

Diversity | Inclusion | Community | Excellence

bioscience.ucla.edu

Fall 2018

Graduate Programs in Bioscience

Graduate Programs in Bioscience is a consortium of 10 Home Areas and their affiliated PhD programs, organized to provide the best possible research training and professional development for graduate students pursuing PhDs in the life and biomedical sciences. Students are offered the flexibility to pursue their interests across the wide range of bioscience fields. At the same time, they benefit from individually tailored education in smaller training communities, defined by today's research themes, not traditional departments.

Home Areas

- Biochemistry, Biophysics & Structural Biology
- Bioinformatics
- Cell & Developmental Biology
- Gene Regulation
- Genetics & Genomics
- Immunity, Microbes & Molecular Pathogenesis
- Molecular, Cellular & Integrative Physiology
- Molecular Pharmacology
- Neuroscience
- Physics & Biology in Medicine

2018 Eugene V. Cota-Robles Fellowship Recipients

UCLA Graduate Programs in Bioscience is committed to diversity and inclusion. Our commitment is central to cultivating a community that nurtures creativity and intellectual curiosity. These core values enhance research training and promote research innovation. In this edition of our newsletter, we proudly celebrate students who received the prestigious Eugene V. Cota-Robles Fellowship. These students recently completed their first year of training and are shining examples of the diverse talent in the UCLA bioscience community.



Abigail Aleman

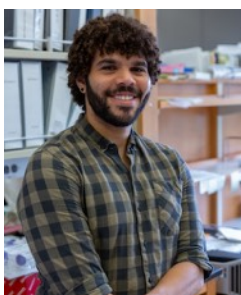
UCLA Home Area: Molecular, Cellular & Integrative Physiology

Master's Institution: CSU Los Angeles

Undergraduate Institution: CSU Los Angeles

Research Programs: NIH MBRS RISE

In her Master's program, Abigail investigated mad linker phosphorylation effects on BMP signaling during *Drosophila* development under the guidance of Dr. Edward Eivers. Through this experience, Abigail had the opportunity to give poster presentations and be featured in two publications, which increased her interest in conducting research. Highlights at UCLA thus far have been participating in lab rotations, learning new techniques, and finding her passion for neuroscience research. Moving forward, Abigail is excited to "delve into thesis research and, of course, make scientific discoveries that could impact human health."



Devin Gibbs

UCLA Home Area: Cell & Developmental Biology

Undergraduate Institution: Colby College

After investigating circadian rhythms as an undergraduate, Devin held a research assistantship at Harvard where his work on Duchenne muscular dystrophy and Autism Spectrum Disorder led to four co-authored publications. His passion for muscular dystrophy research led him to Dr. April Pyle's lab at UCLA to enhance his train-

Meet our
Associate Director for
Recruitment & Inclusion

Dr. Diana Azurdia



Diana leads UCLA's effort to enhance diversity in the biomedical graduate student population. She earned her PhD in Molecular Biology & Biochemistry from UCLA and she graduated with a BS in Biochemistry from CSU Los Angeles. Diana is a first-generation Guatemalan-American and the first in her family to attend college. She credits much of her success to the influence of her mentors, who have shaped her focus on the propagation of effective mentoring of underrepresented students in STEM.

Fall 2018
Enrollment Facts

Total enrollment.....	66
California residents.....	34
Out-of-State students.....	17
International students.....	15
From underrepresented backgrounds.....	12 (18%)

ing at UCLA's Center for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. In his first year, Devin was appointed to a training grant to fund his research efforts and found the camaraderie of his peers to be an important support mechanism. Devin looks forward to meeting "talented scientists that are doing impactful research" through his program.



Héctor Navarro

UCLA Home Area: Cell & Developmental Biology
Undergraduate Institution: UC Santa Cruz
Research Programs: NIH IMSD

Héctor's undergraduate research project centered on how broken chromosomes segregate during mitosis and stimulated his interest in research and graduate training. He chose to attend UCLA during the interview process because he felt that he would be "supported by UCLA, and the faculty seemed genuinely invested in helping their students succeed". From the outset, Héctor found his Home Area Director to be a crucial source of support in navigating his first year experience. Héctor now looks forward to beginning his thesis research in earnest.

Fellowship Application Support

Writing workshops, faculty writing coaches, and a library of successful proposals are some of the support services available to bioscience students. About 20% of students hold prestigious individual merit-based fellowships each year from programs such as the NIH National Research Service Award, the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship and the HHMI Gilliam Fellowship.



Jessica Nevarez-Mejia

UCLA Home Area: Molecular, Cellular, & Integrative Physiology
Undergraduate Institution: UC Irvine
Research Programs: NIH MARC, NIH IMSD, NIH MHIRT, NIH MARC, and UC Competitive Edge

Jessica's undergraduate research experience with Dr. Luis Mota-Bravo in microbiology, introduced her to "the fundamentals of scientific research" and helped her "establish a foundation for scientific inquiry". Jessica presented her research at the ABR-CMS, AAAS, and SACNAS conferences and received the ABRCMS Best Poster Award. As a Jennifer S. Buchwald Graduate Fellowship recipient, she is working with Dr. Elaine Reed on characterizing macrophage polarization in cardiac allograft vasculopathy. Jessica chose UCLA because the "diverse, supportive, and collaborative environment is truly focused on students' success and career development."



Maria Palafox

UCLA Home Area: Genetics & Genomics

Undergraduate Institution: Univ. of Texas, Austin

Enrolled in a graduate-level nutrition course her senior year, Maria studied the role of bioactive molecules with gene regulatory capabilities in food. The experience sparked her passion to study genetics. In her undergraduate career, Maria focused her research on understanding the influence of genes on exercise response, both physiologically and behaviorally. As a graduate student at UCLA, she has been appointed to a training grant and is leveraging chemical proteomic and genomic datasets to find drug targets for proteins implicated in rare monogenic disorders. Maria has found the Collaboratory at the Institute for Quantitative & Computational Biosciences to be a key resource in her training. In describing UCLA, Maria believes that "if you derive joy from learning, you will never be disappointed here."



Luke Riggan

UCLA Home Area: Cell & Development Biology

Undergraduate Institution: Univ. of Washington

Luke commuted four hours a day to his position in the David Cobrinik lab at Children's Hospital Los Angeles/USC, where he investigated how MDM2 regulates N-myc expression in retinoblastoma. Luke found the experience worth the commute time as it played a significant role in developing his scientific work ethic. As a graduate student at UCLA, Luke formed a supportive network of peers that have provided him insight during times of uncertainty. He plans to continue to learn and grow from these strong relationships and connections.



Carina Sandoval

UCLA Home Area: Gene Regulation, Epigenomics & Transcriptomics

Undergraduate Institution: CSU Fullerton

Research Programs: McNair Scholars, HHMI Research Scholar, NSF Summer REU

As an undergraduate, Carina investigated the activation of Tm2-2 immune receptors in response to the Tobamovirus Movement Protein and had the opportunity to present her work at the SACNAS, CSU-PERB, and ASBMB conferences. Carina chose to attend UCLA because its academic spaces are "collaborative, rigorous, and inclusive" and found that her lab rotations allowed her to learn and execute the essential techniques for her research. Looking forward, Carina is excited to make scientific advances, participate in outreach events, and expand her professional network.

Bioscience PhD Facts

Research Excellence

UCLA is among the nation's top recipients of research funding (over \$1B awarded in 2017-2018).

Opportunity

Over 400 members of the basic science and clinical faculty are potential mentors to students in the program.

Flexibility

Students can rotate with any Bioscience faculty member, provided one rotation is in their Home Area, and they can change Home Areas if evolving research interests dictate.

Support

All PhD students receive full financial support during the course of their study, including a living allowance (\$33,000 in 2018-19), all tuition and fees, and student health insurance.

Training Opportunities

Grad School Hacks

Workshops provide students with strategies for effectively integrating into PhD programs, and labs, as well as a space for sharing experiences with peers and building community.

"Get Connected" Quarterly

A curated list of events that enrich the graduate student experience through career & professional development.

Entering Mentoring Program

Mentorship, leadership, and diversity sensitivity training for graduate students and post-doctoral trainees.

Scientific Excellence Through Diversity

A student-organized seminar series that brings outside scientists and UCLA diversity associations together to celebrate the value of diversity in scientific enterprises.



Joselyn Soto

UCLA Home Area: Neuroscience

Undergraduate Institution: UC Riverside

Research Programs: NIH MARC, Bridge to the Doctorate

As an undergraduate student, Joselyn conducted research under the guidance of Dr. Seema Tiwari-Woodruff. She investigated various cellular mechanisms in mouse models of multiple sclerosis. Through this experience, she found her niche in science and was awarded the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship to support her research efforts. Joselyn is now working under Dr. Baljit Khakh, conducting research on the role of astrocytes in different brain circuits. She decided to come to UCLA because she "knew she would find a diverse and inclusive community." She is now looking forward to starting her dissertation and meeting peers in her field. "I pursued science because, although something might seem like it is not working, there is never a dead end. There are so many phenomena in this universe, on this planet, and even inside us that are waiting to be discovered and elucidated! I am very excited to be a part of it!"



Amara Thind

UCLA Home Area: Immunity, Microbes, & Molecular Pathogenesis

Undergraduate Institution: UC Irvine

Research Programs: NIH MARC, NIH IMSD, NIH MHIRT

Amara describes her undergraduate research as transformative in developing her research interests in microbiology and infectious diseases. Amara chose UCLA based on the collaborative community and the intellectual freedom offered by her Home Area. Amara joined Dr. Peter Bradley's lab to conduct research on the composition and function of secreted proteins during cyst formation by the opportunistic pathogen *Toxoplasma gondii*. "I am confident that my experience here will prepare me with the skills I will need in my career, whether it be as an independent researcher in academia or elsewhere."

Visit Us



October 2018
Booth #911



November 2018
Booth #406

Student Groups

Graduate Programs in Biosciences proudly supports our student organizations:

AMEBA: Association for Multi-Ethnic Bioscientists' Advancement

BSB: Black Scholars in Bioscience

SACNAS at UCLA: Society for the Advancement of Chicanos & Native Americans in Science

Undergraduate Summer Research

Applications due: Feb. 1, 2019

The UCLA SPUR-LABS summer program provides a rigorous research training experience for undergraduates with interests in a broad range of bioscience disciplines. Exceptional research training, integrated with professional development activities, will prepare students to succeed in leading PhD and MD/PhD programs.

bioscience.ucla.edu/spur-labs

spurlabs@mednet.ucla.edu

Contact Us

UCLA

Graduate Programs in
Bioscience

BiosciencePhD@mednet.ucla.edu

bioscience.ucla.edu

(310) 206-1845