



WAKE FOREST
UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL of
ARTS & SCIENCES

Molecular Medicine and Translational Science Graduate Program Student Profiles

Edward Beck, MD

Second Year MS Student, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2019

Email: ecbeck@wakehealth.edu

Education: University of Illinois College of Medicine, MD, 2019



Research mentor: Kerry Danelson, PhD and Kristen Nicholson, PhD (Orthopaedics)

Research Interests: Orthopedic surgery, sports medicine, biomechanics, motion analysis, physical rehabilitation therapy

Lanazha Belfield

Fourth Year PhD Candidate, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2017

Email: lbelfiel@wakehealth.edu

Education:

Bachelor's of Science Biology Major Physics Minor,
Winston-Salem State University, 2017



Research mentor: D. Clark Files, MD (Pulmonary)

Research Interests: Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome; Muscular Atrophy; Muscle Proteins

Julie Bennington, DVM

Fifth Year PhD Candidate, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2017

Email: jbenning@wakehealth.edu

Education:

DVM, Kansas State University, College of Veterinary Medicine



Research mentor: Kouidy Williams, DVM, (WFIRM and Comparative Medicine/Pathology)

Research Interests: Working under the mentorship of Kouidy Williams, DVM, at WFIRM and shadowing Dr. Gopal Badlani, MD, Professor of Urology and Vice Chair of Clinical Affairs, during Urology clinics. Her research interests include developing animal models for regenerative and reconstructive medicine that are directly translational to the military patient and veteran populations, Women's Health Initiatives, as well as veterinary patients. She hopes to be able to teach and continue clinical research in Comparative Medicine after earning her PhD.

Steven Bronson, DVM

Second Year PhD Student, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2020

Email: sbronson@wakehealth.edu

Education:

DVM, Purdue University, 2019

BS, Genetics and Developmental Biology, Pennsylvania State University, 2011



Research mentor: David Soto-Pantoja, PhD (Surgery Sciences (Hypertension))

Research Interests: Cancer Biology

Aaron Deal

Fifth Year PhD Candidate, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2016

Email: awdeal@wakehealth.edu

Education:

Davidson College, BS - 2012



Research mentor: Leah Solberg Woods, PhD (Molecular Medicine)

Research Interests: Genetic mapping

Anthony Dominijanni, MS

Fourth Year PhD Candidate, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2017

Email: adominij@wakehealth.edu

Education:

M.S., Cancer Biology, Wake Forest University, 2017

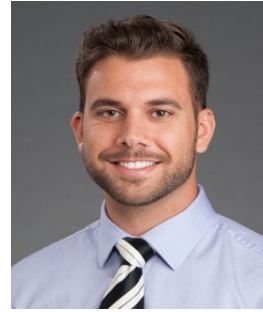
B.S., Biology, Virginia Tech, 2014

Research mentor: Shay Soker, PhD (WFIRM)

Research Interests: Development of in vitro 3D organoids for testing the efficacy and mechanism of both novel and established cancer therapeutics on CRC.

Establishing high throughput screening methods for testing therapeutics on 3D cancer organoids in comparison to the 2D monolayers.

Identify the role of stromal cells on cancer spheroids using 3D organoids.



Lindsey Farris

Second Year PhD Student, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2019

Email: lfarris@wakehealth.edu

Education:

BS, Biology & Chemistry

Research mentor: Leslie Poole, Ph.D. (Biochemistry)

Research Interests: Cancer therapeutics & translational medicine



Brittni Foster, MS

Fifth Year PhD Candidate, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2016

Email: bmfoster@wakehealth.edu

Education:

MS, Chemistry, Western Carolina University, 2016

BS, Chemistry, Western Carolina University, 2014

Research mentor: Bethany Kerr, Ph.D. (Cancer Biology)

Research Interests: Bone microenvironment, prostate cancer, metastasis, metastatic cancer stem cells, circulating tumor cells.



Jenny Gonzalez-Armenta

Fifth Year PhD Candidate, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2016

Email: jcollin@wakehealth.edu

Education:
BS in Chemistry, Western Carolina University, 2016

Research mentor: Anthony Molina, Ph.D. (Internal Medicine – Section on Gerontology and Geriatrics)

Research Interests: Effects of diet and exercise, healthy aging, bioenergetics



Chukwuwieke Gwam, MD

Fourth Year PhD Candidate, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2018

Email: cgwam@wakehealth.edu

Education:
MD, Howard University College of Medicine

Research mentor: Xue Ma, PhD and Kerry Danelson, PhD (Orthopaedics)

Research Interests: Bone microenvironment



Alexandria Harrison

Sixth Year PhD Candidate, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2015

Email: alexharr@wakehealth.edu

Education:
BS, Biology, Winston-Salem State University, 2014

Research mentor: Donald McClain, MD, PhD (Endocrinology & Metabolism)

Research Interests: diabetes, obesity, metabolism, dietary iron, hypoxia



Alexander Jinnah, MD

Sixth Year PhD Candidate, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2016

Email: ajinnah@wakehealth.edu

Education:

BSc – University of Southampton ('07- '10),

MD – Medical University of the Americas ('11-'15)

Research mentor: Kerry Danelson, PhD (Orthopaedic Surgery)

Research Interests: Fracture healing, bone graft substitutes



Brendan Johnson, DVM

Second Year PhD Student, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2020

Email: bjohnso@wakehealth.edu

Education: DVM, University of Missouri, 2018

Research mentor: Mark Cline, DVM, PhD (Pathology, Comparative Medicine)

Research Interests: Comparative Medicine, Cancer Biology, Radiation Oncology, Cognition and Memory



Adam Jorgensen

Fifth Year Student MD/PhD Program, PhD Candidate 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2015

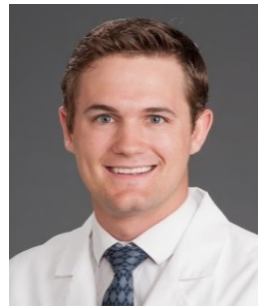
Email: ajorgens@wakehealth.edu

Education:

BS, Exercise Science, Brigham Young University, 2015

Research mentor: Anthony Atala, MD, WFIRM

Research Interests: skin tissue engineering, bioprinting, surgery, and regenerative medicine.



Caroline Kuczynski

Second Year PhD Student, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2019

Email: ckuczyns@wakehealth.edu

Education:

BS, Biophysics with Honors, Wake Forest University, 2018

Research mentor: Graça Almeida-Porada, MD, PhD (WFIRM)

Research Interests: Genetic hematologic disorders (particularly sickle cell anemia and other hemoglobinopathies), adeno-associated virus (AAV)-based gene therapy, prenatal gene therapy, and molecular dynamics (MD) simulations.



Kendall Langsten, DVM

Second Year PhD Student, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2019

Email: klangste@wakehealth.edu

Education:

DVM, University of Missouri, 2017

MS in Biomedical Sciences, University of Missouri, 2017

Residency in Anatomic Pathology, University of Minnesota, 2020

Research mentor: Neveen Said, MD, PhD (Cancer Biology)

Research Interests: Cancer Biology, pathophysiology



Daniel Lara, MD

Fifth Year PhD Candidate, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2017

Email: dlara@wakehealth.edu

Education:

BS, University of Notre Dame, 2011

MD, Creighton University School of Medicine, 2016

Research mentor: Thomas Smith, PhD (Orthopaedic Surgery)

Research Interests: Neuromuscular Junction/Peripheral Nerve Trauma and Regeneration



Steven Leung, MBBS

Fourth Year PhD Candidate, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2016

Email: sleung@wakehealth.edu

Education:

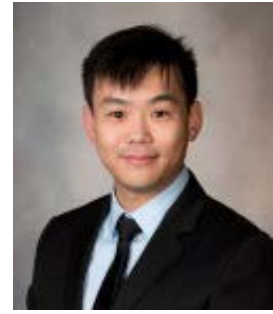
B.S. Human Biology, University of California, San Diego, 2009

M.B.B.S, University of Queensland/Ochsner Clinical School, 2013

M.S., Wake Forest University Graduate School of Arts & Science, 2018

Research mentor: Sean Murphy, PhD (WFIRM)

Research Interests: Evaluation of Cystic Fibrosis Inflammatory Cell Function



Diana Lim

Fourth Year PhD Candidate, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2018

Email: dlim@wakehealth.edu

Education:

B.A. in Neuroscience, Dartmouth College

Research mentors: James Yoo, MD, PhD and John Jackson, PhD (WFIRM)

Research Interests: Regenerative Medicine, Organogenesis, Oncology (Glioblastoma), Translational Medicine, Food Insecurity, Healthcare Education



T. David Luo, MD

Sixth Year PhD Candidate, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2015

Email: tluo@wakehealth.edu

Education:

B.S. Purdue University, 2009

M.D. Indiana University School of Medicine, 2014

Research mentor: Jeffrey Willey, PhD (Radiation Oncology)

Research Interests: Peripheral nerve injury and repair



Nequesha Mohamed, MD

Second Year PhD Student, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2020

Email: nmohamed@wakehealth.edu

Education: MD, University of Medicine and Health Sciences, St. Kitts, 2016
BS, University of Toronto, 2011

Research mentor: Kerry Danelson, PhD (Orthopaedics)

Research Interests: Arthritis, Diabetes, Joint Replacement, Healthcare Disparity



Sumaiya Nazli

Fourth Year PhD Student, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2017

Email: snazli@wakehealth.edu

Education: Bachelors of Science Biology Major, Math Minor,
Salem College, 2015

Research mentor: Michael Olivier, PhD (Molecular Medicine)

Research Interests: Plasma Proteomics, Mass Spectrometry, plasma biomarkers for biological disease



Angelica Riojas

Fifth Year PhD Candidate, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2016

Email: ariojas@wakehealth.edu

Education:
B.S. Biology, Texas State University, 2014
M.S. Biochemistry, Texas State University, 2016

Research mentor: Laura Cox, PhD (Molecular Medicine; Center for Precision Medicine)

Research Interests: Genetics and genomics, sex specific differences, hypertension



Martin Rodriguez

Fourth Year PhD Candidate, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2017

Email: mrodrig@wakehealth.edu

Education:

BSc in Biomedical Engineering, Marquette University, 2017

Research mentor: Graca Almeida-Porada, MD, PhD (WFIRM)

Research Interests: Fetomaternal Immunology of In Utero Stem Cell Transplant in treatment of Hemophilia A



Alistaire Ruggiero

Third Year PhD Candidate, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2018

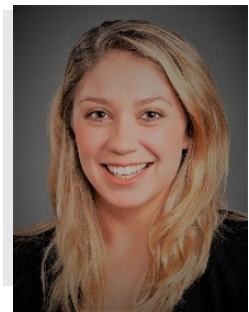
Email: adruggie@wakehealth.edu

Education:

BA in Biological Anthropology from Smith College

Research mentor: Kylie Kavanagh, PhD (Pathology-Comparative Medicine)

Research Interests: Metabolism and ageing, obesity phenotypes, adipose



William Shane Sills, DVM

Third Year PhD Student, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2019

Email: wsills@wakehealth.edu

Education:

BS, Zoology, NC State University

DVM, NC State University

Residency, Anatomic Pathology, Cornell University

Research mentor: Mark Cline, DVM, PhD, DACVP (Pathology-Comparative Medicine)

Research Interests: Immunology and pathology, Immune response to tumors and cancer immunotherapy, Cancer genetics and genomics, Long-term effects of radiation



Alexandria Szalanczy

Third Year PhD Candidate, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2018

Email: aszalanc@wakehealth.edu

Education:

Centre College, B.S. Biochemistry & Molecular Biology

Research mentor: Leah Solberg Woods, PhD (Molecular Medicine)

Research Interests: How our genetics can impact our health and behavior.



Priyanka Thakur, MVSc

Fifth Year PhD Candidate, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2016

Email: pthakur@wakehealth.edu

Education:

Post Graduate: Master of Veterinary Sciences (M.V.Sc.), 2008-2010,
Major: Veterinary Pathology

Date of completion: September 2010

Graduate: Bachelor of Veterinary and Animal Sciences,
Dr. G.C. Negi College of Veterinary Sciences,
CSK HPKV, Palampur, Himachal Pradesh, India. (Five year Graduate programme, 2003-2008).

Research mentor: Mark Cline, DVM, PhD (Pathology, Comparative Medicine)

Research Interests: Radiation induced lung fibrosis.



Briana Thompson

Fourth Year PhD Candidate, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2018

Email: brthomps@wakehealth.edu

Education:

B.S., Physics, Wake Forest University, 2017

B.A., Mathematics, Wake Forest University, 2017

Research mentor: William A. "Andy" Dezar, PhD (Radiation Oncology)

Research Interests: Liver Cancer, Brachytherapy, Yttrium Radioisotopes



Shaina Yates Alston

Fifth Year PhD Candidate, 2020-2021

Year Matriculated: 2016

Email: sayates@wakehealth.edu

Education:

Winston Salem State University;

Bachelor of Science in Clinical Laboratory Science, MT (AMT)



Research mentor: Nicole Levi-Polyachenko, PhD (Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery)

Research Interests: Microbiology - bacteriology, infectious disease, biofilms, chronic wounds, cancer, nanomedicine, thermal therapy, alternative therapy for disease, immunology

