

## Diversity | Inclusion | Community | Excellence

[bioscience.ucla.edu](http://bioscience.ucla.edu)

Fall 2019

### 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, Epigenomics & Transcriptomics
- 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.



### Carolina Chavez

**UCLA Home Area:** Molecular Pharmacology

**Undergraduate Institution:** UC San Diego

**Research Programs:** McNair Scholars

As an undergraduate, Carolina transferred from El Camino Community College to UCSD, where she worked as a research assistant in Dr. James Kadonaga's laboratory. Her research investigated the nature of the interaction between Dsup, a tardigrade-unique protein, and nucleosomes to provide new insights into how this protein

enhances protection of DNA. Carolina was a McNair Scholar and participated in seminars and workshops that aimed to assist and guide scholars for success in graduate school. She chose UCLA because she enjoyed "the working environment and interactions among faculty and students" that she observed during her visit. She also liked the flexibility of being to explore other research areas under the umbrella program. As a second-year student, she is conducting research in Dr. Robert Prin's lab and is looking forward to learning more about the field of immunology and starting her thesis research.

## 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. Email: [dazurdia@mednet.ucla.edu](mailto:dazurdia@mednet.ucla.edu)

## Fall 2019 Enrollment Facts

Total enrollment.....	80
California residents.....	45
Out-of-State students.....	18
International students.....	17
From underrepresented backgrounds.....	23



### Amberlene De La Rocha

**UCLA Home Area:** Molecular Pharmacology  
**Master's Institution:** University of Michigan  
**Undergraduate Institution:** Duke University

After investigating the cognitive and social effects of exposure to retinoic acid and valproic acid in zebrafish embryos as an undergraduate, Amberlene worked in investigating MAPKs as regulators of the inositol polyphosphate pathway and pseudohyphal growth in yeast. Her work both at Duke University and University of Michigan has led to two co-authored publications. Amberlene chose UCLA because of its "very transitional nature of the Pharmacology Home Area and the close ties". She especially enjoyed the lab rotations and the mentors in the Home Area.



### Roy McReynolds III

**UCLA Home Area:** Neuroscience  
**Undergraduate Institution:** Morehouse College  
**Research Programs:** NIH MBRS RISE, NIH MARC, NSF REU

As an undergraduate, Roy became interested in Neuroscience research through summer opportunities suggested to him by his mentors at Morehouse College. During one such summer program, Roy worked with Dr. Richard Morimoto at Northwestern University, establishing a TAU seeding and aggregation model in mouse neuro-2a neuroblastoma cells. Through his experience working with Dr. Morimoto, he was able to present at ABRCMS and received a certificate of achievement in the neuroscience section for his poster presentation. Roy chose to attend UCLA because of the strong sense of community that he observed during his interview process. During his first year, he found that the research rotations and variety of research seminars were useful and appreciated the opportunity to interact with students from different home areas.

## 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.

## Jocelynda Salvador

**UCLA Home Area:** Molecular, Cellular, & Integrative Physiology

**Undergraduate Institution:** UC Irvine

**Research Programs:** NSF LSAMP/CAMP, NIH PREP

Jocelyn worked in the lab of Dr. George E. Davis at the University of Missouri as an NIH PREP fellow and studied endothelial cell morphogenesis and the role of microtubule dynamics in endothelial cell network formation in 3-D matrices. It was through this experience that she wanted to go to graduate school and learn more about vascular biology.

Jocelyn chose UCLA because she was amazed by the amount of interdisciplinary and translational work across campus. During her first year at UCLA, Jocelyn felt that the Grad STRIVE events allowed her to meet other graduate students on campus and feel more connected to UCLA. As she transitions to her second-year of graduate school, she looks forward to delve deep into her research interests and spending time in her lab.



## Rafael Sandoval

**UCLA Home Area:** Biochemistry, Biophysics, & Structural Biology

**Master's Institution:** Cal State Los Angeles

**Undergraduate Institution:** UC San Diego

**Research Programs:** NIH MBRS RISE

Rafael transferred from Long Beach City Community College to UC San Diego and majored in Biochemistry and Cell Biology as an undergraduate. During his Master's program, he worked in Dr. Michael Hayes's lab, studying RNA editing in the organelles of land plants. His experience taught him that research is a series of trial and error and

that planning is key to conducting successful work. Ultimately, he learned that research is a challenging but very rewarding endeavor. He chose UCLA because it is "a world leader in Molecular Biology research and because there is a strong sense of community, inclusiveness, and camaraderie present." In the past year, Rafael has formed friendships with students in his cohort and enjoyed the opportunity to learn from world leaders in research. "Trust the process!" is his motto when discussing his studies and research experience.

## Bioscience PhD Facts

### Research Excellence

UCLA is among the nation's top recipients of research funding (over \$1B awarded in 2018-2019).

### 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 (\$33,500 in 2019-2020), 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.



# Student Groups

Graduate Programs in Biosciences proudly supports our student organizations:



**AMEBA:** The Association for Multi-Ethnic Bioscientists' Advancement, AMEBA, is a graduate student group sponsored by Graduate Programs in Bioscience at UCLA. The goal of AMEBA is to create an equitable environment to promote the advancement and retention of PhD students in the GPB. We aim to provide our members with skills & experiences, we seek to build a community, and we work to

promote diversity in the sciences via academic development, professional development and outreach.

**BSB:** Black Scholars in Bioscience is a student initiated program that aims to foster community, provide professional development, and outreach opportunities amongst postdoctoral scholars, graduate students, and faculty.



**SACNAS at UCLA:** Society for the Advancement of Chicanos & Native Americans in Science is dedicated to increasing the numbers of underrepresented students in higher education and in science. This group is open to undergraduates, graduate students, transfer students, community college students, post-docs, faculty and staff who share a common concern about equal access to education,

who have interest in outreach and/or are in need of opportunities in academic leadership and participation.



Visit Us



October 31-  
November 2, 2019  
Booth #1607



November 13-16  
2019  
Booth #301

## GRE Requirements

As of August 2019, the home areas listed below have elected to make the GRE optional:

- Biochemistry, Biophysics, and Structural Biology
- Bioinformatics
- Cell and Developmental Biology
- Gene Regulation, Epigenomics, & Transcriptomics
- Genetics and Genomics
- Immunity, Microbes, and Molecular Pathogenesis
- Molecular Pharmacology

## Undergraduate Summer Research

Applications due: Feb. 3, 2020

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](http://bioscience.ucla.edu/spur-labs)

[spurlabs@mednet.ucla.edu](mailto:spurlabs@mednet.ucla.edu)

UCLA

Graduate Programs in  
**Bioscience**

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