**2022 Science**

**CAREER SYMPOSIUM**

FOR POSTDOCS, GRADUATE STUDENTS, AND ALUMNI

**Wednesday, December 7, 2022**

**3:30 – 5PM | ZOOM**



**FEATURING ZOOM BREAKOUT ROOM DISCUSSIONS LED BY PHD PROFESSIONALS REPRESENTING A VARIETY OF EXCITING CAREER PATHS**



Whether you are a medical or graduate student just starting advanced study in your chosen field; a postdoctoral fellow, resident, or clinical fellow embarking on even more specialized training; or a junior-level faculty member serving as a teacher, researcher, or clinician, we want to help you achieve your professional potential.

Visit oacd.pitt.edu or email oacd@pitt.edu to learn more about the academic career development programs and resources available to help guide you on your journey toward a professional life.

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**PROGRAM**

3:30 pm Zoom

INTRODUCTION

Laura Miller, PhD

Associate Director

 Office of Academic Career Development

OPENING REMARKS

Karen Carney, PhD

Product Manager

Elsevier

3:45 – 4:45 pm Zoom

BREAKOUT ROOM DISCUSSIONS

Participate in four, 15-minute virtual roundtables where you will meet and interact with PhD professionals from science-related fields who will discuss their careers across a range of employment settings, such as academia, industry, and government organizations. Review the table and bios below to plan out your individualized experience.

4:45 - 5 pm Zoom

FINAL DISCUSSION

Return to the main room where you will be invited to share insights gained from this experience. What surprised you? What reaffirmed or changed your thoughts about a future career? What steps do you plan to take that came from ideas shared today?

**SPEAKER INDEX**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| # | Topic | Speaker | Title & Company |
| 1 | Academic - Primarily Research | Jessica Jarvis, PhD | Assistant Professor,University of Pittsburgh |
| 2 | Academic -Research Scientist | Lawrence Andrews, PhD | Research Scientist, University of Pittsburgh |
| 3 | Academic - Undergraduate Education | Erin Kirschmann, PhD | Associate Professor,Immaculata College |
| 4 | Academic - Research Administration | Jessica Moon, PhD, PMP | Executive Director, Stanford University |
| 5 | Academic - Technology Translation | Michelle Zorrilla, PhD, MPH | Associate Director, University of Pittsburgh |
| 6 | Academic - Postdoc | David Gau, PhD | Postdoctoral Scholar,University of Pittsburgh |
| 7 | Industry - Research | Alex Prokopienko, PharmD, PhD | Senior Clinical Pharmacologist, Takeda Pharmaceuticals |
| 8 | Industry - Product Management | Karen Carney, PhD | Product Manager,Elsevier  |
| 9 | Industry - Medical Science Liaison | Kristine Ojala, PhD | Medical Science Liaison,Genentech |
| 10 | Public Policy | Natalie Ernecoff, PhD, MPH | Associate Policy Researcher,RAND Corporation |
| 11 | Medical Regulatory Writing | Jennifer Signore, PhD | Medical Regulatory Writer,Global Regulatory Writing & Consulting   |
| 12 | International Trainee Employment | Arundhati Gupta, MS, PhD | Postdoctoral Scholar and UPPDA’s International Chair,University of Pittsburgh |

**CAREER TABLE DISCUSSION LEADERS**

**Lawrence Andrews, PhD,** is a research scientist in the Vignali Lab at the Department of Immunology (University of Pittsburgh). He received his PhD from the University of Southampton (Southampton, UK) before transitioning to a postdoctoral research position at St. Jude Research Hospital (Memphis, TN) before arriving in Pittsburgh. Dr. Andrews’ research investigates the role of two inhibitory receptors, PD1 and LAG3, aiming to develop a clear understanding of their cellular and molecular mechanisms in synergistically modulating intratumoral T cell function. He has won numerous awards through the Society of Immunotherapy of Cancer (SITC), American Association of Immunologists (AAI), and American Association of Cancer Research (AACR), and is a Review Editor for Frontiers in Immunology and Frontiers in Oncology. Dr. Andrews has also recently navigated through the EB1 Green Card process at the University of Pittsburgh and can offer advice and support.

**Karen Carney, PhD,** is a Product Manager at Elsevier supporting ClinicalPath, an oncology-focused clinical decision support and analytics software tool. She manages a Scrum team to develop and refine features for PathBuildR, a web-based authoring and deployment platform for clinical pathways. Karen previously worked at PittSciVelo as a Senior Commercial Translation Associate where she helped researchers commercialize their digital health innovations. Prior to transitioning to industry, Karen was a Postdoctoral Associate in the Department of Neurology at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. Her postdoctoral research explored the role of ion transporters in the progression of glioblastoma multiforme. Using cell and animal models, she tested the therapeutic potential of ion transporter inhibitors to reduce cancer invasiveness and extend survival. She was also actively involved in the leadership of the University of Pittsburgh Postdoctoral Association, the not-for-profit consulting firm Fourth River Solutions, and the Pitt Professional Development Consortium. Karen earned a Bachelor of Science degree in biopsychology from Eckerd College, a Master of Science degree in behavioral and cognitive neuroscience from the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, and PhDs in molecular neuroscience from the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and the Université de Bordeaux.

**Natalie C. Ernecoff, PhD, MPH,** (she/her) is an associate policy researcher at the RAND Corporation. Her research focuses on developing, implementing, and evaluating systems-level palliative care, hospice, and home care interventions. Her work includes healthcare system informatics, electronic health record (EHR)-based interventions, systematic identification of serious illness populations, and collaborative models of palliative care delivery. She has conducted work across serious illness care, including among people living with chronic kidney disease, Alzheimer's disease and Alzheimer's disease-related dementias, cancer, and critical illness. She is experienced in qualitative and mixed methods research, implementation science, population health management, program evaluation, and clinical research. Ernecoff holds a PhD in health policy and management and an MPH. in behavioral and community health sciences.

**David Gau, PhD,** is a fifth-year postdoctoral scholar at the Department of Bioengineering. He obtained his BPhil/BS (2011) and PhD (2018) in Bioengineering at the University of Pittsburgh. David was recently awarded a NIH K99/R00 Pathway to Independence grant for his research on the role of Profilin1 in clear cell renal cell carcinoma. Dave has served as President of UPPDA for two years from 2020-2022. David's goal is to transition to a full-time faculty role with his transition grant within the next 2 years.

**Arundhati Gupta, MS, PhD,** completed her bachelor’s and master’s degrees before moving to the United States for her PhD. At the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, she completed her doctoral dissertation on the role of viral immediate early proteins in gammaherpesvirus pathogenesis. While at UAMS, she was a part of the Graduate Student’s Association and was actively involved in negotiating a pay increase and better parking access for grad students. As an International Postdoctoral Associate at the University of Pittsburgh, Aru studies the epigenetic effects of viral proteins on the cellular transcriptome during herpes simplex viral infections and continues her peer-advocacy as the Chairperson for the UPPDA International Postdoctoral Committee. She is especially passionate about advocating for greater peer-mentorship and community building among international students and scholars at Pitt. Being personally affected by the ever-changing immigration landscape in the country, Aru is also keenly interested in helping internationals navigate the immigration process with the best information available at any time. She is happy to answer any questions about being an international postdoc in the US, including applying to various labs, navigating life in a foreign city/country, and visa status changes.

**Jessica Jarvis, PhD,** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation. She is a health services researcher with clinical experience as a music therapist in pediatric acute care. The overarching goal of their program of research is to improve pediatric rehabilitation equity and efficacy for children with chronic and critical illnesses through three related lines of inquiry: (1) characterizing functional outcomes for families of critically ill children; (2) assessing equity in access to care and care experiences for families in the pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) and across their care continuum; and (3) developing and testing nonpharmacologic interventions to improve functional outcomes for children with chronic and critical illnesses. She was recently awarded a K23 career development award from the National Institutes of Health to conduct a mechanistic trial of a music listening intervention that aims to decrease stress and pain during mechanical ventilation in the PICU, and to collaborate with participants and PICU staff to inform intervention refinement and co-design a plan for equitable implementation.

**Erin Kirschmann, PhD,** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology and Counseling at Immaculata University, near Philadelphia, PA. She earned her BA in Psychology from Elizabethtown College and spent some time as a research coordinator investigating functional MRI investigations of memory function before entering graduate school. She earned her PhD in Neurobiology from the Center for Neuroscience at the University of Pittsburgh in the laboratory of Dr. Edda Thiels; part of her time was funded by a Department of Psychiatry T32 training grant. Her work utilized rodent behavior and biochemical analyses of motivated behaviors to investigate, fist, the interaction of glutamate and dopamine signaling in reward circuitry during cue-induced reward-seeking, and second, the role of unpredictable chronic mild stress in adolescent rats. Dr. Kirschmann completed three years of postdoctoral training in the Department of Psychiatry/Translational Neuroscience Program in the laboratory of Dr. Mary Torregrossa, where she investigated the impact of cannabinoid self-administration on cognition in adolescent and adult rats. Dr. Kirschmann began her teaching career as a Part-time Instructor for the undergraduate Neuroscience program at Pitt during her post-doc; she secured her full-time Assistant Professor position at Immaculata University in 2017 and was promoted to Associate Professor in 2021. With no animal work on her current campus, she is finding ways to engage students in research collaborations with other local institutions. Outside of teaching, mentoring, and conducting research with undergraduate students, she enjoys spending time with her husband and two young children – finding a family-friendly institution was a top priority during the job search process.

**Jessica Moon, PhD,** PMP, is the Executive Director of the Stanford Aging and Ethnogeriatrics Research Center (NIA P30 RCMAR) at Stanford University where she oversees faculty development, grant submissions, the seed funding program, Center evaluation, and strategic planning and development. In her prior position as a Research Development Associate at the University of Arizona, she provided scientific editing services and grant development training to faculty across the five health sciences colleges. She is a member of the National Organization for Research Development Professionals (NORDP) and is currently serving on its Board of Directors and as co-chair of the 2023 Conference Planning Committee. Dr. Moon obtained her PhD in biomedical science at the University of Vermont and is a certified project management professional.

**Kristine Ojala, PhD,** is a medical science liaison for Genentech’s Alzheimer’s Disease program. In her work, she connects with scientists and healthcare providers across the northeast to foster scientific discussions in the area of AD and neurodegeneration. Kristine started her career in neuroscience at California State University, Long Beach, where she studied psychology and journalism. This work led to a research position at a psychiatry clinic specializing in neuroimaging, which supported her transition to graduate work. She received her PhD from the Center of Neuroscience, University of Pittsburgh in 2020 after completing her research investigating mechanisms and treatment of neuromuscular and genetic diseases. Kristine leveraged her broad neuroscience training (think many labs and experiences over time!) alongside her introductory involvement in Fourth River Solutions to transition from a brief postdoc in her graduate lab to a medical science liaison position at a large pharmaceutical company. Through her current work, she continues to expand her neuroscientific breadth, understand cross-functional partnership and opportunities within an industry structure, and delve deeper into addressing critical scientific hypotheses that are uniquely explored through clinical data.

**Alex Prokopienko, PharmD, PhD,** is a proud alumnus of Pitt’s School of Pharmacy and Medicine. He is currently a Senior Clinical Pharmacologist at Takeda Pharmaceuticals. Before joining Takeda he worked as a Clinical Pharmacologist at Vertex Pharmaceuticals. Alex is passionate about clinical research and drug development. At home, he has 3 children and enjoys creating memories with them.

**Jennifer Petrie Signore, PhD,** is an associate CER writer at Global Regulatory Writing and Consulting. She holds a PhD in behavioral neuroscience from UCLA and conducted postdoctoral research at the University of Pittsburgh, Department of Psychiatry, in stress neurobiology. She transitioned out of bench science and worked in Pitt’s Office of Academic Affairs, Health Sciences, for the next seven years, where she had the pleasure of meeting with--and writing about--the work of investigators across the university as well as helping to plan and execute an annual regional science festival, several speaker series, and various publications highlighting research in the Schools of the Health Sciences. Jennifer then jumped out of academia entirely and spent the next decade as a leader in nonprofit development, which had always been a volunteer passion of hers. Two years ago, she joined the regulatory writing team at GRWC and is delighted to have come back to her roots in science. In her free time, Jennifer enjoys gaming, crafting, and finding ways to turn a road trip into a fossil hunting expedition. She lives in Squirrel Hill with her husband (a fellow neuroscientist), two teens, and two dogs, all of whom keep life interesting.

**Michelle Zorrilla, PhD, MPH,** serves as the Associate Director of Technology Translation at the IMPACT (Initiative to Mobilize Partnerships for Successful Assistive Technology Translation) Center at the University of Pittsburgh in the Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology. She has a background in genetics, public health, clinical research, healthcare systems, and sales, with experience in consulting, technology translation, and project coordination. Dr. Zorrilla received her Master of Public Health (MPH) in Public Health Genetics, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Human Genetics, and Certificate in Health Systems, Leadership and Management from the University of Pittsburgh, with focuses in infertility, heart disease, and management, respectively. Her additional interests include consulting and serving as a liaison for the exchange of clinical and scientific information through the development of scientific partnerships and commercialization. She is responsible for the development and running of the IMPACT grant initiatives, managing content development, project flow, and communications with grantees.



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