

Thomas Jefferson University

Speed Networking Event

Jefferson College of Life Sciences

Hosted by the Graduate Student Association, Jefferson Postdoctoral Association, Business and Biotechnology Group, the JCLS Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, and the Jefferson Center for Career Success

April 11, 2023

Academics – Core Facilities

Amir Yarmahmoodi, MS

Flow Cytometry Core Manager

Temple University Health System

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/amir-yarmahmoodi-b151096a/>



Amir Yarmahmoodi received his MS in Biopharmaceutical Process Engineering from Thomas Jefferson University. After being the SKCC Flow Cytometry Core Coordinator, he is now the Core Manager of the Flow Cytometry Core in Temple University. He has extensive experience in Flow Cytometry techniques and imaging instrumentation, providing hands on training and support for health systems and partners.

Education:

Bachelors of Science in Biochemistry from Temple University

Master of Science in Biopharmaceutical Process Engineering from Jefferson University

Work Experience:

- Research Assistant (Flow Cytometry Core Coordinator)Research Assistant (Flow Cytometry Core Coordinator) at Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center – Jefferson Health · Full-time
- Flow Cytometry Core ManagerFlow Cytometry Core Manager at Temple Health – Temple University Health System · Full-time

Academics – Non-Faculty

Chris McNair, PhD

Director of Cancer Informatics & Associate Director for Data Science

Thomas Jefferson University – Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center (SKCC)

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/christophermcnair18/>



I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of Medical Oncology, and currently serve as both the Director of Cancer Informatics and the Enterprise Associate Director for Data Science at the Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center at Thomas Jefferson University. My early research was performed in the lab of Dr. Karen Knudsen and was focused on the identification of the molecular alterations underlying prostate cancer development and progression. Specifically, my studies utilized genome-wide approaches to elucidate the biological implications of the interplay between components of the cell cycle and androgen receptor signaling axis, with an emphasis on downstream clinical repercussions. I continue to provide computational biology support to the research ongoing at the SKCC through collaboration. In my role as the Associate Director for Data Science, I provide informatics leadership and oversee the maintenance and development of technologies and applications for use by the SKCC research population. These include data capture software, bio-specimen collection tools, clinical research datamart and associated applications, and genomic research data portal, which acts as a source of aggregate genomic data for the institution. I also serve as the co-director for the development of the SKCC's precision medicine program.

Donna Brennan-Crispi, PhD

Associate Director of Basic Research

University of Pennsylvania – Department of Dermatology and Cutaneous Biology

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After receiving her BS in Biology from Bucknell University, Donna began working at Thomas Jefferson University in the Department of Dermatology and Cutaneous Biology where she also earned her MS in Biomedical Chemistry. In 2009 she began the PhD Program in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Jefferson and completed her thesis work in both Biochemistry and Dermatology. Donna was an active member of the Graduate Student Association (GSA) Board and served as GSA President and a student liaison on several university committees. In 2015 Donna earned her PhD and began a postdoctoral fellowship at the University Pennsylvania. In 2021, switched trajectories and is now the Associate Director of Basic Research in the Department of Dermatology at UPenn where she manages research

operations and training programs and supports long-term strategic planning.

Academics – Principal Investigator

Hwyda Arafat, PhD

Professor of Medicine & Director of Pathophysiology and Clinical Medicine

Drexel University – College of Medicine

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/hwyda-arafat-98a45320/>



Dr. Arafat completed her residency in Internal Medicine and a fellowship in Clinical Pathology at Ain Shams University Hospitals in Cairo, Egypt. She received a master's degree in Histopathology and Biochemistry and her PhD in Cell Biology and Immunology from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. Dr. Arafat completed her postdoctoral training, first at Temple University, then at the University of Pennsylvania. She was recruited to the faculty at the Thomas Jefferson's Sydney Kimmel Medical College in Philadelphia and had successful teaching and research careers in the areas of pancreatic cancer and diabetes mellitus. Dr. Arafat joined the faculty at the University of New England, College of Osteopathic Medicine as a Clinical Professor, and obtained a master's degree in Medical Education Leadership. In addition to teaching Pathophysiology and Clinical Skills, Dr. Arafat led the efforts to integrate equity, diversity and inclusion in the medical school curriculum through her role as the Chair of Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee. Recently, Dr. Arafat joined the faculty at Drexel University, College of Medicine as a Professor of Medicine and the Pathophysiology and Clinical Medicine Thread Director.

Academics – Teaching/Undergraduate

Hannah Schapiro, PhD

Teaching Assistant Professor

Thomas Jefferson University – East Falls Campus



Hi! My name is Hannah Schapiro. Up until May of 2022, I was a graduate student at Thomas Jefferson University. While I enjoy being at the bench, I was looking for a more pedagogical focus after graduating. After defending my thesis this past spring, I was hired as a teaching assistant professor on the East Falls undergraduate campus. Here, I teach microbiology lecture and lab; this combination provides me with a good balance between classroom time and facilitating student experiments in the lab. In addition, I co-teach a special topics course for upper-level biology students on evolution. My position specifically focuses on teaching and pedagogy rather than research.

Biotechnology

Heather D. Malicki, PhD

Executive Director - Analytical Development and Testing Technologies

WuXi AppTec

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Heather D. Malicki, PhD is an Executive Director in Analytical Development and Testing Technologies. She is a Thomas Jefferson Alumni and is an expert in virology, viral vaccines, and developing new assays for cell and gene therapies.

Ileine Sanchez, PhD

Preclinical Scientific Lead

Integral Molecular

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Ileine Sanchez is the Preclinical Scientific Lead at Integral Molecular where she helps advance internal R&D programs from proof of concept to licensing. Having worked in academic settings leading up to graduate school, she subsequently leveraged her Ph.D. in Genetics, Genomics, and Cancer Biology in diverse positions as a scientific advisor at a life science investment bank and a senior associate in biotech practice at an organization consulting firm. While originally from Puerto Rico, Ileine spent her formative years in Germany and Japan, moving to the US for the first time for college. A self-proclaimed nerd, Ileine loves anything sci-fi and even named her dog Data.

Clinical Trials

Desmond Ryan, MS

Director, Medical Writing, Infectious Disease and Vaccines

Merck

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Desmond Ryan holds a MS in Pharmacology from Jefferson Graduate School of Biomedical Science. He has 30 years of experience in the pharmaceutical/vaccine/medical device fields, with 26 years of experience authoring and/or leading development of regulatory documents/filings in late-stage clinical development (primarily infectious diseases/vaccines). He has been a leader and manager in the Merck Medical Writing department since its inception and represents Medical Writing at a program level on multiple programs and cross-functional teams.

Consulting

Curtis Kugel, PhD

Manager (Insights and Planning - Oncology)

ZS-Strategy

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/curtis-kugel-95472758/>



PhD Genetics, Genomics & Cancer Biology. Currently working in commercial strategy for life sciences consulting company (ZS Associates). Specifically helping Cell & Gene Therapy clients prepare for and execute new drug launches.

Entrepreneurship

Veenu Aishwarya

CEO & Co-Founder

AUM LifeTech & AUM BioTech

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/veenuaishwarya/>



At AUM LifeTech, Veenu Aishwarya oversees the development of RNA-targeting therapies for cancer immunotherapy and diseases of the central nervous system using AUM LifeTech's proprietary next-generation RNA Silencing antisense oligonucleotide technology. He has over 16 years of experience in the discovery, optimization, and development of nucleic acids therapeutics. Mr. Aishwarya has invented several new medical applications of their RNA targeting technology and has multiple patents applications for research and therapeutic use. He has also secured Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) NIH grants, as a principal investigator, from The National Cancer Institute (NCI) and The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) to advance their pre-clinical programs. At AUM BioTech, he is leading the development and commercialization of next-generation self-delivering RNA silencing products using *AUMsilence* technology. *AUMsilence*-based RNA silencing products are globally being used (in over 32 countries) by biomedical scientists and researchers (both from academia and pharma/biotech companies) working on basic, transitional, and pre-clinical research.

Government

Elaine Z. Francis, PhD

President/Consultant

Sandcastle Toxicology Associates

Former Acting Deputy National Program Director for the Chemical Safety & Sustainability Research Program at USEPA



Dr. Elaine Francis is an adjunct professor at Thomas Jefferson University. She is also President of Sandcastle Toxicology Associates, a consulting company she started upon her retirement from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, where she worked for over 31 years. In her last position she served as the National Program Director for the Pesticides and Toxics Research Program. Elaine coordinated the development and implementation of multi-million-dollar research programs, working with scientists from USEPA, other federal agencies, governments of other countries, academia, and the regulated community. She spent 1991 as a legislative fellow to then-Senator Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut, working on pesticides, lead, and children's issues. Elaine received her B.S. in Biology from The American University. She received her doctorate in Anatomy from TJU from which she received the Distinguished Alumni Award and is a Past-President of their College of Life Sciences Alumni Board. She is a Past-President of the Teratology Society/Society for Birth Defects Research and Prevention. Elaine has served on numerous scientific advisory boards.

Non-Profits

Dorian Pustina, PhD

Director, Experimental NeuroImaging

CHDI Foundation, Cure Huntington's Disease Initiative

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/dpustina/>



Dorian Pustina completed his undergraduate studies in Psychology at the University of Padua in Italy. He completed his PhD in Cognitive Neuroscience at the University of Bochum, Germany, where he studied mechanisms of human memory formation. Dorian continued his postdoctoral career in the United States, first at Thomas Jefferson University and then at the University of Pennsylvania, studying epilepsy, tumor, and stroke, and producing several software tools. He then moved to CHDI Foundation (Princeton), a privately-funded, nonprofit biomedical research organization devoted to Huntington's disease (HD). In

his role as science director for neuroimaging at CHDI, Dorian manages a portfolio of studies and efforts that span from data federation to disease progression modelling as well as ongoing clinical and preclinical studies.

Patent Law/Technology Transfer

Heather M. Rose, JD, PhD

Vice President of Technology Licensing & Startups

Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals Innovation Center



Heather Rose PhD, JD joined the Innovation Pillar as the Director of Technology Licensing in February 2017. Prior to joining the Innovation Pillar at Jefferson, Dr. Rose worked for five years in the Drexel University Office of Technology Commercialization as a Licensing Manager focused on commercializing inventions in the life science disciplines. In addition to a JD with a concentration in intellectual property law obtained at the Kline School of Law, Dr. Rose also holds a PhD in Cellular and Molecular Biology from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine.

At Penn, Heather performed and presented research about how retroviruses choose genomic locations for insertion of the viral DNA into the host chromosome with an overarching focus on safety and predictability in delivering therapeutic gene doses for gene therapy applications. While in law school Heather interned for two consecutive terms at the Corporate Intellectual Property Department of GlaxoSmithKline. Heather is a member of the PA, NJ, and United States Patent Bars.

Pharmaceutical

Nicolette Heinsinger, PhD

Senior Scientist

Merck

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Nicolette defended her PhD in Neuroscience at Jefferson University in 2021. Her thesis in the Lepore lab focused on the role of excitatory synaptic dysfunction on neuropathic pain following spinal cord injury. Outside of lab, she was involved in the Graduate Student Association (GSA), science communication and outreach events. Currently, Nicolette is a Senior Scientist at Merck in the Discovery Neuroscience group. In this role, she builds and characterizes in vitro and in vivo models of neurodegenerative disease to use for early target identification/validation and lead candidate optimization studies.

Nikki Deangelis, MS, PhD

Senior Director Research Project Leader, Center of Excellence

GlaxoSmithKline (GSK)

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/nikki-deangelis-71b60a4>



Dr. Nikki DeAngelis is a Research Project Leader in the Project Leader Center of Excellence at GlaxoSmithKline (GSK). In this role, Nikki is responsible for leading teams working to deliver novel therapies for patients in need. Her current disease areas of focus are oncology and immunology indications. In her previous role as Compound Development Team Leader in the Hematologic Malignancy Disease Area Stronghold for Oncology Research and Development at Janssen (a Pharmaceutical Company of Johnson and Johnson) Nikki was responsible for leading teams working to deliver novel oncology therapies for cancer patients. Nikki earned her bachelor's degree in Biology from Penn State University, after which she completed a post-baccalaureate at the National Institute of Health (NIH) in Bethesda. Following her work at the NIH, Nikki earned her master's degree in Bioscience Technology at Thomas Jefferson University. She joined Janssen's Oncology Discovery team in 2010. Concurrently, Nikki completed her PhD in Cell and Molecular Biology at the University of Sciences in Philadelphia where her research focused on the role of immune checkpoint inhibitors on adaptive immune cells. She is passionate about supporting women in leadership and established the Oncology Women's Mentoring Circles at Janssen. Nikki is a leader in the Janssen Oncology Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council and spearheads the High School Outreach program and serves as one of the leaders of the Summer Internship program. Nikki is also the co-leader of the Sense of Belonging program for Janssen's Our Race to Health Equity commitment, which aspires to help eradicate racial and social injustice as a public health threat by eliminating health inequities for people of color.

Program Manager

Elise Lewis, PhD

Principal Director of Toxicology

Charles River Laboratories

<https://www.criver.com/about-us/about-us-overview/our-employees/employees/elise-m-lewis-phd>



Dr. Lewis is a native of Alabama, and she received both her Bachelor and Doctorate degrees from The University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. As an undergraduate, she was patterning herself to be a medical professional, particularly an Obstetrician. However, she diverged from this path and literally embarked upon a road that is less traveled, the field of toxicology. While in graduate school she was recipient of a Future Faculty Fellowship for minority students, and through her training in the field of toxicology, Dr. Lewis found a way to marry her interests in the medical field with a passion to prevent birth defects from intentional or unintentional exposure to drug products or chemicals. Simply put, she spends much of her time researching human health hazards that could cause embryo-fetal death, birth defects, growth retardation, or functional deficits. Today, Dr. Lewis is employed by Charles River Laboratories, Inc., a contract research organization that focuses on improving human and animal health by advancing the search for drugs from discovery through market approval. Dr. Lewis joined Charles River Laboratories, Inc. in 2001 as a Study Director in the area of Reproductive, Developmental, and Juvenile Toxicology. In this role, she had the opportunity to oversee the technical conduct of nonclinical laboratory studies that are critical to environmental safety and the health care industry and are necessary prior to consideration of new compounds for regulatory approval as drug products, medical devices, vaccines, pesticides, and other products to which humans might be exposed.

Lebaron Agostini, PhD

Manager of Precision Oncology Programs

Caris Life Sciences

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Lebaron C. Agostini, Ph.D. is currently the Manager – Precision Oncology Programs at Caris Life Sciences, a precision medicine, and molecular profiling company. His role involves building relationships and providing strategic guidance to cancer centers to optimize their precision oncology programs by leveraging Caris Life Sciences molecular profiling technologies. He also serves as an oncology SME within his core team and manages projects in a matrix environment to improve the efficiency of precision oncology workflows. Before joining Caris Life Sciences, Dr. Agostini was a Life Science Analyst for Axiom Healthcare Strategies, a boutique biopharma life sciences strategy consulting firm. His consulting experience includes market research, product strategy, clinical development strategy, and commercial launch strategy for oncology therapeutics. Dr. Agostini received his Ph.D. in Genetics, Genomics, and Cancer Biology from Thomas Jefferson University. His research experiences are focused on DNA damage repair mechanisms, synthetic lethality, replication stress, and developing synergistic drug combinations in gastrointestinal tumor models (e.g., colon, pancreatic, gastric, etc.) He has publications in several AACR journals, including Cancer Research and Molecular Cancer Research.

Regulatory Affairs

Xufan Tian, PhD

Associate Principal Scientist, Regulatory Affairs

Merck

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Xufan has been in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industry for ~10 years. Trained as a research scientist, she started her career in Pharma as a post-doctoral fellow at Merck in the Neuroscience early discovery department. After post-doctoral training, Xufan transitioned to Amgen Neuroscience in Boston. In late 2019, she made the decision to step away from bench research and transitioned to post-marketing CMC (Chemistry, Manufacturing and Control) work. For the past 3 years, she is the vaccine CMC product lead for Merck HPV vaccines focusing on the China market. She leads the development of the regulatory strategy and is accountable for the planning, prioritization, and execution of the entire regulatory submission portfolio. Xufan inspires to gain deep understanding of the E2E drug development and lifecycle management process, with clarity on the interphase and interplay driving enterprise decision making.

Science Communication

Dolly Al Koborssy, PhD

Medical Writer

Oxford PharmaGenesis

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Dolly Al Koborssy, Ph.D., is a medical writer at Oxford PharmaGenesis. She did her Master's in Physiology at the University of Claude Bernard in Lyon - France and received her Ph.D. in Neuroscience at Florida State University. She moved from Florida to Philadelphia after accepting a postdoctoral position at Monell Chemical Senses Center. Dolly has recently pivoted from bench work and is now dedicated to writing manuscripts, abstracts, posters/oral presentations on the latest clinical trials in oncology and requiring an understanding of regulatory documents. Dolly is committed to increasing the participation of underrepresented groups in STEM through mentorship and teaching either on the bench or outside the lab. Dolly is an advocate for empathy and mental health support. She received training on how to support peers from different backgrounds when they are in distress or crisis, and she is constantly learning how to address the issues of discrimination in STEM.

Science Policy

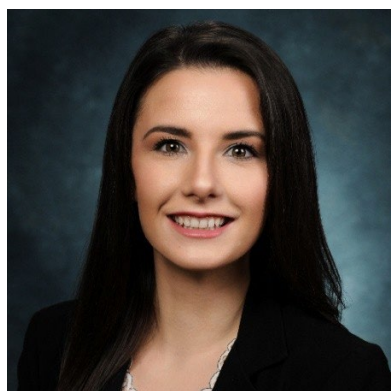
Emanuela (Dylgjeri) Kruser, PhD

Oncology Scientific Communications Fellow

Janssen Pharmaceuticals

Former Science Policy Advocate at AACR

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/emanuela-dylgjeri-kruser/>



Emanuela Kruser is currently the Oncology Scientific Communications PhD Fellow in US Medical Affairs at Janssen Pharmaceuticals supporting the solid tumor portfolio (prostate, lung and bladder cancers). During her time in industry, Emanuela has supported various teams including medical, MSL, commercial, real-world value and evidence (RWV&E), clinical trial operations, Continued Medical Education (CME), congress activities, and patient experience research consortium (PERC) in both strategy and execution. Emanuela received her Doctorate degree in Biochemistry and Molecular Pharmacology from

Thomas Jefferson University. During her PhD, Emanuela worked in the laboratory of Dr. Karen Knudsen on various translational prostate cancer projects focusing on identifying novel mechanisms of aggressive disease and developing actionable therapeutic targeting strategies to be explored in clinical trials. Her work also resulted in numerous high impact publications, presentations in national and international congresses, and a clinical trial. Moreover, Emanuela has been an avid advocate for cancer research and patient education at the local and national level.

Jefferson Center for Career Success

<https://www.jefferson.edu/life-at-jefferson/student-resources-services/academics-career-success/career-success-center.html>

Chris from the Center for Career Success is at the Speed Networking event to help you practice your Elevator Pitch and check your CV/resume on the spot!

Chris Miciek, MA

Director, Jefferson Center for Career Success

Thomas Jefferson University

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/chrismiciek/>



In 2002 Chris began building the first 100% online career center in the US, pioneering online technology and social media to deliver career development advising and instruction. Since then he's held roles at three Philadelphia universities providing leadership in co-operative education, admissions for graduate STEM programs, and now leading Jefferson University's Center City based Center for Career Success serving students and alumni for all Jefferson health profession programs through faculty partnerships and career development content embedded in curricula.

Since that start in 2002 he's presented at state and regional Associations of Colleges & Employers as well as NACE on online career services and emerging technology, including creating a keynote panel at MWACE 2007 and leading a NACE President's Tech Summit at the 2009 annual conference. More recently he's co-authored a contribution to the NACE Case Study Guide on navigating mergers, authored another case study on creating online career centers, created and delivered numerous blogs, podcasts, and webinars on AI and Work for NACE and EACE. In 2022 he presented two iterations of Why Work at NACE22 and EACE22 as explorations of how we think and talk about work, and what that means for our conversations around automation and the future of work. Chris continues to stare at the horizon.