

NATIONAL POSTDOC

APPRECIATION WEEK

Speed Networking with Postdoc Alumni: *Alumni Bios*

September 20, 2022



Speed Networking with Postdoc Alumni



Allison Beal, PhD

*Scientific Director, Immunology Unit
GlaxoSmithKline*

Allison Beal is a Scientific Director in the Immunology Research Unit at GlaxoSmithKline, leading a team of immunologists driving drug discovery efforts for various programs targeting the innate immune system and leading various external collaborations including two functional genomic collaborations. In addition to leading a team of immunologists, she has experience leading programs in a matrix team setting from early target identification through lead optimization and candidate selection.

Allison has authored 17 publications, one book chapter, and one review paper. Allison's career at GSK began in July 2014 as an investigator in the Pattern Recognition receptor DPU following one year working as a medical writer for a scientific communications agency. Prior to that, Allison completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia where she used in-vivo murine models and cellular and molecular immunology techniques to elucidate molecular mechanisms limiting inflammation and promoting T cell tolerance.

Allison earned a PhD in immunology from Thomas Jefferson University where she used advanced microscopy techniques combined with functional cellular assays to further understand how cytotoxic lymphocytes (CTL) effectively destroy infected target cells via the immunological synapse. During graduate school and postdoctoral fellowship, Allison gained an appreciation for mentoring, networking and developing additional skills outside of the lab, and served as a board member and president of the Philadelphia Chapter for the Association for Women in Science. Allison has continued her passion for mentoring by serving as the mentor lead for the global WLI mentoring team at GSK and mentoring several junior scientists in R&D at GSK and currently serves as one of the DEI champions in the Immunology Research Unit.

Speed Networking with Postdoc Alumni



Adriana D. Benavides, PhD

Associate Editor, Cancer Immunology Research

Public Policy Fellow, American Association of Immunologists

Dr. Benavides' field of expertise is immunology. She is currently associate editor for the peer-reviewed journal, Cancer Immunology Research (CIR, impact factor 12.020), one of the journals published by the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR). Dr. Benavides is also a current Public Policy Fellow (2022-2023) for the American Association of Immunologists (AAI). Dr. Benavides obtained her BS in Biology, with a concentration in molecular and cellular biology, from the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA).

While at UTSA, she completed her undergraduate honors thesis on immune-related factors affecting transmission/progression of HIV-1/AIDS. Dr. Benavides then pursued her PhD in immunology and microbiology at UT Health San Antonio's School for Biomedical Sciences, where she studied aging and its impact on immunity, as well as the effects of rapamycin on immunity in the elderly, in collaboration with the Sam and Ann Barshop Institute for Longevity and Aging Studies.

After completing her PhD, Dr. Benavides accepted a postdoctoral fellowship at CHOP where her studies focused on the tumor immune microenvironment and the mechanisms behind the efficacy of immunotherapy. She then transitioned into her current editorial role at CIR, where she facilitates the publication of exciting research on the complex interactions of the immune system and cancer, and has built relationships with the scientific community through her outreach efforts and discussions with researchers.

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Krista Bledsoe, PhD

*Senior Editor, Molecular Cell
Cell Press*

Krista is a senior editor at Molecular Cell. She earned her PhD in biochemistry and molecular biology from Mayo Graduate School where she studied transcription factor fusion genes in Ewing sarcoma and sinonasal sarcoma with Dr. Jennifer Westendorf, followed by postdoctoral work at the CHOP investigating epigenetic inhibitors in Ewing sarcoma with Dr. Margaret Chou. Krista worked as a science writer at Cancer Discovery before joining Cell Press in 2018 as an editor at both Molecular Cell and Cancer Cell.

She shifted her focus to Molecular Cell full time in 2020 and enjoys working with authors to help them develop and share their science.

Speed Networking with Postdoc Alumni



Daniel Blumenthal, PhD

Principal Scientist

Carisma Therapeutics

Daniel holds a PhD in biotechnology engineering. He came from Israel to a postdoctoral fellowship at CHOP with Jan Burkhardt, where he studied the effects of antigen-presenting cell stiffness on the cells' ability to prime a T cell response. While at CHOP, Daniel served as the inaugural co-chair of the CHOP Postdoc Association (CPA) where he aimed to better the postdoc experience at CHOP. Today, Daniel is a principal scientist at Carisma Therapeutics, where he leads a team of five scientists.

Currently, he oversees discovery work aimed at developing a novel, CAR monocyte platform for cancer immunotherapy. Apart from his main role, Daniel and his team collaborate with many departments in Carisma to bring CAR monocytes to the clinic – working closely with process development, giving scientific advice on the development of a production process for the CAR monocytes product. He also works with the regulatory department, to prepare scientific documentation and reports to support and IND submission.

Speed Networking with Postdoc Alumni



Leah Brogan, PhD

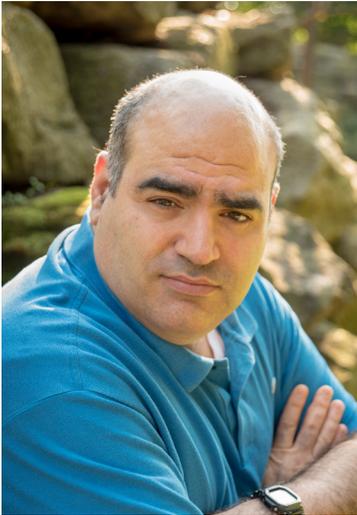
*Psychologist, Center for Violence Prevention
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia*

Dr. Brogan is a psychologist at the Center for Violence Prevention (CVP) at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. In her role as a psychologist, Dr. Brogan provides evidence-based, trauma-informed psychological services to patients throughout the CHOP inpatient and ambulatory enterprise within the Violence Intervention Program (VIP). She also provides clinical, trauma-informed supervision to other clinicians, participates in the educational experience of trainees, and establishes plans and initiates professional growth and leadership within the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Behavioral Science.

Dr. Brogan is also an Associate Fellow at the Center for Injury Research and Prevention. Dr. Brogan collaborates with Dr. Fein and other CVP colleagues to identify markers for adolescent suicide, firearm risk, and related behavioral health concerns through a large, longitudinal data repository of adolescent patient electronic medical record data and behavioral health data captured via the Behavioral Health Screening-Emergency Department (BHS-ED) survey.

Prior to Drexel, Dr. Brogan completed a postdoctoral fellowship in Psychology with CVP at CHOP where she worked across several projects focused on hospital-based youth violence prevention and intervention programming in schools and the Philadelphia community. While at CVP during her postdoctoral fellowship, she provided trauma-focused, cognitive behavioral therapy to violently injured youth enrolled in VIP and coached teachers in implementing an evidence-based bullying prevention program for Philadelphia elementary school students.

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Christopher Cardinale MD, PhD

*Research Scientist, Center for Applied Genomics
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia*

Dr. Cardinale is a research scientist in the Center for Applied Genomics in the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Research Institute. He began at CHOP in 2010 as a post-doctoral fellow and became a staff scientist in 2015. His work involves genomic and genetic studies of autoimmune disease, namely inflammatory bowel disease and type 1 diabetes. It's a mix of bench work and bioinformatic analysis. His career in science began as an undergraduate at Harvard University and continued as an MD/PhD student at New York University Langone Medical Center. He hopes to continue at CAG in a faculty role.

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Becky Chanoux, PhD

*Medical Director, Advertising
Evoke North America*

Dr. Chanoux left the lab to pursue a career in medical writing. She began as a writer at a medical communications agency, where she distilled published data into digestible pieces for physicians. After 4 years, she sought to return to oncology, which was the focus of her PhD. To that end, she left med comms and has spent the past 7 years as a medical writer and finally medical director in healthcare advertising. Working in advertising has encouraged her to expand the way she talks and writes about science. In this setting, with a different audience, she is more focused on the scientific story and how it fits into the overall strategy of her brands

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Rueben G. Das, PhD

Senior Research Investigator, Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania

Dr. Das has experience in studying neurodegenerative diseases of the brain and eye to address both fundamental and disease-related questions in biology. During his PhD, he studied the contribution of candidate and susceptibility genes in Parkinson's disease and Tauopathies in an East Indian population. As part of his postdoctoral training at Penn Vet, he contributed to the identification of a new locus for cone rod dystrophy 1 (cord1) by GWAS in a canine colony.

Additionally, he characterized a continuum of phenotypes in the colony by extensively studying retinal morphology and function. Through an international collaboration that led to the identification of the first canine model for Congenital Stationary Night Blindness (CSNB), he discovered the causal gene (LRIT3) of the disease. Recently, successful gene therapy treatment was achieved that restored vision in this disease model. Currently, he is part of Prof. Gerard Schellenberg's research group. In his own independent project funded by CurePSP, his goal is to connect GWAS hits of Tauopathies with the causal variants.

Speed Networking with Postdoc Alumni



Maria Fasolino, PhD

Program Director, Autism Spectrum Program of Excellence (ASPE) Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania

Maria Fasolino, PhD, is the program director for ASPE. She obtained her PhD in Neuroscience at the University of Pennsylvania under the mentorship of Zhaolan (Joe) Zhou, PhD, where she studied the molecular consequences of patient-associated mutations in MECP2 that cause Rett Syndrome, a rare neurological disorder with autistic-like features.

Maria continued her training as a postdoc in the laboratory of Golnaz Vahedi, PhD, at the University of Pennsylvania, where she investigated the etiology and pathogenesis of type 1 diabetes, a complex autoimmune disease. Prior to joining ASPE, Maria was a preclinical and clinical product manager for a neuromodulation device company. Maria applies her training and experience to coordinate the various aspects of ASPE to ensure that program objectives are met.

Speed Networking with Postdoc Alumni



Matthew Finley, PhD

Director, Research Administration

Lankenau Institute for Medical Research

Matt Finley graduated from Thomas Jefferson University with a Bachelors in Biotechnology and from Temple University School of Medicine with a PhD in Genetics & Molecular Biology. He completed a three-year pediatric cardiology postdoctoral fellowship at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia in the laboratory of Robert Levy, MD. Moving into industry, Matt joined SABiosciences which was successfully acquired by QIAGEN.

He continued working for QIAGEN with national and global positions in sales and field applications before moving on to Personal Genome Diagnostics, a clinical oncology diagnostic startup that spun out of Johns Hopkins University. With Personal Genome Diagnostics being acquired by LabCorp America, Matt joined Main Line Health as the Director of Research Administration which allowed him to move back to the city he loves – Philadelphia.

Speed Networking with Postdoc Alumni



Michael P. Hart, PhD

*Assistant Professor, Department of Genetics
Perelman School of Medicine at the University
of Pennsylvania*

Michael Hart did his bachelor's degree at St. Lawrence University. He received his PhD from the University of Pennsylvania in the Neuroscience Graduate Group working in the lab of Aaron Gitler (now at Stanford). He started *C.elegans* research during his postdoctoral fellowship at Columbia University with Oliver Hobert, after which he joined the Autism Spectrum Program of Excellence (ASPE) at the Perelman School of Medicine as a Research Associate.

Michael opened his own research lab in the Department of Genetics at the University of Pennsylvania in 2020, focusing on plasticity of neuronal circuits and behavior, and continuing to work with the ASPE group.

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Joshua Jackson, PhD

*Assistant Professor, Pharmacology and Physiology
Drexel University College of Medicine*

Dr. Jackson graduated from Carleton College with a BA in biology. He briefly attended the University of Edinburgh for Economics/Economic History before returning to the U.S. to start a research career as a technician in the laboratory of Dr. Elliott Richelson at the Mayo Clinic. There he was involved in the development and characterization of pharmacologic reagents for neuropsychiatric indications. He did his PhD training with Dr. Stan Thayer at the University of Minnesota looking at calcium signaling in sensory neurons.

He did postdoctoral work with Dr. Phil Haydon at the University of Pennsylvania where he developed his interest in astrocyte-neuron signaling and developed expertise in two-photon in vivo microscopy. He did further postdoctoral work with Dr. Michael Robinson at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, where he continued my investigations of astrocyte-neuron signaling looking at the regulation of the glial glutamate transporters.

He started my own lab at Drexel University College of Medicine in the Fall of 2018. He currently has two PhD and two master's trainees working in the lab. His current research interests continue to revolve around understanding mechanisms that regulate astrocyte-to-neuron communication, cerebral blood flow, and brain metabolism. His lab has a particular interest in understanding how this signaling is altered during brain inflammation. In close collaboration with the other labs at Drexel, his lab has begun to develop models to understand how metastatic tumors interact with the native brain microenvironment. In addition to research, he teaches multiple classes at the graduate and medical school level and is co-course director for Core Concepts in Biochemistry and Cell Biology course, required for all biomedical graduate students at Drexel.

Speed Networking with Postdoc Alumni



Stephanie Krauthamer Ewing, PhD, MPH

*Assistant Professor, Counseling and Family Therapy
Drexel University College of Nursing and
Health Professions*

Stephanie Krauthamer Ewing, PhD, MPH, is a clinical and developmental psychologist. Her research focuses on healthy emotional development in childhood and adolescence and the impact of caregiving and attachment relationships on emotional development and psychological well-being. Much of her research explores parenting approaches and the various psychological and contextual influences on parenting.

She has a particular interest in studying these relationships within racial and ethnic minority families and families coping with poverty and oppression. Finally, her program of research focuses on translating knowledge from basic scientific research into clinical intervention and prevention programs that can effect change at both individual and systemic levels.

Together with mentors and colleagues from the University of Delaware, she contributed to the development and testing of “The Emotions Course for Children,” an emotions-based prevention program for preschool children at risk for behavior and emotional problems. Dr. Ewing was also a co-investigator on Family Safety Net 2, an NIMH funded clinical trial investigating the efficacy of Attachment Based Family Therapy (ABFT) vs. Individual Supportive Therapy for adolescents struggling with depression and suicide risk. Through current NIMH research support, she continues to work to identify depression and suicide risk and protective factors in youth and their families.

Speed Networking with Postdoc Alumni



Matthew Mitchell, PhD

*Assistant Professor and Program Manager
Coriell Institute for Medical Research*

Matthew Mitchell, PhD, is the Co-PI of both the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) Human Genetic Cell Repository at Coriell, an extensive collection representing more than 1,000 unique human diseases, as well as the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) Sample Repository for Human Genetic Research, a collection which includes DNA samples and cell lines from the populations used for the International HapMap and 1000 Genomes Projects.

He is also a Co-Investigator and member of the Human Pangenome Reference Consortium. Prior to joining Coriell, Matt was a postdoctoral research fellow in the Department of Biology at the University of Pennsylvania where his work focused on developing new methodologies to study microbial genomics. He also completed a postdoctoral fellowship in the Department of Biology at Drexel University where he studied the population genomics and evolutionary history of wild chimpanzees in Central Africa. Matt received his undergraduate degree in Biology and Music from Colby College in Waterville, ME, and his doctoral degree in Biology from the State University of New York at Albany in Albany, NY.

Speed Networking with Postdoc Alumni



Alex Rohacek, PhD

Research Scientist Spark Therapeutics

Dr. Rohacek earned his PhD from UPenn in 2018 from the lab of Dr. Doug Epstein, where he studied genetic causes of hearing loss and inner ear development in mouse models. He moved onto a postdoc in the lab of Dr. David Raizen also at UPenn where he worked on project studying the genetic basis of sleep in *C. elegans*. He was a teaching assistant for graduate and undergrad courses and was an adjunct professor as a postdoc. He also served as treasurer and Co-president of the Biomedical Postdoctoral Council (BPC) at Penn. Currently, he works as a research scientist at Spark Therapeutics developing gene therapy for rare diseases.