

Thomas Jefferson University

Speed Networking Event

Jefferson College of Life Sciences

**Hosted by the Graduate Student Association (GSA), Jefferson
Postdoctoral Association (JPA), Business and Biotechnology Group
(BizBio), and the JCLS Office of Postdoctoral Affairs**

May 1, 2024

Non-Profits

Anil Noronha Antony, PhD

Assistant Director, Corporate Alliances

American Association for Cancer Research (AACR)

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Anil Noronha Antony currently works as the Assistant Director for Corporate Alliances at the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR). In his role, he focuses on developing partnerships with industry partners to secure funding for various AACR initiatives. Previously, he worked as a Research Fellow at Thomas Jefferson University, where he assisted with the technical management of research and development. He has a Master's and Ph.D. in Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine from Thomas Jefferson University, where he also worked as a postdoctoral research fellow. Furthermore, he has experience as an

Expert/Scholar at Context Travel, where he developed and presented academic lectures for a general audience. He has published several papers in peer-reviewed journals and has extensive experience in scientific research. Anil has a diverse range of skills, including liaising and building relationships, coaching, training, mentoring, public speaking and communication, and project management.

Industry—Pharma

Annabel (Torres) Johnson, PhD

Senior Scientist

The Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson

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Annabel Johnson Ph.D. is a senior scientist at Johnson & Johnson Innovative Medicine, in the department of *Cell Line Development*. She generates high producing cell lines expressing large molecules used in biotherapeutics. Her group is also heavily involved in many research projects focused on host cell engineering to create a “cell factory” that will shorten production timelines while maintaining high product quality. Annabel is also a firm believer in the power of education to transform lives and serves as an adjunct professor for Rowan College at Burlington County, teaching night laboratory classes in biology and microbiology. She earned her Ph.D. at Thomas Jefferson

University in cell and developmental biology, then went on to do a postdoctoral fellowship at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia where she did research on T-cell activation. Her research has been published in *Nature Genetics*, *Journal of Biological Chemistry* and *Autophagy*. In her free time, she volunteers at the Burlington County Animal Shelter, caring and advocating for finding families for homeless animals.

Personalized Medicine

Corey Poveda-Rogers, PhD

Genomics Development Specialist

Penn Medicine, University of Pennsylvania Health System

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Corey Poveda-Rogers received his Bachelor of Science in Biology from La Salle University before his graduate work at Thomas Jefferson University. At Jefferson, he worked with Dr. Emad Alnemri to identify novel mechanisms of programmed cell death, which earned him his PhD in Biochemistry and Molecular Pharmacology. Following Jefferson, he worked at CellOxess, a biotech company specializing in reproductive medicine, where he helped to develop a novel assay to detect male factor infertility. He then transitioned into his current position as a Genomic Development Specialist at Penn Medicine where he works to develop and validate new clinical assays for the Division of Precision and Computational Diagnostics.

Academic—Non-Faculty

Eileen Collyer, PhD

Research Associate, Department of Neuroscience

Thomas Jefferson University

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Eileen received her PhD in Physiology from the P. Catholic University of Chile working on axonal collateral sprouting after spinal cord injury. She moved to the US to pursue a postdoc at UCSD where she combined stem cell grafting with rehabilitative paradigms after spinal cord injury. After that, Eileen moved to Philadelphia to continue her postdoctoral training at Drexel University working on autonomic dysreflexia after spinal cord injury. She is currently working as a Research Associate at Thomas Jefferson University focusing on the regional differences of astrocytic response to stroke. In her spare time, she enjoys playing with her five-year-old daughter and trying to achieve the always elusive life-work balance.

Science Outreach


Elena Kozina, PhD

Society for Neuroscience Policy Ambassador

Research Assistant Professor, Department of Neuroscience

Thomas Jefferson University

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Throughout my scientific career, I have dedicated myself to exploring neuro-immune interactions and the cell biology of Parkinson's disease. My journey began during my graduate studies in Moscow, where I investigated the striatal and extra-striatal compensatory mechanisms that occur during the early (prodromal) stages of the disease. Upon completing my PhD, I joined the lab of Dr. Richard Smeyne, initially at St. Jude Children's Hospital in Memphis, TN, and later at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, PA. It was during this time that I embarked on a new research direction within the lab, focusing on neuro-immune modulation of the CNS effects in both sporadic and familial Parkinson's disease. Following my postdoctoral fellowship, I was honored to accept a faculty position at the Department of Neuroscience, where my research has continued to evolve. Currently, I am actively working on my transition to independent funding and the establishment of my own lab. My work centers on unraveling the intricate interplay between viral and bacterial infections, innate immunity, and the development of Parkinson's disease. By exploring these multifaceted factors, I aim to contribute to our understanding of the disease's pathogenesis and identify potential therapeutic targets outside the CNS.

Government

Gaurav Shrivastava, PhD

Research Scientist

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

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Dr. Gaurav Shrivastava is a distinguished Virology Scientist at the National Institutes of Health known for his expertise in molecular virology and immunology, particularly focusing on RNA viruses. With a fervent passion for unraveling virus-host interactions, his research illuminates the role of mosquito salivary gland extract and proteins in modulating host immunity during flavivirus infections. Through his research, he sheds light on the intricate mechanisms shaping vector-virus-host complex interactions, offering invaluable insights for therapeutic interventions. Dr. Shrivastava has been acknowledged as an outstanding performer for his exceptional efforts that go significantly beyond the regular duty requirements, directly contributing to fulfilling the NIH mission, resulting in him being honored with both the NIH Director Award and the NIH Merit Award.

Industry

Jeffrey Charlap, MS

Senior Mammalian Toxicologist

FMC Corporation

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Experienced toxicologist specializing in developmental and reproductive toxicology. Completed Master of Science degree from Thomas Jefferson University in the Department of Anatomy, Pathology, and Cell Biology. Worked in pharmaceutical, chemical, and contract research organizations. Experience in investigative toxicology, new animal models, study directing/monitoring, regulatory sciences, and chemical safety assessment. Currently a senior mammalian toxicologist in agrochemical supporting global registration and defense of active ingredients. Served as President of Middle Atlantic Reproduction and Teratology Association (MARTA). Member of the Society of Toxicology, and the Society for Birth Defects Research and Prevention. Current member of the Jefferson College of Life Sciences Alumni Board.

Industry—Contract Research Organization (CRO)

Lindsey Mayes-Hopfinger, PhD

Director of Immunology & Inflammation

Melior Discovery

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Lindsey Mayes-Hopfinger is the Director of Immunology & Inflammation at Melior Discovery, an *in-vivo* pharmacology contract research organization in Exton, Pennsylvania. At Melior, Lindsey interacts with clients from pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies to help develop studies aiming to test candidate drugs in a variety of animal models. She also serves as the Project Manager on inflammatory disease-based preclinical studies and is the Chair of Melior’s IACUC.

Lindsey completed her thesis work in Emad Alnemri’s lab and graduated from Thomas Jefferson University with a Ph.D. in Biochemistry and Molecular Pharmacology in 2021. In her free time, she enjoys cooking and spending quality time with friends and family.

Consulting

Maia Green, MS, PhD

Director, Toxicology

Hurley Consulting Associates, Ltd

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Maia L. Green, PhD, is a Director of Toxicology at Hurley Consulting Associates, Ltd. in Summit, NJ where she provides strategic insight through scientific and regulatory review of nonclinical programs. Previously (2018-2021), she was an Advanced Toxicologist at ExxonMobil (EM) Biomedical Sciences Inc., in Annandale, NJ where she supported EM businesses to help them make informed decisions related to human health and the environment. Previously (2009-2018), she was a Study Director at Merck and Co. Inc., in Developmental and Reproductive Toxicology (DART) safety assessment and was the Investigational DART Lead where she provided continued pipeline support to de-risk early-stage drugs for possible teratogenicity, and assisted to develop and refine the use of alternative developmental and

reproductive toxicity animal models for research. She earned her BS degree in Genetic Engineering and Chemistry from Cedar Crest College, Allentown, PA in 2002, an MS in Developmental Biology and Teratology from Thomas Jefferson University, Philadelphia, PA in 2005 and a PhD in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from the University of Louisville, Louisville, KY in 2009. At the University of Louisville, she worked in the Birth Defects Center in the Department of Molecular, Cellular and Craniofacial Biology, where she received a National Institute of Environmental Health Science Fellowship training grant, to complete research focused on fetal alcohol syndrome and the effects of mitochondrial dysfunction on the developing embryo. She served as President of the Middle Atlantic Reproductive and Teratology Association, was Secretary of the NJ chapter for the Black Employee Success Team for ExxonMobil, is a member of the Society for Birth Defects Research and Prevention, Health & Environmental Sciences Institute (ILSE/HESI-DART), and used to participate on The Toxicology Forum, and European Center for Ecotoxicology and Toxicology of Chemicals (ECETOC) committees and was designated as an expert representative on endocrine disruption at the European Union Commission for the European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC). She was an Academic Advisor for an undergraduate and graduate student at George Mason University and Thomas Jefferson University, respectively. She currently serves on the Thomas Jefferson University Life Sciences Alumni Board. She was on the Scientific Advisory Board for The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Kutztown University, Kutztown, PA and was inducted into the Alumnae Hall of Fame at Cedar Crest College, Allentown, PA. She volunteers for organizations such as Cay Galgon Life House, which supports homeless pregnant women and new mothers. She was an ambassador for Merck for Mothers. She is published in a number of peer reviewed scientific journals, a book chapter and was interviewed by Fox29 Philadelphia and PBS news.

Industry—Pharma

Megha Verma, PhD

Senior Scientist

Ocugen

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Dr. Megha Verma obtained her Ph.D. in the field of Neuroscience and spent 5+ years working in the field of neuroscience before making her transition into biopharmaceuticals. She started her industry experience at Janssen working on CAR-T therapy release assay and then moved into the Active Pharmaceutical team. She has over six years of hands-on experience in the industry, she excels in driving success across upstream process development and CMC project management. Her expertise spans from authoring IND/BLA submissions to orchestrating late-stage process characterization studies. Specializing in cell and gene therapy, vaccines, fusion proteins, and regenerative medicine, Dr. Verma has optimized manufacturing processes and ensured regulatory compliance with finesse. Her strategic acumen shines in devising comparability strategies and nurturing external CMO/CRO relationships. Proficient in analytical assay development, animal studies, and bioanalytical methods, Dr. Verma is poised to elevate her team's performance.

Academic—Undergraduate Faculty

Nathan Fried, PhD

Associate Teaching Professor

Rutgers Camden

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



Associate Teaching Professor at Rutgers University Camden, integrates research and teaching to guide undergraduates aspiring for PhDs in biomedical sciences. Leading a *Drosophila* lab, he explores the correlation between sleep and pain, extending their findings to rodents through collaborations throughout the Philadelphia area. As Assistant Director for Undergraduate Research and the NIH MARC-U-STAR program, he aims to incorporate experiential learning into the Biology curriculum, develop specialized courses, and strives to foster the next scientist generation and enhance diversity in the biomedical sciences. As a scientist from a low socioeconomic background, he is passionate about bringing science and research to the public and has developed courses and given lectures in science communication.

Industry—Pharma

Noel Ngoubilly, MS

Scientific Director

WuXi Advanced Therapies

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Highly motivated Biopharma professional with laboratory management and assay development experience; Hard-working, excellent team player and easy to get along with, possessing excellent oral and written communication and organizational skills with the ability to work with flexibility, agility and perseverance to improve business results within and beyond area of responsibility. He received his MS degree from Thomas Jefferson University.

Science Communication—Marketing

Pooja Bhavsar, PhD

Senior Vice-President, Strategy

BGB Group

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Pooja is currently a Senior Vice President of Brand Strategy at BGB Group with experience across Promotional Strategy, Medical Affairs, and Advertising and is always thinking about the intersection of these functions. In her role, she is responsible for overseeing the marketing strategy involved in launching brands and building multi-indication brands. She has successfully managed workstreams across both US and global accounts, understanding the nuances that lead to market success. Her expertise includes strategic launch planning, competitor analyses, tactical ideation, and messaging development, with a proven track record of building client partnerships. Her work spans across oncology, rare diseases, COPD, diabetes, rheumatology, and, more recently, COVID-19, but her passion for working in cancer stems back to her undergraduate and graduate research.

Prior to entering her career in pharmaceutical communications strategy, Pooja conducted scientific research at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Her scientific research focused on identifying how the Jak-Stat signaling pathway contributes to early prostate cancer metastasis. What intrigued her most was the ability to test hypotheses and produce raw results, but she found her passion in marrying the science and art of sharing her findings.

Pooja received her PhD in Biochemistry from Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Her passion for finding new, creative, and powerful ways to use data to tell compelling stories stems from her graduate thesis and continues to drive her daily work.

In her downtime, she enjoys cooking, Pilates, expanding her wine collection and chasing around her toddler. Pooja and her husband recently moved to New Jersey to spend more time with their family.

Science Communication—Writing/Editing

Rachel Hodge, PhD

Assistant Editor, Clinical Cancer Research

American Association for Cancer Research (AACR)

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Rachel Hodge is an Assistant Editor for the scientific journal Clinical Cancer Research at the American Association for Cancer Research. After receiving her PhD in Genetics, Genomics, and Cancer Biology from Thomas Jefferson University, she transitioned from academia to publishing where she now handles scientific manuscript submissions throughout each step of the publication process. As an Assistant Editor, Rachel is responsible for managing the peer-review process, developing and editing content, communicating with authors, editors, and reviewers regarding the Clinical Cancer Research journal, and promoting the journal through outreach and networking efforts.

Management

Robyn Sussman, PhD

Senior Manager of Diagnostic Development

Haystack Oncology/Quest Diagnostics

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Dr. Robyn Sussman received a PhD in Cell and Developmental Biology from Thomas Jefferson University in 2013, where she studied how epigenetic control of transcription regulates cell-fate decision making in embryonic stem cells under Steve McMahon. She went on to complete a postdoctoral fellowship at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia focused on using genomics to discover new immunotherapy targets for pediatric cancer and the pre-clinical development of immunotherapies born out of that pipeline. She then spent 5 years at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania overseeing the development of clinical genetic and genomic diagnostic assays. She joined a diagnostic startup developing a minimal residual disease test called Haystack Oncology in early 2022. Haystack was acquired by Quest Diagnostics, where she is currently the Senior Manager of Product Research and Development for the clinical cancer franchise.

Entrepreneurship

Veenu Aishwarya, M. Tech

CEO & Co-Founder

AUM BioTech & AUM LifeTech

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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.

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 informational interviewing techniques and check your CV/resume on the spot!

Chris Miciek, MA

Director, Jefferson Center for Career Success

Thomas Jefferson University

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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.