



2023 Science

CAREER SYMPOSIUM

FOR POSTDOCS, GRADUATE STUDENTS, AND ALUMNI

Tuesday, December 14, 2023

3:30 – 5PM | 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

WELCOME

Laura Miller, PhD
Associate Director,
Office of Academic Career Development

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 to share insights gained from this experience with your peers. What surprised you? What reaffirmed or changed your thoughts about a future career? What steps do you plan to take that came from ideas you heard today?

SPEAKER INDEX

#	Topic	Speaker	Title & Company	Contact Information
1	Academic - Primarily Research	Nicholas Lennemann, PhD	Assistant Professor, University of Alabama at Birmingham	njlenn@uab.edu
2	Academic - Undergraduate Education	Megan Bertholomey, PhD	Assistant Professor Allegheny College	mbertholomey@allegheny.edu
3	Academic – Grant Writing	Paulina Liang PhD	Scientist Administrator, University of Pittsburgh	pahst33@pitt.edu
4	Academic - Postdoc	Rachael Rush, PhD	Postdoctoral Scholar, University of Pittsburgh	r.rush@pitt.edu
5	Academic – Technology Transfer	Hima Vangapandu PhD	Technology Licensing Specialist, UT Health San Antonio	vangapandu@uthsca.edu
6	Research	Liang Zhang, PhD	Principal Research Technologist, Mayo Clinic	Zhang.Liang@mayo.edu
7	Industry – Technical Applications	Paul Dascani, PhD	Technical Applications Specialist, Cytex Biosciences	pdascani@gmail.com
8	Industry - Medical Science Liaison	Stephen McCalley, PhD	Medical Science Liaison, UCB	stevemcalley0406@gmail.com
9	Science Policy	Stephanie Muchler, PhD	Health Science Policy Analyst, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive Disorders and Kidney Disease	Smm226@pitt.edu

CAREER TABLE DISCUSSION LEADERS

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 fourth year of 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 education so strongly.

Paul Dascani, PhD, is an Online Technical Applications Specialist at Cytek Biosciences. In this remote work role, he provides support to Cytek customers by conducting training, troubleshooting data and technical experiment issues, designing flow cytometry panels, and any other science-side applications of using Cytek instruments. He also leads the production of educational video content for Cytek's website, and is involved in the creation and testing of other tools and aspects of the company's online presence. Prior to joining Cytek, Paul was Operations Director of the Hillman Cancer Center Flow Cytometry Facility at the University of Pittsburgh where he oversaw the daily operation of the shared resource cytometry facility, trained users in instrument use, and provided assistance with experimental design and troubleshooting. Paul holds a PhD in Immunology from the University of Louisville, in which he studied the impact of B cell receptor signaling in mouse lupus models, as well as allergy-related B cell class switching pathways.

Nick Lennemann, PhD, focuses his research on understanding virus-host interactions. He began his training in molecular virology as a graduate student at the University of Iowa, where his research focused on biochemical characterization of the Ebola virus glycoprotein. During his training as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Pittsburgh, Nick was trained in techniques to work with several positive-strand RNA viruses and microscopy techniques for studying the cell biology of virus infection. The viruses he currently works with, including flaviviruses, enteroviruses, and astroviruses, have no specific antiviral therapeutics. Thus, his research continues to utilize and further his expertise in molecular virology and cell biology to continue the study of virus-host interactions, which can provide significant information leading to the development of antiviral interventions. In his career he has been on 21 publications and received federal funding through a Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award Individual Postdoctoral Fellowship and a K22 career transition award, both from NIH/NIAID. Currently, his lab is funded by NIH/NIGMS by an R35 MIRA award. Nick's commitment to basic science research and the mentoring and training of junior scientists has led him to a career in academic research.

Paulina Liang, PhD, is a Scientist Administrator in the Office of Research, Health Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh. She earned her PhD in Cellular and Molecular Pathology from Pitt's School of Medicine and completed her postdoctoral work at the UPMC Hillman Cancer Center. Her research focused on tumor vascularization and hematopoietic stem cells. Transitioning away from bench research, she has worked in research administration for over 10 years. She assists investigators in developing high-quality, rigorous, and compelling research proposals by providing critical scientific and editorial review of grant applications. This includes critique of the overall research plan and advising on grantsmanship. Additionally, Dr. Liang directs the Health Sciences Bridge Funding Program and co-manages the Competitive Medical Research Fund at Pitt. These two programs are internal funding mechanisms that provide grant support for research across the biomedical sciences.

Steve McCalley, PhD, earned his degree from the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public Health in the field of Human Genetics in 2018. There, he studied rare, genetic, inborn errors of metabolism under the Chief of Genetic Medicine at UPMC Children's, Dr. Jerry Vockley. During his graduate career, Steve gained a passion for, and awards in scientific and medical communications. This led Steve to pursue a career as a Medical Science Liaison (MSL). As an MSL, Steve has had the great pleasure of communicating cutting edge science to some of the nation's top physicians. Recently, Steve has been a part of two drug launches as a part of UCB's Rare Disease Organization.

Stephanie Mutchler, PhD, is a health science policy analyst at the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive Disorders and Kidney Disease (NIDDK) in the National Institutes of Health (NIH). She serves in this position as an AAAS Science and Technology Policy Fellow. As a policy analyst, Stephanie works to garner continued financial support for NIH sponsored projects and to disseminate findings from these studies to policy makers so that they may make evidence informed decisions. She has leveraged her background in renal physiology to help promote continued advances in the fight against metabolic diseases, diabetes, and kidney diseases. Prior to joining the federal government, she was a postdoctoral scholar in the Renal-Electrolyte Division at the University of Pittsburgh where she studied the effects of the hormone aldosterone on renal electrolyte handling. She received her PhD from the University of Pittsburgh Interdisciplinary Biomedical Graduate Program and her Bachelor of Science from The College of William and Mary.

Rachael Rush, PhD, is a second year Postdoctoral Scholar in the Center for Vaccine Research and Department of Infectious Diseases and Microbiology. She is currently supported by the Viral Persistence and Pathogenesis T32. Her research focuses on high-containment arboviruses, such as Rift Valley Fever Virus, and exploring their tropism, dissemination, and pathogenesis. Rachael earned her B.S. in Microbiology from Pitt in 2017, and her PhD in Immunology and Microbial Pathogenesis in 2022. She serves as the current president of the University of Pittsburgh Postdoctoral Association (UPPDA), where she strives to continue the tradition of the UPPDA helping post-docs grow both professionally and personally. She is also involved in advising undergraduate organizations on Pitt's campus and is currently earning a micro-credential in Leading People in Organizations from Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business.

Hima Vangapandu, PhD, is a Technology Licensing Specialist in the Office of Technology Commercialization at UT Health San Antonio. She focuses on life science technologies, namely, therapeutics. She handles her technology portfolio from cradle to grave, i.e., from assessment and IP protection to marketing and deal making in the biotech-pharma space. She graduated with a PhD in Experimental Therapeutics from MD Anderson Cancer Center and got a Master's in Biomedical Science from the University of South Carolina School of Medicine. Her graduate research was focused on cancer metabolism and targeted therapy. Her other areas of research interests include male infertility, wound healing, and cancer genetics. Hima's research over the years was mostly translational in nature, leading to her interest in the commercial aspects of science. She gained hands-on experience in early-stage life science development and start-up formation through internships and commercialization course work. She is passionate about working at the intersection of business and science and translating technologies into clinical medicine.

Liang Zhang, PhD, is a Principal Research Technologist at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. Liang pursued biochemistry as an undergraduate, during which she received two research scholarships: the Kansas IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence Undergraduate Research Scholar (K-INBRE, 2005-2007) and the Terry Johnson Undergraduate Student Cancer Research Award (2005-2007). Both scholarships gave her extensive training and exposure to biomedical research, especially in the area of drug discovery and therapeutic interventions. These experiences led her to join the University of Kansas where she received comprehensive training and understanding of drug mechanisms and their interaction within cellular/animal systems in normal and disease state. She completed her graduate education in Pharmacology (Ph.D.) in 2012. Her dissertation was focused on identification of global translational changes in models of diabetic neuropathy and novel drug therapy developed in-house that had been shown to protect neurons and diabetic animals from hyperglycemic insults. Additionally, in collaboration with medicinal chemists in-house, Liang developed a novel, high-throughput assay for drug screening against glucotoxicity using primary dorsal root ganglia neurons. Towards the end of her graduate work, she became aware of the power of systems biology and its potential to become a part of individualized medicine. Liang joined Dr. Trushina's laboratory to receive in-depth training in the field of translational research in neuroscience using metabolomics that could significantly contribute to biomarker and drug discovery. Upon the completion of her postdoctoral training, she became interested in neuro-oncology and joined Dr. Daniel's lab to study pediatric brain tumors. Here she set up numerous high-throughput drug screens to identify therapeutic agents that will be effective against diffuse midline glioma.



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