



GHUCCTS Announces 2018-2019 Translational Biomedical Science (TBS) Program Scholars

The [Georgetown-Howard Universities Center for Clinical and Translational Science](#) (GHUCCTS) is proud to introduce our 2018-2019 [Translational Biomedical Science \(TBS\) program scholars](#).

The goal of the TBS program is to prepare pre-doctoral students and post-doctoral fellows (MDs and PhDs) to serve as the critical link in advancing the translation of basic science into improved outcomes for health, aging and disease. The primary aim of the TBS program is to provide the training necessary for scientists to become the next generation of leaders in translational biomedical research. Emphasis is placed on teaching trainees how to build interdisciplinary collaborative research programs by providing them with dual mentored training experiences in preclinical and clinical research. The TBS Program leverages the rich partnerships that GHUCCTS has established among Georgetown University Medical Center (GUMC), Howard University College of Medicine (HUCM), MedStar Health Research Institute (MHRI), the Washington, D.C. Veterans Administration (VA) and Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL).

PRE-DOCTORAL STUDENTS:

Sikoya Ashburn is a PhD candidate in the Georgetown University Interdisciplinary Program in Neuroscience, studying the cerebellum's involvement in higher cognitive functions, particularly with respect to reading and math. Her mentor is Dr. Guinevere Eden in the Department of Pediatrics at Georgetown University.

Victoria Brooks is a PhD candidate in the Howard University Department of Microbiology pursuing a degree in medical microbiology with an emphasis on immunology. Her thesis research proposes to elucidate a biological basis of red blood cell alloimmunization in multiple transfused sickle cell disease patients. Her mentors are Dr. James G. Taylor, IV, and Dr. Sergei Nekhai, in the Department of Medicine at Howard University.

Kevin Cook is a PhD candidate in the Georgetown University Interdisciplinary Program in Neuroscience, where he is investigating the role of memory and learning in explaining clinical symptoms of autism spectrum disorder. His mentor is Dr. Chandan Vaidya, Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience Department Chair at Georgetown University.

Elyssa LaFlamme is a PhD candidate in Pharmacology & Physiology at Georgetown University. Her research interests center on the neuropharmacology regulating cognitive and emotional dysfunction underlying neurodevelopmental disorders, with the ultimate goal of designing more specific and effective treatments. Her mentors are Dr. Ludise Malkova in Pharmacology at Georgetown University and Dr. Patrick Forcelli in Pharmacology at Georgetown University.

Adam Caccavano is a PhD candidate in the Georgetown University Interdisciplinary Program in Neuroscience. He is interested in how hippocampal oscillations with a critical role in memory consolidation become disrupted in Alzheimer's disease. His mentors are Dr. Stefano Vicini and Dr. Daniel Pak, both within the Department of Pharmacology & Physiology at Georgetown University.

Parnika Kadam is a PhD candidate in Biochemistry and Molecule Biology at Georgetown University. Her thesis research is entitled "Regulation of the angiotensin type 1 receptor by an upstream short open reading frame in the receptor mRNA 5' leader sequence", aiming to deduce the mechanisms in which the sORF upstream of the AT1R coding region regulates the function of AT1R and explore the role of this sORF in human physiology/ pathophysiology. Her mentors are Dr. Kathryn Sandberg, Director of the Center for the Study of Sex Differences in Health at Georgetown University, Dr. Susette Mueller, Georgetown University Emeritus Faculty in Molecular Oncology, Dr. Joseph Verbalis, Division Chief of Endocrinology at Georgetown University, and Dr. Robert Speth, Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences at Nova Southeastern University.

Katherine O'Connell is a PhD candidate in the Georgetown University Interdisciplinary Program in Neuroscience. She is interested in understanding how affective processes and emotions influence behavior, and how these influences play a role in the development and maintenance of clinically-relevant socio-emotional traits in neurologically healthy populations and individuals who have had a stroke. Her mentor is Dr. Abigail Marsh, Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology at Georgetown University.

Jay Patel is a PhD, MD candidate at Georgetown University with a focus on tumor biology. His research interest is in understanding how mitochondrial metabolism influences cancer progression. His mentors are Dr. Stephen Byers, Department of Oncology at Georgetown University, and Dr. Jacqueline Jonklaas, Department of Medicine at Georgetown University.

POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWS

Emily Andre, PhD is a post-doctoral fellow at Georgetown University, focusing on understanding mechanisms of neuropathology in Alzheimer's disease. She received her PhD in Neuroscience from the University of Virginia. Her mentors are Dr. Daniel Pak Professor in Pharmacology at Georgetown University and Dr. Raymond Scott Turner, Director of the Memory Disorders Program at MedStar Georgetown University Medical Center.

Martha Gay, PhD is a post-doctoral fellow at Georgetown University with an interest in liver cancer. She earned her PhD in Pharmacology from Howard University. Currently, Dr. Gay is an NIH TL-1 Postdoctoral Scholar at Georgetown University Medical Center. Her mentors are Dr. Jill Smith, Professor of Medicine in the Division of Gastroenterology at Georgetown University, Dr. Alexander Kroemer, Assistant Professor of Surgery, Director Transplant Laboratory, MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute University Medical Center, and Dr. Leena Halvinki-Clarke, Professor of Oncology at Georgetown University.

Andrew DeMarco, PhD, CCC-SLIP is a post-doctoral fellow at Georgetown University. His research interests relate to understanding how the speech and language systems break down in the brain in aphasia (difficulties understanding or talking e.g., after a stroke) and how that information can inform aphasia rehabilitation. His mentor is Dr. Peter Turkeltaub in Department of Neurology at Georgetown University.



Katherine G. Michel, PhD is a post-doctoral fellow at Georgetown University. She received her PhD from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, focusing on the effects of hormonal contraception on the systemic and genital immune milieu. Her current research topics include HIV/STI's, women's health, and health disparities. Her mentors are Dr. Seble Kassaye, Assistant Professor in the Department of Medicine, Infectious Diseases at Georgetown University, and Dr. Richard Schlegel, Department of Pathology at Georgetown University.

Kimberly Nkem Uweh, PhD is a post-doctoral fellow at Howard University. She received her PhD of Pharmacy at the University of Colorado Skaggs School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences. Her research interest consists of understanding the placebo effect and its clinical implications in future treatments in psychiatric disorders. Her primary co-mentors are Dr. Ihori Kobayashi, Department of Psychiatry and Medicine at Howard University, and Dr. Khang Ho, Department of Research Pharmacy at Georgetown University. She is also mentored by Dr. Thomas Mellman and Erin Wilhelm, MPH, both at Howard University.