with academic researchers at the University of Pittsburgh to translate their scientific research into innovative commercial products through work at sciVelo, a part of the university's Innovation Institute that helps identify, cultivate and advance the university's most promising life and health sciences research to market-ready solutions. She holds a Ph.D. in Neuroscience from Brandeis University, where she studied the molecular mechanisms of synapse development and the implication of perturbations in synapse function in diseases such as autism spectrum disorder and epilepsy. Marissa was awarded a postdoctoral fellowship funded by the National Institutes of Health with the University of Pittsburgh's Pittsburgh Center for Pain Research to study neural circuits mediating pain and itch sensation. Her scientific experience broadly spans molecular neuroscience from the periphery to the central nervous system; from primary cell culture to in vivo animal physiology and behavior; and from electrophysiology to advanced imaging techniques. Throughout her career in academia, Marissa has performed research at four institutions, including Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and has published eight peer reviewed papers in journals such as Cell.

Julie Myers-Irvin, PhD, is the Swanson School of Engineering Grant Developer at the University of Pittsburgh. Julie holds a doctorate from the Department of Pharmacology at the University of Pittsburgh and completed two years postdoctoral work at the McGowan Institute for Regenerative Medicine. Stepping away from bench research, she has worked in the field of research development for nearly 15 years at Pitt. She spent three years as a scientist administrator in the Office of Research, Health Sciences and two years in the Department of Radiology. In her current position as SSoE Grant Developer, Julie's primary responsibilities are to help investigators develop competitive extramural grant applications and to assist with the planning and development of large multi-part, multi-investigator grant applications. In this capacity, she provides both editorial and scientific review of grant applications, including critique of narrative structure and clarity, experimental design, and responsiveness to funding announcements, and offers advice on grantsmanship. She also develops and administers programming to support faculty in their pursuit of research funding.

Samantha L. Rosenthal, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Oral and Craniofacial Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine and a faculty member in the Center for Craniofacial and Dental Genetics. She earned her PhD in Human Genetics from Pitt Public Health studying the genetics of late-onset Alzheimer's disease. Following graduation, she completed two NIH T32 training programs (Skin Biology and Cancer; Diabetes and Endocrinology) at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and a micro-credential in Leading People in Organizations from Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business. She joined the highly interdisciplinary OLAGA research team in 2017 to investigate the function of the gene CREBRF and effects of a population specific variant on gene expression and cellular processes. As a new faculty member, she continues working with the OLAGA team and is building her research program to combine bioinformatics and benchwork to translate genetic findings into actionable information.

Karen Schmidt, PhD, People are sometimes surprised to learn that I am an anthropologist by training, specifically a physical anthropologist. My graduate degree in anthropology was a result of my pursuit of animal behavior through an undergraduate degree in Biological Sciences and my graduate training in four field anthropology. My original research program involved assessing similarities in nonverbal communication across cultures and in the context of mental illness or physical disability. Specifically, I was interested in the universal nature of eyebrow raises and smiles, studying what changes illness produced in these ubiquitous facial signals. Although my current position does not allow time for formal academic research, my knowledge base has been very helpful on a practical level in the era of Zoom and Microsoft Teams calls. You may be familiar with the term "soft money researcher" and this was my role during my first ten years at the University of Pittsburgh. This career path turned out to be unsustainable for me and I transitioned into a new role as a research administrator, also at the University of Pittsburgh (CTSI). For several years I led the RCR Center which provided in person training in Research Ethics, Project Management, and Research Fundamentals. The week of the pandemic lockdown, I departed Pitt for a new position as Project Manager at NSABP Foundation, which is a local non profit academic research organization that conducts oncology clinical trials. I was the first in house project manager at NSABP and participated in the initiation of multiple culture change initiatives there. Just this fall, 2021, I joined the Great Resignation and left NSABP for the position I hold now at BeiGene USA, a global pharmaceutical company. While I use my PhD and Project Management skills every day, I am currently filling a new role with the company, as Manager of Pharmacovigilance Research and Planning. It is an interesting career shift, as it has been some time since I worked for a for profit company. Over the last 6 years, I have also served as an Adjunct Professor in Pitt's School of Engineering, teaching Bioengineering Ethics. On a personal level, I have always maintained a strong separation between life and my work, although I am not sure it could be called a balance. I'm married, with adult children, pets, and maintain a side business managing several rental properties with my husband. Sometimes it seems that my main hobby is working on either of my side gigs, but I also enjoy getting outside, knitting, and recreational writing.

Eileen Wong, PhD, is a Health Program Analyst with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. Previously, she was an AAAS Science and Technology Policy Fellow at the Department of State, managing global HIV/AIDS programming for PEPFAR. She completed her PhD in Molecular Virology and Microbiology and post-doctoral research at the University of Pittsburgh, researching tuberculosis immunology in the laboratory of Dr. JoAnne Flynn. While at Pitt, she was a co-founding member of the Pitt Science Policy Group. Eileen holds a MS in Environmental Health from University of Washington and a BS in Molecular Environmental Biology from University of California, Berkeley.



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