



Awards ceremony

spring 2021

ASU School of
Life Sciences
Arizona State University



Congratulations to the class of

2021

The School of Life Sciences prides itself on many years of dedication to undergraduate learning and success. We have actively supported undergraduate research in faculty labs for more than 20 years and we have bucked the national trend by having 90% of our undergraduate courses taught by tenure-track professors rather than by adjunct faculty.

We offer students a wide range of research opportunities with more than 100 faculty members dedicated to mentoring undergraduates. That, combined with opportunities to interact with top-notch faculty in the classroom, provides a unique educational experience for our students. One measure of our success is the phenomenal achievements of the undergraduates we recognize today.

Our Mission

To inspire and transform life science students by providing an innovative learning experience that prepares them to thrive in a dynamic and demanding world.

We aim to improve life by stimulating scientific discovery and solving critical problems at the intersection of the life sciences and society.

Our Vision

We aspire to become a global leader in life science education and discovery. We will create an atmosphere that inspires diverse groups of visionary students and researchers to lead with us.

Together, we will tackle emerging problems by embracing a rapidly changing world. Our solutions will help shape a more sustainable future for life on Earth.

Our Values

- Pushing the boundaries of knowledge
- Investing in diversity
- Creating synergy
- Serving our community
- Pursuing excellence

Schedule

11 a.m.

Opening remarks

Professor Kenro Kusumi

Associate dean; The College; director, professor,
School of Life Sciences

11:10 a.m.

Undergraduate awards presentation

Professor Shelley Haydel

Associate director, undergraduate programs; professor

12:10 p.m.

Graduate awards presentation

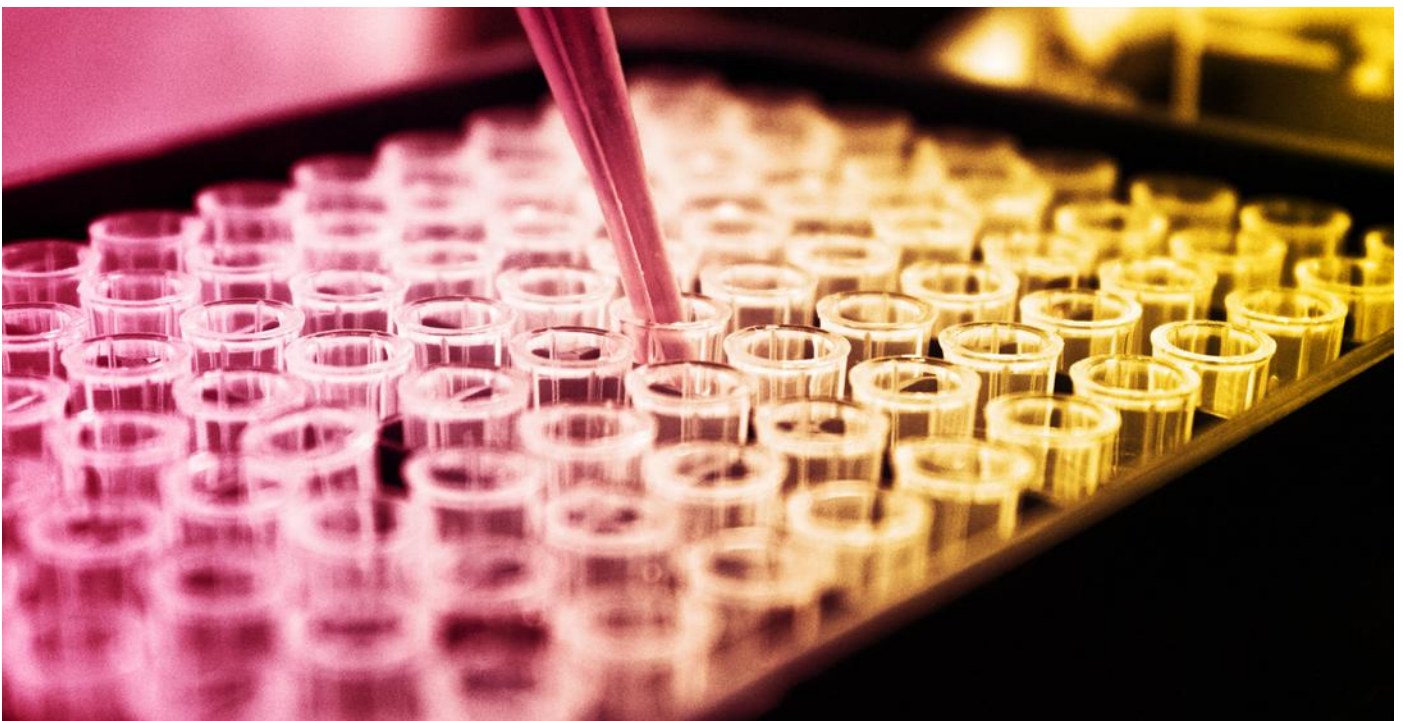
Professor Emilia Martins

Associate director, graduate programs; professor

12:50 p.m.

Teaching, advising and faculty grant awards

Professor Shelley Haydel



Program associate directors



Shelley Haydel, PhD

Professor Haydel is an infectious disease microbiologist researching new antibiotics to fight resistant infections and how bacteria cause lung infections and wound infections. She is also working with engineers and chemists to create a point-of-care instrument for rapid antibiotic susceptibility testing and to develop skin glues to prevent wound infections.

Professor Haydel is a dedicated instructor, implementing creative teaching methods, real-life case studies, daily critical-thinking exercises, and hands-on modeling activities, thus promoting a higher order cognitive learning environment for her students. In May 2020, Professor Haydel was awarded the Zebulon Pearce Distinguished Teaching Award in Natural Sciences from The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.



Emília Martins, PhD

Emília Martins studies how sensory systems interact, and how those interactions impact animal communication and social behavior. Most recently, her lab has been studying how lizards and fish shift between visual and chemical signals in response to climate change, pollutants, and environmental disturbance. She is especially well known for pioneering the use of phylogenetic comparative methods, for example, using these statistical approaches to map the ancient history of lizard communication in the southwestern U.S.

Dr. Martins has published more than 100 papers and is a Fellow of both the Animal Behavior Society (ABS) and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). She is especially passionate about equity and inclusion in the sciences, and has spearheaded several initiatives to mentor and support early career scientists.

Undergraduate and graduate endowed awards



Danielle Aronson Memorial Award

Jerome Aronson, PhD, is professor emeritus with the School of Life Sciences and a distinguished faculty member in plant biology. To honor his late wife, Aronson established this award to recognize an outstanding student studying plant science or plant biology in the biological sciences.

Edward and Linda Birge Scholarship

Ed Birge is an emeritus faculty member with the School of Life Sciences and former-chair of the Department of Microbiology at ASU. He established this award in memory of his mother Linda and father Edward, and to recognize and support undergraduate microbiology students in the School of Life Sciences.

Ralph A. Fisher, Jr. Scholarship

Mr. Ralph Fisher, Bachelor of Science, Class of '51, was a lifetime member of the National Wildlife Federation, as well as a trail guide and bird count organizer for the Audubon Society. The Ralph A. Fisher Scholarship recognizes biology and plant biology students with outstanding academic performance and promise in the field of biology.

Joyce Foster Larson Scholarship

Joyce Foster Larson is professor emerita with the School of Life Sciences. She earned her PhD in zoology at ASU. The Joyce Foster Larson Scholarship supports life sciences students involved in the study of animals.

Dr. K. Michael Peddecord and Mary Ann Peddecord Scholarship

Michael and Mary Ann Peddecord received their Master of Science degrees in microbiology at ASU and have created this fund to support microbiology students because they are grateful for the support they received at Arizona State University. Michael earned his PhD in Public Health and teaches at San Diego State University and Mary is a clinical microbiologist.

John F. Schmidt Life Sciences Scholarship

Jean Schmidt is professor emerita with the School of Life Sciences and was associate director of the Cancer Research Institute at ASU before she retired. She established this award in honor of

her father, John F. Schmidt, to support undergraduate microbiology students in the School of Life Sciences.

School of Life Sciences Undergraduate Research Scholarship

This award supports undergraduate students who participate in independent and creative research projects mentored by faculty in the School of Life Sciences. This scholarship was created through the generosity of current and former faculty in the School of Life Sciences.

Biology and Society Unusual Student Project Award

The fund was created by ASU Professor Jane Maienschein and Professor Richard Creath to encourage students' creativity to identify and participate in unusual projects in biology and society. Funds may support research, travel and related activities.

Michele and Robert Page First-Generation Scholarship

Rob and Michele Page have generously established multiple scholarships at ASU to support first generation, ROTC, and Veteran students. They are passionate about education and supporting students. Rob served ASU in many positions, including founding Director of the School of Life Sciences, Vice Provost and Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Provost. Rob and Michele are first generation college students and want to support and encourage other first generation students. The impact their educations had on their lives and the lives of their children has been immeasurable and they would like to have the same impact on others.

Undergraduate award recipients



(listed in order of presentation)

Endowed awards

Edward and Linda Birge Scholarship

Mitul Waghmare

Dr. Harry Gilbert and Doris Loraine Crecelius Scholarship

Varshini Methuku

Ralph A. Fisher Jr. Scholarship

Seth Wielgus

Joyce Foster Larson Scholarship

Gabrielle Meissner

Michele and Robert Page First Generation Scholarship

Bryttani Allred

Dr. K. Michael Peddecord and Mary Ann Peddecord Scholarship

Khaled Alzreikat

John F. Schmidt Life Sciences Scholarship

Alexia Childress

Danielle Aronson Memorial Award

Aditi Galande

School of Life Sciences awards

Student of the Year in Biological Sciences

Danielle Alarid

Student of the Year Award in Biological Sciences – Biology and Society

Kara Gardner

Student of the Year Award in Biological Sciences – Biomedical Sciences

Lara Aguiar

Student of the Year Award in Biological Sciences – Conservation Biology and Ecology

Mark Williamson

Student of the Year Award in Biological Sciences – Genetics, Cell, and Developmental Biology

Jade Porche

Student of the Year Award in Biological Sciences – Neurobiology, Physiology and Behavior

Miriam Goras

Student of the Year in Microbiology – Medical Microbiology

Alexia Childress

Student of the Year Award in Microbiology

Charles Marquardt

Student of the Year Award in Molecular Biosciences and Biotechnology

Ryan Eghlimi

School Undergraduate Research Scholarship

Miriam Goras

School of Life Sciences Miles Orchinik True Grit Award

Elizabeth Audannio

School of Life Sciences Outstanding Service Award

Amal Altaf

School of Life Sciences Outstanding Graduate

Amal Altaf

Notable student achievements

Dean’s Medal for the School of Life Sciences

Kara Gardner



Graduate award recipients



Endowed awards

Graduate Research Fellowship, National Science Foundation

Cindy Vargas, environmental life sciences, PhD

Brianah McCoy, molecular and cellular
biology, PhD

Forest Shreve Award from the Ecological Society of America

Edauri Navarro-Perez, environmental
life sciences, PhD

NRSA pre-doctoral fellowship from the National Institutes of Health

Broc Pagni, neuroscience, PhD

Wenner-Gren Foundation's Dissertation Foundation's Dissertation Fieldwork Grant and the Social Science Research Council's Mellon International Dissertation Research

Sanghamitra Das, biology and society, PhD

Biology and Society's Unusual Student Project Award

Va'Trelle Stokely, biology and society, PhD

Peabody Family Memorial Fellowship

Lauren Neel, biology, PhD

Michael A. Cichan Award Scholarship and the Lisa Dent Memorial Ecology Fellowship

Fransiska Kangombe, environmental
life sciences, PhD

Inclusive teaching fellows 2020

Sarah Polekoff, animal behavior, PhD

Benjamin Pyenson, biology, PhD

Katherine Weiss, environmental
life sciences, PhD

Daniel Jackson, evolutionary biology, PhD

Brennan Hays, biology, MS

Anthony Basile, evolutionary biology, PhD

Graduate programs awards 2021

Miranda Bernard, environmental
life sciences, PhD

Tanessa Call, neuroscience, PhD

Kelle Dhein, biology and society, PhD

Kevin Klicki, molecular and cellular biology, PhD



Marina Lauck, environmental life sciences, PhD

Kimberly Olney, evolutionary biology, PhD

Nathan Smith, animal behavior, PhD

Peaches Ulrich, molecular and cellular
biology, PhD

Emily Webb, Biology, PhD

Aigerim Kamzina, molecular and cellular
biology, PhD

Lin Li, Biology, PhD

Sandra Nordlie, molecular and cellular
biology, PhD

Mary Pardhe, molecular and
cellular biology, PhD

ASU Graduate College completion awards

Julie Bethany-Rakes, environmental
life sciences, PhD

Jacob Youngblood, biology, PhD

Stephen Elser, environmental
life sciences, PhD

Jason Sauer, environmental
life sciences, PhD

School of Life Sciences completion awards

Anthony Basile, biology, PhD

John Christie, microbiology, PhD

Adele Crane, evolutionary biology, PhD

Challie Facemire, biology and society, PhD

ASU neuroscience completion awards

Stephen Moore, neuroscience, PhD

ARCS scholar awards

Jordan Glass, biology, PhD

Sara Knowles, neuroscience, PhD

Rodrigo Martinez, microbiology, PhD

Mark Namba, neuroscience, PhD

Kirsten Pfeffer, molecular and cellular
biology, PhD

Angela Oill, evolutionary biology, PhD

Faculty teaching, advising and grant awards



Teaching awards

Teaching assistant award

Richard Clarke

Faculty teaching award

Katherine Maccord

Advising awards

NACADA Region 10

Excellence in Advising

– New Advisor

Emily Vedder

2021 ASU Council of Academic Advisors

Excellence in Advising – Experienced Advisor

Serena Christianson

Faculty grant awards

New and/or active grant awards

(FY20 and 21)

Anderson, Karen

Balmer, Timothy

Bean, Heather

Brownell, Sara

Buetow, Kenneth

Cadillo-Quiroz, Hinsby

Chen, Qiang

Cooper, Katelyn

Dolby, Greer

Ellison, Karin

Franz, Nico

Frasch, Wayne

Geiler-Samerotte, Kerry

Gerber, Leah

Gerkin, Richard

Gile, Gillian

Grimm, Nancy

Harris, Robin

Harrison, Jon

Hartwell, Leland

Haydel, Shelley

Hogue, Brenda

Hogue, Ian

Hu, Ke

Huijben, Silvie

Hurlbut, Benjamin

Jacobs, Bertram

Jensen, Jeffrey David

Katsanos, Christos

Kusumi, Kenro

Lake, Douglas

Laubichler, Manfred

Liebig, Juergen

Lim, Efrem

Lynch, Michael

Maienschein, Jane

Mana, Miyeko

Mason, Hugh

McCutcheon, John

McFadden, Grant

Neisewander, Janet

Neuer, Susanne

Newbern, Jason

Newfeld, Stuart

Nickerson, Cheryl

Pfeifer, Susanne

Pratt, Stephen

Rabeling, Christian

Robert, Jason

Sabo, John

Shrivastava, Abhishek

Smith, Brian

Snyder-Mackler, Noah

Sterner, Beckett

Ugarova, Tatiana

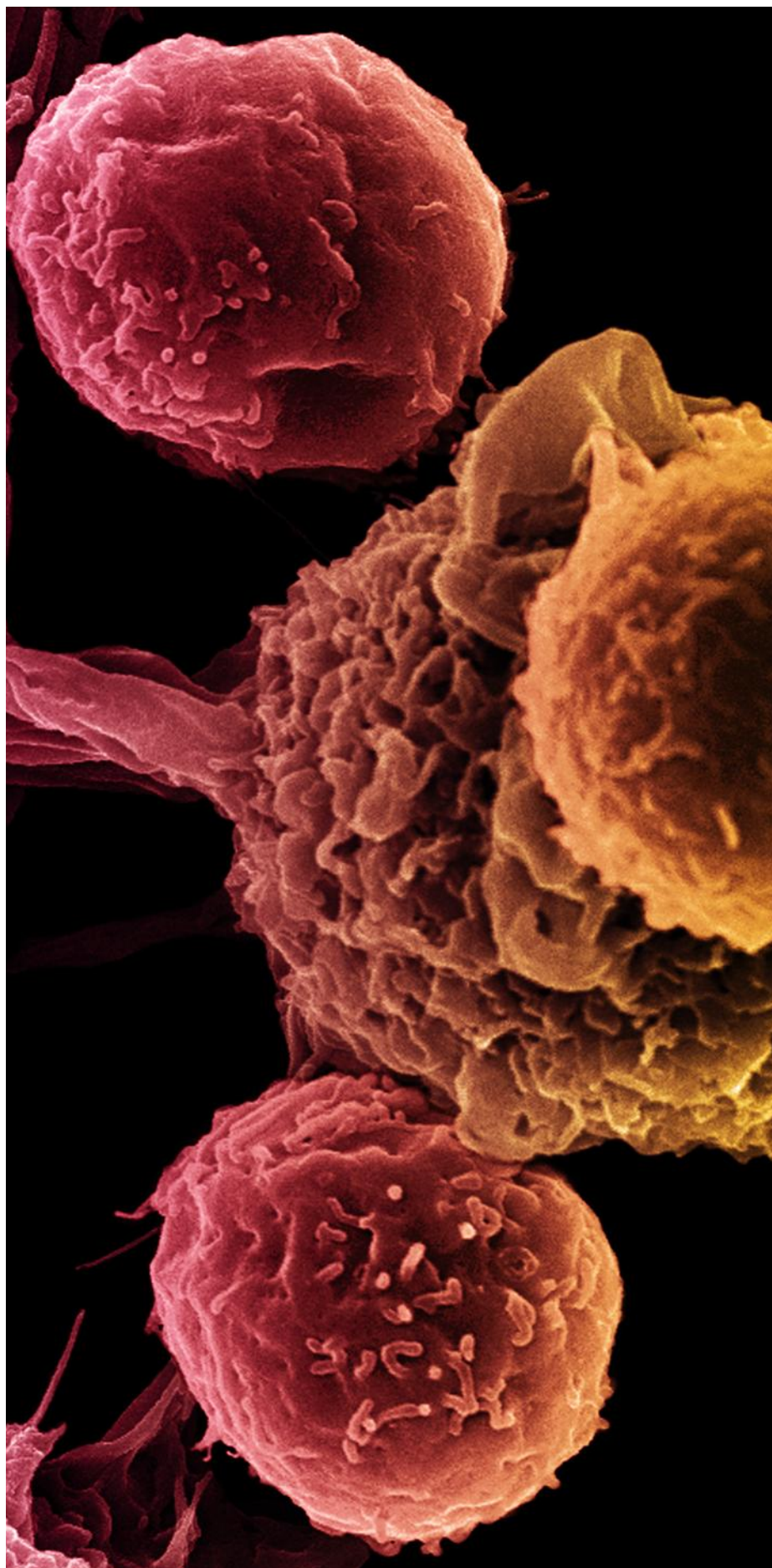
Varsani, Arvind

Vermaas, Willem

Wang, Xuan
Wilson, Melissa
Wojciechowski, Martin

**Active grant awards
(before FY20)**

Amdam, Gro
Blattman, Joseph
Cartwright, Reed
Collins, James
Compton, Carolyn
Creath, Richard
DeNardo, Dale
Deviche, Pierre
Fewell, Jennifer
Garcia-Pichel, Ferran
Gaxiola, Roberto
Hall, Sharon
Johnston, Stephen
Maley, Carlo
Mangone, Marco
Martins, Emilia
McGraw, Kevin
Paaijmans, Krijn
Pigg, Kathleen
Sala, Osvaldo



Student biographies

Undergraduate biographies



Danielle Alarid (she/her)

BS Biological sciences

Danielle Alarid is from Orange County, California and a senior at Arizona State University. She is pursuing her undergraduate degree in biological sciences and is a member of Phi Theta Kappa and Honor Society. For the last five years, Danielle has worked for a regional community college program where she promotes biotechnology and robust training opportunities to her local community. Passionate about bioinformatics, Danielle also works in the lab of Dr. Melissa Wilson conducting computational research. Upon graduation, Danielle plans to obtain her Master's in Biology from ASU and to work in bioinformatics specializing in cancer research.



Lara Aguiar

BS Biomedical sciences
(biomedical sciences)

Lara Aguiar is a senior at Barrett, the Honors College at Arizona State University, double majoring in biomedical

sciences and family and human development. She is an undergraduate research assistant at the Arizona Twin Project, an Academic Integrity Team Lead within ASU's Psychology Department, and a medical scribe at a local community health center. In her spare time she enjoys cooking, yoga, gardening and painting. After graduating this semester, Lara will be attending the University of Arizona College of Medicine - Phoenix to pursue her Doctor of Medicine degree. She is honored to be this year's Biomedical Sciences Student of the Year.



Bryttani Allred

BS Microbiology

Bryttani is pursuing a degree in microbiology. She is currently doing research on termites in the Liebig laboratory, and is loving it! She has lived in Arizona for most of her life, and is proud to call Tempe her home. She married her high school sweetheart in December of 2019, and they are working tirelessly to get me through University. After graduation she plans to pursue a master's degree in microbiology. Her ultimate goal is to work with fungus and bacteria to find a way to better the environment while raising a generation of future change-makers.



Amal Altaf

BS Biological sciences

Amal is a senior pursuing dual degrees in biological sciences and global health with a minor in business. Upon graduation, she will be attending medical school, where she hopes to continue exploring her interests in global health and equitable education opportunities for underserved communities. During her time at ASU, Amal has been involved in several organizations including R.I.S.E. Hands for Henna, S.H.O.W., and R.E.A.C.T. and also co-founded her own organization: Refugee LINK. She is a member of the Obama Foundation Community Leadership Corps and is an ASU Tillman Scholar. Outside of school, Amal enjoys painting, creating pottery and playing tennis.



Khaled Alzreikat

BS Biological sciences (neurobiology, physiology and behavior)

Khaled is from Syria and came to the U.S. in 2016. He is a pre-med biology student at ASU with 3.84 GPA. He works as a pharmacy technician, and is currently working at Covid-19 vaccine clinics. His goal is to become a doctor one day, but his biggest dream is to build a hospital that is affordable for everyone and provide care for people from marginalized communities.



Elizabeth Audannio

BS Biological sciences

Elizabeth Audannio chose to attend Arizona State University to pursue a BS in biological sciences with a minor in sustainability. She has also been enrolled at the College of Southern Nevada pursuing BAS in project management. Upon graduation she will be the first in her family to obtain a bachelors degree. At ASU, she has developed a passion for biological sustainability. Her goal was to enter the joint

MS-GSS degree with ASU / Leuphana University and plans to pursue it when the program is active again. She hopes to launch a sustainable business in the future to address issues surrounding water, food, plastics and housing crises.



Alexia Childress

BS Microbiology (medical microbiology)

Alexia is a third-year student in Barrett, the Honors College and the School of Life Sciences at ASU. She is studying medical microbiology with a minor in Spanish and plans to apply to medical school in the near future. She currently works as a SOLUR Scholar in Dr. Haydel's lab at the ASU Biodesign Institute and researches potential drug targets of the bacterium that causes tuberculosis. She also helped found the National Pre-Health Conference, a student-led organization that provides free resources to pre-health individuals around the country. In her free time, she enjoys hiking, reading comics, and watching Marvel movies.



Ryan Eghlimi

BS Molecular biosciences and biotechnology

Ryan has a loving mother, father, and brother and he has been a resident of Arizona since 2000. He went to Pinnacle High School where he won a Varsity Ice Hockey State Championship. Ryan still loves to play hockey and he pursues creative writing in his free time. During his time at ASU he published his first peer-reviewed research manuscript on triple negative breast cancer detection, three poems in three literary magazines and has been an active member of Pi Kappa Phi.



Aditi Galande

BS Microbiology
(medical microbiology)

Aditi is a second year student studying medical microbiology and global health at Barrett, The Honors College. On campus, she dedicates her time as the academic and professional liaison on the Advisory Board for Student Organizations and oversees clubs across all campuses. Among other leadership positions, Aditi is also the digital design co-director for the National Pre-Health Conference. She comes from an immigrant household and is the first to pursue medicine. Aditi is extremely grateful to be a recipient of the Danielle Aronson Memorial Award. She looks forward to graduating ASU and serving her community as a physician.



Kara Gardner

BS Biological sciences
(biology and society)

Kara Gardner is a first-generation college student studying Biology and Society. She is concurrently enrolled in a Bioethics, Policy, and Law Master's Program at ASU. Her Master's research focuses on the impact birth control technologies and policies have on social justice initiatives and social structures. Unlike most research surrounding birth control, Kara's research focuses on the underdeveloped area of male birth control. In her spare time, Kara enjoys ceramics, reading, playing volleyball, and training her cat.



Miriam Goras

BS Biochemistry and biological sciences

Miriam Goras is an Arizona native and first-generation college student who will be a senior this fall at Arizona State University double majoring in biochemistry and biological sciences with an emphasis on neurobiology.

She is passionate about education equality and advocating for expanding access to STEM education, especially for girls and low-income students. After finishing her undergraduate studies, she plans to pursue a career as an PhD in Neuroscience, investigating the molecular underpinnings of neurodegenerative diseases and teaching future generations at the university level. Some of her hobbies include gardening, cooking, and petting dogs.



Charles Marquardt

BS Microbiology

Born in Flagstaff, AZ, Charles spent his youth outdoors. Fascinated by the fossils in surrounding areas, he took a liking to biology and ecology. During middle school, he decided he wanted to cure cancer, but had no idea how to go about it other than making his studies his life. Upon high school graduation, he attended ASU, studying Microbiology and Biochemistry. Now, at the end of his undergraduate career, Charles hopes to become an Oncological Immunotherapist by earning an MD-PhD.



Gabrielle Meissner

BS Biological sciences

Gabrielle Meissner is living in Palm Springs/Big Bear but she grew up on the Oregon coast. She's a senior ASU and will be graduating this summer. She majored in Biology because she wanted to go into a career that has new discoveries within the scientific field. At this point on her educational journey, she is leaning towards medical school or marine biology and conservation of species. She enjoys singing, family time, traveling and learning about different cultures! She shares a love of pet rescue and decided to build her own "fur" family and adopted a cat about 3 years ago.



Varshini Methuku

BS Microbiology (medical microbiology)

Varshini Methuku is a third-year student in Barrett, the Honors College at ASU studying Medical Microbiology. She is a pre-med student who works as a medical assistant at an internal medicine clinic and wants to be a pediatric oncologist in the future. She actively participates in research at the Biodesign Institute Center of Immunotherapy, Vaccines and Virotherapy where she works with Dr. Blattman. When she is not working and or doing research, she enjoys volunteering with Science Detectives, painting different landscapes, and watching crime movies.



Jade Porche

BS Biological sciences (computational life sciences)

Jade is graduating Summa Cum Laude with a degree in biological sciences (computational life sciences) and minor in Spanish. Over the course of her four years at ASU she has been president of The College Council, vice president of CRUSH Servant Leadership, a community assistant and a peer mentor. She loves working with and helping others and hopes to continue this passion as a physician. In addition to her organizational involvement, she has completed research within SOLS on bacteriophages and science curriculum, while working part time at HonorHealth Medical Center as a patient care technician.



Mitul Waghmare

BS Microbiology (medical microbiology)

Mitul is an international student and a sophomore majoring in Microbiology. He was born in Mumbai, India, and came to the United States when he was 17 to pursue his undergraduate degree. Last year he started gaining a

substantial amount of interest in the biomedical field. His particular field of interest is immunology and oncology/ hematology. His hobbies include cooking and he is trained in classical Indian music.



Seth Wielgus

BS Biological sciences (conservation biology and ecology)

Seth has always had a connection to nature and wants to learn more about its interactions with humans so that the best outcomes for both can be created. He sees himself researching plants as a career and has started internships and research projects focusing on them. Currently, he runs a side business with his family to grow and sell houseplants grown from his family's yard. He spends most of his free time outside doing a wide range of activities from mountain biking to kayaking to simply observing plants.

Graduate biographies



Miranda Bernard

PhD, Environmental life sciences

Miranda is in her fifth year in the environmental life sciences PhD program at ASU. She is interested in the intersections of marine science, policy and engagement. Specifically, she is exploring the roles of community engagement with respect to marine protected areas across the insular Caribbean. She hopes to better understand the impacts humans have on marine systems and determine just means to conserve biodiversity.



Tanessa Call

PhD, Neuroscience

Tanessa is utilizing pre-clinical models of stress and depression. She is investigating novel molecular pathways which will contribute to the development of new antidepressants. For her dissertation, Tanessa has been researching changes in neuronal morphology resulting from protein-specific genetic manipulations.



Kelle Dhein

PhD, Biology and society

Kelle is a Phoenix native and Navajo tribal member interested in integrating historical and philosophical perspectives on the life sciences. He enjoys travel and reading.



Sanghamitra Das

PhD, Biology and society

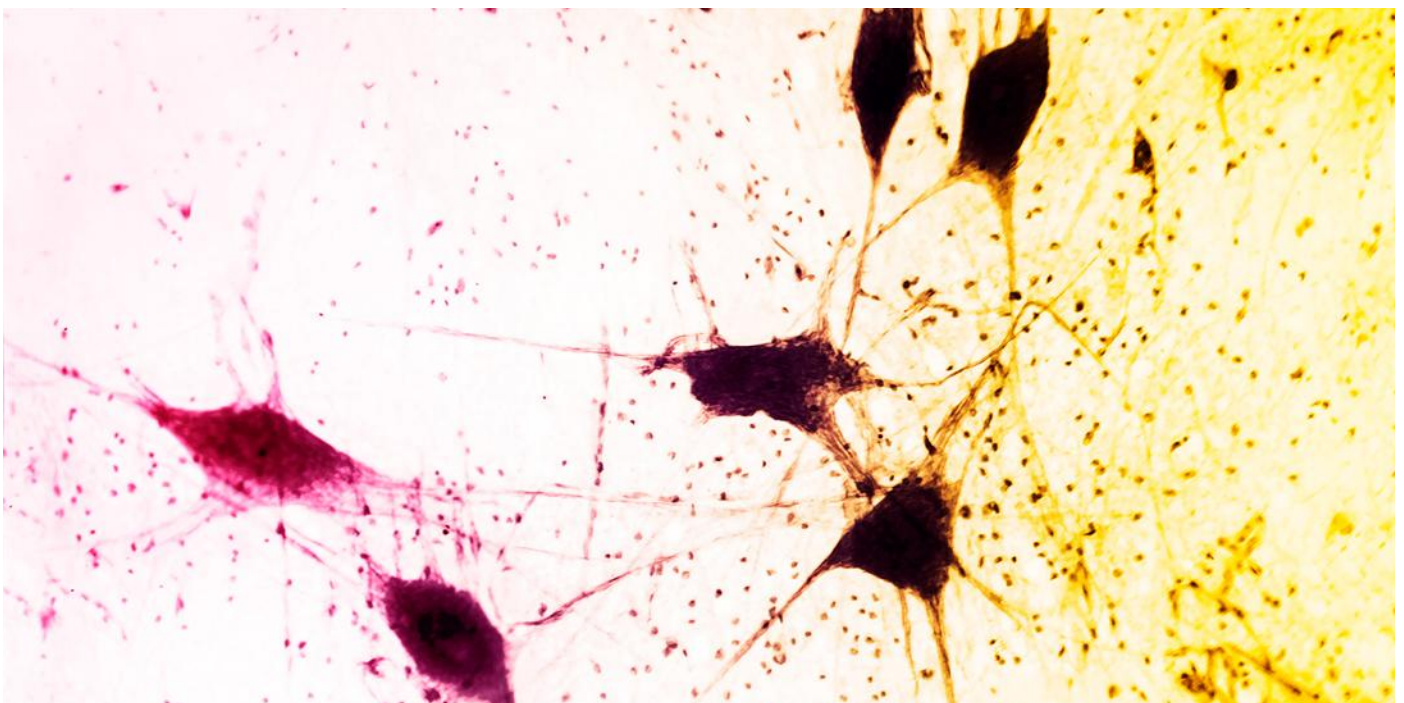
Sanghamitra is a PhD candidate in the Center for Biology and Society at Arizona State University. Her research lies at the intersections of medical anthropology, science and technology studies, and Adivasi studies. Her PhD project investigates the management of sickle cell disease in India as a public health problem.



Fransiska Kangombe

PhD, Environmental life sciences

Fransiska is a fourth year environmental life sciences student at ASU. Her flowering phenology study seeks to investigate how the on-going environmental changes on earth are affecting the growth, reproductive timing and output of plants in drylands. She is sourcing data from published studies and herbarium specimens to detect any shifts in flowering date with climate change in dryland plants and conducting field and greenhouse experiments to validate these changes. Her fieldwork is based in Namibia, the driest country in sub-Saharan Africa,



where she is using rainout shelters to study the impact of declining rainfall on the growth and flowering timing of selected summer annual plants in an effort to quantify plant-environment relationships and responses to global climate change.



Kevin Klicki
PhD, Molecular and cellular biology

Kevin is a PhD candidate in the molecular and cellular biology program in the Garcia-Pichel lab. He is studying the molecular mechanisms of ultraviolet radiation adaptation in biological soil crust cyanobacteria.



Marina Lauck
PhD, Environmental life sciences

Marina is an aquatic ecosystem ecologist interested in the influence of plants on ecosystem structure and function. Her dissertation focuses on using plant functional traits to explain the impact of plant communities on ecosystem metabolism and carbon dynamics in streams and wetlands.



Brianah (Bri) McCoy
PhD, Molecular and cellular biology

Brianah (Bri) McCoy is a first-year PhD student in molecular and cellular biology, where she is advised by Noah Snyder-Mackler, PhD. Bri graduated from ASU online with a BS in biological sciences in 2020. She is currently working as a member of the Dog Aging Project on project 3 where she studies the molecular mechanisms (epigenetics) of muscular aging in companion dogs. After graduating from ASU, she hopes to begin a career with the National Institutes of Health, specifically the National Institute on Aging where she can continue her work understanding human skeletal muscle aging and developing potential

therapeutic strategies for increasing healthspan. She also plans to continue her efforts to create research opportunities for non-traditional/underrepresented students and encourage increased diversity in STEM.



Edauri Navarro-Perez
PhD, Environmental life sciences

Edauri is a PhD student in the environmental life sciences program at ASU. Born and raised in Bayamón, Puerto Rico, his undergraduate studies were at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus, in the Environmental Sciences Program. Edauri's research is about root functional traits and how they are affected by soil abiotic conditions, their relationships with microbial processes, and their effect on dryland soil properties. Currently, he is part of the Drylands Ecosystems Research Team (DERT) and Heather Throop's lab at ASU.



Lauren Neel
PhD, Biology

Lauren is a fourth year biology PhD candidate at ASU. Her research focuses on the thermal ecology and physiology of reptiles. Lauren studies how lizards alter their behavior or physiology to survive in different environments. Her work integrates fieldwork, lab work, and computational methods to answer questions about life history. Currently, she is studying Yarrow's spiny lizards in Arizona.



Kimberly Olney

PhD, Evolutionary biology

Kimberly Olney is an evolutionary and computational biologist trained in the biology of genomics and gene expression.

Kimberly received her BS in biological sciences from Arizona State University in 2013. As an evolutionary biology PhD candidate, Kimberly is developing computational tools that infer genetic differences among human samples. Kimberly applies these tools to characterize gene expression patterns across human tissue types to better understand the mechanism underlying sex-bias in gene regulation that contributes to human health and disease. Through her research, she hopes to improve human health by contributing knowledge about sex as a biological variable.



Va'Trelle Stokely

PhD Biology and society

Va'Trelle Stokely is a first-year PhD student in biology and society, where he is co-advised by Krijn Paaijmans, PhD and James Collins, PhD. Va'Trelle came to ASU from San Jose State University, where he graduated in 2020 with a BA in Biology, a minor in Chemistry, and a second minor in Humanities. He is currently researching methods to reduce the transmission of mosquito-borne diseases that pose significant public health challenges worldwide. After graduating from ASU, he hopes to begin a career with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, United Nations, World Health Organization, or further his education by attending medical school. His goal is to be hands-on and impact the world by encouraging communities to become more actively involved in disease prevention and health conscious.



Broc Pagni

PhD, Neuroscience

Broc is a 5th year PhD student working in the Autism Brain Aging Laboratory. His research is focused on identifying therapeutic neural mechanisms of mindfulness meditation in adults with autism using fMRI and EEG imaging techniques.



Peaches Ulrich

PhD, Molecular and cellular biology

Peaches is a 2020 graduate with a PhD in molecular and cellular biology. Her doctoral studies were focused on characterizing T-Cell receptors in the context of Human Papillomavirus associated with head and neck cancer. Since graduation she began working as a senior scientist at PathogenDx developing platforms to detect bacterial and fungal organisms as well as viruses. Although she dedicates most of her time to her work she also enjoys drumming, photography and creative writing.



Nathan Smith

PhD, Animal behavior

Nate's dissertation combines techniques from the fields of animal behavior, nutritional physiology, and ecology. His research focuses on the role of the relative concentration of macronutrients in how fungus-farming leafcutter ants choose what food items to collect and provide to their fungus gardens. His research utilizes the local species *Acromyrmex versicolor*, which allows him to perform experiments both in the lab and the field.



Cindy Vargas

PhD Environmental life sciences

Cindy Vargas, a first-generation college student, completed her undergraduate degree in Conservation Biology and Ecology, and is now pursuing a PhD in environmental life sciences at Arizona State University. Her doctoral research will focus on studying small-scale fisheries governance and bycatch innovation along the Pacific and Gulf of California coasts of Baja California Sur, Mexico. Cindy has also been actively involved in biology education research investigating undergraduate research experiences and mental health in online education.



Emily Webb

PhD Biology

Emily Webb is a biology PhD candidate in Kevin McGraw's lab studying pigment and nutritional physiology in birds. In addition to her dissertation research, she collaborates with the Brownell lab on biology education research. While at ASU, she has also been heavily involved in the SOLS community particularly through participation and leadership on the student executive board as well as the prison biology education program. As a teaching assistant, she has co-developed online course materials and redesigned labs for vertebrate zoology, which resulted in two teaching awards through SOLS and The College.



Teaching excellence and innovation awards

This award recognizes outstanding teaching efforts that contribute to the School of Life Sciences' educational mission, particularly in regards to innovations in technology or course delivery that are likely to improve undergraduate learning and success.



Katherine MacCord, PhD

Faculty teaching award

Katherine received their PhD in history and philosophy of science in 2017 from Arizona State University. In addition to working as an instructor in the School of Life Sciences, Katherine co-leads the McDonnell Initiative at the [Marine Biological Laboratory](#) in Woods Hole, MA, with Jane Maienschein. The driving theme of their research is excavating the assumptions engrained within scientific practice and explanations, and turning them into tools to transform and accelerate scientific research. Katherine currently focuses on the history and philosophy of regeneration, the germline, cellular identity and genome editing. They've collaborated with scientists around the world, written and edited for the [Embryo Project Encyclopedia](#), run the [MBL History Project](#), and worked as a developing editor for Harvard University Press on Lucie Laplane's book, [Cancer Stem Cells: Philosophy and Therapies](#). Katherine's philosophy of teaching is simple: get students to think differently.



Richard Clarke

Teaching assistant award

Richard Clarke is part of Dr. Holechek's interdisciplinary group and is currently pursuing a master of science in biology. For the last three years he has been working as a Lead Instructional Aide for BIO100: The Living World and as a grad TA for BIO340: General Genetics. During the Fall 2020 semester, together with Dr. Holechek and his colleague Daniel Woodley he helped plan, develop and execute in person Campus Learning Sessions which gave BIO 340 students the opportunity to experience real world genetics concepts, laboratory practices and analytical techniques. A similar experience will be brought for online students as a Summer Research Immersion pilot program this May. He has future plans to continue contributing to the iSTEM SOLUR Prep program in the fall semester.

ASU School of
Life Sciences
Arizona State University

sols.asu.edu



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