CONVOCATION 2021

Wednesday, May 19, 2021
Broadcast at 11:00 am
CONVOCATION PROGRAM

Welcome .................................................... Dean Barbara Hempstead, MD, PhD

Presentation of the Candidates for Master’s Degree in  
**Program Chair** 
Clinical Epidemiology and Health Services Research .................. Mary E. Charlson, MD

Presentation of the Candidates for Master’s Degree in  
Student Ombudsperson
Clinical and Translational Investigation ............................. Mary Jo Ward, PhD

Presentation of the Candidates for Master’s Degree in  
Vice Chair of Education
Healthcare Policy and Research ................................. Karla Ballman, PhD

Presentation of the Candidates for Master’s Degree in  
**Program Co-Chair** 
Executive MBA/MS .......................................................... Said Ibrahim, MD

Presentation of the Candidates for Master’s Degree in  
**Program Director** 
Computational Biology .................................................. Trine Krogh-Madsen, PhD

Presentation of the Candidates for Master’s Degree in  
**Program Co-Chair** 
Health Sciences for Physician Assistants ............ Gerard Marciano, EdD, PA-C

Presentation of the Candidates for the Doctor of Philosophy  
Degree in **Medical Sciences** .......................... Dean Barbara Hempstead, MD, PhD

**2021 Award of Distinction Awardee**.............................. Dr. Eric Huang, MD, PhD

Presentation of the **2021 Distinguished Student** 
Commencement Award ................................. Dean Barbara Hempstead, MD, PhD

Presentation of the **Excellence in Teaching and Mentoring Award** .......................... Dean Barbara Hempstead, MD, PhD

Presentation of the **Outstanding Teaching and Mentoring Awards** .......................... Dean Barbara Hempstead, MD, PhD

Presentation of the **2021 Vincent du Vigneaud Awards** .......................... Dean Barbara Hempstead, MD, PhD

Introduction of the **2021 Julian R. Rachele Prizes** .......................... Dean Barbara Hempstead, MD, PhD

Presentation of the **2021 Julian R. Rachele Prize** .......................... Danwei Huangfu, PhD

**2021 Julian R. Rachele Prize Research Overview** .......................... Gary Dixon

Presentation of the **2021 Julian R. Rachele Prize** .......................... Ming Li, PhD

**2021 Julian R. Rachele Prize Research Overview** .......................... Ke Xu
Presentation of the **2021 Student Diversity Award** .................. Dean Hempstead

2021 Student Diversity Awardee ................................................... Christopher Bourne

Presentation of the **2021 Faculty Diversity Award** ................... Dean Hempstead

2021 Faculty Diversity Awardees .......................... Björn Kafsack, PhD, MHS, MS ............................................................. Monica Guzman, PhD

Presentation of the **2021 Student Outreach Award** .................. Dean Barbara Hempstead, MD, PhD

2021 Student Outreach Awardee ................................................. Camir Neville Ricketts

Presentation of the **2021 Student Service Award** ...................... Dean Barbara Hempstead, MD, PhD

**2021 Student Service Awardees** ....................... Thomas Rossetti and Krysta DiKun

Farewell .............................................................. Dean Barbara Hempstead, MD, PhD
Established in 1997, the annual Award of Distinction recognizes an alumnus/a who has demonstrated exceptional achievements and outstanding contributions to biomedical research and education.

Eric Huang, MD ‘86, PhD ‘93
Professor of Pathology at the University of California San Francisco School of Medicine

The WCGS Distinguished Student Commencement Award recognizes an exceptional member of our graduating WCGS class, who will deliver the student commencement address.

Jordana Thibado, PhD Class of 2021
Physiology, Biophysics & Systems Biology Program
Mentor: Joshua Levitz, PhD
2021 EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND MENTORING AWARD

The WCGS Excellence in Teaching and Mentoring Award recognizes a Weill Cornell Graduate faculty member who has distinguished herself or himself in the teaching and mentoring of students, postdocs, and other faculty.

CARL NATHAN, MD
R.A. Rees Pritchett Professor of Microbiology
Chairman, Department of Microbiology and Immunology
Professor of Microbiology and Immunology
Professor of Medicine

2021 OUTSTANDING TEACHING AND MENTORING AWARDS
For Each Doctoral Program

The WCGS Outstanding Teaching and Mentoring Award recognizes a WCGS faculty member in our doctoral programs who has been exemplary in showing their dedication and giving their time to training our first- and second-year students during their early transition into our programs.

Immunology and Microbial Pathogenesis

Alexander Rudensky, PhD
Chairman, Immunology Program, SKI
Director, Ludwig Center at MSK
Co-Chair, IMP Program

Neuroscience

Anna Orr, PhD
Assistant Professor of Neuroscience
Brain and Mind Research Institute

Physiology, Biophysics and Systems Biology

Lucy A Skrabanek, PhD
Assistant Professor of Computational Biomedicine in Physiology and Biophysics
2021 VINCENT DU VIGNEAUD RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM AWARDS

First-Year Poster Award

1st Place:

Thasin Peyear, “The Time Course of Amphiphile Translocation Across Lipid Bilayers.”
(PI Olaf Andersen, MD)

2nd Place:

Nicholas Bartelo, “Predicting Risk of Disease Progression for Prediabetic Patients.”
(PI Olivier Elemento, PhD)

3rd Place:

Tran Hoang, “Detecting EGFR Expression in Bladder Cancer Using [89Zr]Zr-DFO-Panitumumab ImmunoPET Imaging.”
(PI Jason Lewis, PhD)

Second-Year Poster Award

1st Place:

Anthony Antonelli, “Mycobacterium bovis BCG Induces CD4 T Cell-Dependent Tumor Immunity Against Bladder Cancer via Tumor-Intrinsic Interferon Gamma Signaling.”
(PI Michael Glickman, MD)

2nd Place:

(PI Dan-Avi Landau, MD, PhD)

3rd Place:

Katherine Lopez, “Maternal Postpartum Exercise Mitigates the Metabolic Cost of a Fat Rich Diet.”
(PI Miklos Toth, MD, PhD)

Jessica Falci, “Novel Autophagy Activators for Aggregated Tau Degradation.”
(PI Yueming Li, PhD)
**Oral Presentation Award**

**1st Place:**

**Bobbie Pelham-Webb,** “The Molecular Resetting of Pluripotent Stem Cell Identity during Mitotic Exit.”  
(PI Effie Apostolou, PhD)

**2nd Place:**

**Aleksandr Talishinsky,** “Distinct Transcriptomic Signatures Predict Sexually Dimorphic Connectivity Changes in Depression.”  
(PI Conor Liston, MD, PhD)

**3rd Place:**

**Tomer Yaron,** “Phosphorylation of SARS-CoV-2 Nucleocapsid Protein Selectively Regulates Viral and Host RNA-Protein Binding and is Essential for Viral Infection.”  
(PI Olivier Elemento, PhD, and PI Lewis Cantley, PhD)

**Alexandra Miller,** “A Novel Reporter System Identifies Iron Uptake Virulence Genes in Mycobacteria.”  
(PI Sabine Ehrt, PhD)
2021 JULIAN R. RACHELE PRIZE

Named for a former Dean of the Graduate School, the Rachele Prize is the highest student award presented by the school. It is awarded to students who have published significant research in a scientific journal during the prior year. This year, two students received the Rachele Prize:

**Gary Dixon** (Mentor: Danwei Huangfu, PhD)
*QSER1 Protects DNA Methylation Valleys from De Novo Methylation*

**Ke Xu** (Mentor: Ming Li, PhD)
*Glycolysis Fuels Phosphoinositide 3-Kinase Signaling to Bolster T Cell Immunity*

2021 STUDENT DIVERSITY AWARD

**Christopher Bourne**
PhD Student, Mentor: Dr. David Scheinberg
Immunology & Microbial Pathogenesis Program
Co-Chair WCGS Social Justice & Anti-Racism Task Force

2021 FACULTY DIVERSITY AWARD

**Björn F Kafsack, PhD, MHS, MS**
Assistant Professor of Microbiology and Immunology
Co-Chair WCGS Social Justice & Anti-Racism Task Force

**Monica Guzman, PhD**
Associate Professor of Pharmacology
Co-Chair WCGS Social Justice & Anti-Racism Task Force
2021 STUDENT OUTREACH AWARD

Camir Neville Ricketts, PhD Class of 2021
Tri-Institutional Computational Medicine Program, PBSB
Founder of “Minds Of Jamaica” a platform that connects underrepresented minority students with professionals in genomics and data science

2021 STUDENT SERVICE AWARD

The WCGS Student Service Award recognizes one or a group of WCGS students who have distinguished themselves in service to the graduate school, WCM, MSKCC, HSS, the larger community, or beyond. This year’s awardees are being recognized for co-chairing the 40th Annual Vincent du Vigneaud Research Symposium.

Krysta DiKun
PhD Student, Mentor: Lorraine Gudas, PhD
Pharmacology Program

Thomas Rossetti
PhD Student, Mentors: Lonny Levin, PhD and Jochen Buck, MD, PhD
Pharmacology Program
RECIPIENTS OF DEGREES

MASTERS OF SCIENCE

August 17, 2020
Kerri Aronson
Keith Alan Chadwick
Lisa Torres
Annalyn Katrina Brown
Farrah Monibi
Yi Hang Ian Yen
Michelle Youngju Yun

December 31, 2020
Jin Kim
Eric James Mallack
Mariam Ali Mohsin
Alicia Jill Latham
Alexander Merkler
Shun Sun
Edwidge Thomas

May 20, 2021
Diana M. Aguilera
Irma Johanny Alarcón
Nicole Anderson
Onyinye Balogun
Anna Berent
Emily Bhutiani
Jessica Maria Bonet
Erica Burke
Margarita Ticzon Camacho
Chloe Lena Cecchini
Kaitlin Ashley Chamberlain
Ida Chen
Michelle Chen
John Deighton Clarke
Leah Cohen
Atish De
Alexis Diaz
Austin Alexander Dixon
Aleksey Dvorzhinskiy
Nancy Fernandez
Fariha Ahsan
Hasan Ali Aldailami
Irene Borteley Aplerh-Doku
Roma Corey Benfanti
Mark Anthony Bernard
Thomas Boerner
Tyler Zedephrym Brown
Jason John Anthony Calcagno
Theresa Jean Casterton
Darby Nicole Chait
Christine Fang Chen
Linda Yin Chen
Zhuoyang Chen
Adam Lee Cohen
Antoinette Danvers
Madhumita Dey
Liezl Angela Diaz
Siobhan M. Dolan
Shadia Farah
Savannah Lyn Francis
August 31, 2021

Ahmed Mohammed Al-Mazrou
Hannah Elizabeth Bancroft
Xiao Cai
Anthony Joseph Casper
Zhixiong Chen
Sophia Rose D’Angelo
Shady Elmasry
Yujie Hai
Zhongyan Hua
Jiahe Li
Xiang Li
Jinfeng Lu
Pratik Mistry
Shreya Sanjay Patel
Saanjaana Rahman
Daniel Sanky
Xiuying Si
Yongqi Sun
Maryanne Thangarajah
Michelle Chinedum Nneka Utah
Yifan Wu
Ziyin Zhang

Maria Purificación Ballester-Navarro
Guillaume Barbalat
Jessie Cai
Tiffany Chang
Albert Chow
Alison Danielle Davis
Nijah Glenn
Kanta Haque
Megha Anil Kanabar
Qiaozheng Li
Shutian Lin
Yunqing Ma
Fariha Mujeebuddin
Marie-Ann Ewurabena Prah
Manya Saaraswat
Caroline Shippey
Kyle Sogluizzo
Man Tang
Yiqi Tian
Siqi Wei
Zizhuo Xu
Xiang Zhu

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 17, 2020

James John Asciolla
Kristopher Michael Barnes
Benjamin Colin Campbell
Sungyoun Cho
Xinghuo Li
Chase Daniel McCann
Anjin Xianyu
Rachel Ann Babij *
Alexandria M. Brumfield
Nathaniel Rosenstein Campbell *
Zhe Ran Duan *
Matthew Joseph Donald MacKay
Pradeep Ramalingam
Jenny Yaohua Xue *

Shira Yomtoubian

December 31, 2020

Syafiq Abd Wahab
Ashley Stephen Doane
Alexander Nathaniel Gorelick
Mehtap Işik
Olivia Brooke Levine
Christopher Mezias
Ashlesha Odak
Zheng Ser
Chaya Stern
Carlos Diaz Salazar Albelda
Joshua Hanna Fass
Teng Han
Chirag Krishna
Ting-Yu Lin
Briana Glyn Nixon
Andrew Crosbie Scott
Jay Shi *
Nevin Yusufova

May 20, 2021

Nimra Asi
Christina E. Bebernitz
Tapojoyoti Das
Gary Raymond Dixon
Vidur Garg
Balvir Kunar, Jr.
Jonghan Lee
Barbara Pelham-Webb *
Merve Sahin
Mojdeh Shakiba
Fanying Tang
Rafal Piotr Wiewiora
Kelly Madigan Banks *
Megan M. Dacek
Elvisha Dhamala
Tyler Andrew Funnell
Jackie L. Gottshall
Chan Lee
Pengju Nie
Camir Neville Ricketts
Sarah Michelle Schrader *
Alison Elizabeth Smith
Jordana Kathryn Thibado
Corrin A. Wohlhieter

Ke Xu

* Cornell/Rockefeller/Sloan Kettering Tri-Institutional MD-PhD Student

BROWN, ANNALYN KATRINA, MS, Pharmacology.


MALLACK, ERIC JAMES, MS, Clinical & Translational Investigation. Advisors: Julianne Imperato-McGinley and Mary Jo Ward. Thesis: A Longitudinal Analysis of Early Lesion Growth in Presymptomatic Patients with Cerebral Adrenoleukodystrophy.


THOMAS, EDWIDGE, MS, Clinical Epidemiology & Health Service Research. Advisor: Mary Charlson. Thesis: Care Managing Patient with Serious Mental Illness: Value or No Value.

May 20, 2021

AGUILERA, DIANA M., Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.


ALARCÓN, IRMA JOHANNY, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.

ALDAILAMI, HASAN ALI, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.


APLERH-DOKU, IRENE BORTELEY, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.

BENFANTI, ROMA COREY, MS, Health Sciences for Physician Assistants. Advisor: Katherine Hajjar. Thesis: The Effect of Lactobacillus Rhamnosus Gg on Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Symptom Severity in Adolescents.

BERENT, ANNA, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.


BOERNER, THOMAS, MS, Clinical Epidemiology & Health Service Research. Advisors: Dennis Chi and Kara Long-Roche. Thesis: Improving the Care of Women with Advanced Ovarian Cancer Undergoing Primary Debulking Surgery.


CAMACHO, MARGARITA TICZON, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.

CASTERTON, THERESA JEAN, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.


CHEN, IDA, MS, Health Sciences for Physician Assistants. Advisor: Sam Senturia. Thesis: Application of Lean Methodology to Diagnostic Laboratory Testing in Emergency Departments as a Solution to Crowding and Prolonged Wait Times.


CHEN, ZHUOYANG, MS, Computational Biology. Advisor: Olivier Elemento. Thesis: Correlation of Copy Number Variation and Gene Expression on TCGA-BRCA Data.

CLARKE, JOHN DEIGHTON, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.
COHEN, ADAM LEE, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.


DANVERS, ANTOINETTE, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.

DE, ATISH, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.

DEY, MADHUMITA, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.


DIAZ, LIEZL ANGELA, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.


DOLAN, SIOBHAN M., Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.


FARAH, SHADIA, MS, Neuroscience.

FERNANDEZ, NANCY, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.

FRANCIS, SAVANNAH LYN, MS, Health Sciences for Physician Assistants. Advisor: Keith LaScalea. Thesis: Clinical Indications for Use of Intermittent Fasting in The Management of Individuals at Risk for Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus.

FRIEDMAN, AMY, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.

GAL, JONATHAN STEPHEN, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.


GILLEN, KELLY MCCABE, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.

GOLDBERG, RAJITA BASAK, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.


KAMATH, VIPIN VAMAN, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.

KARRA, SUNAYANA, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.


KIM, CHOO-HYUN, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.

KIM, PAUL JANG, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.


Lakin, Tyler David, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.


MACVEY, MATTHEW JOHN, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.


MCCREATH, WAYNE ANTHONY, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.

MCDONALD, LINDSEY DRU, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.

MIRONOV, ALEXANDRA GORDON, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.

MITILENES, NICKOLAS GEORGE, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.


PHILLIPS, PEARL, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.
PINKHASOV, JOHNATHAN, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.

PIRPINIAS, STEPHEN THOMAS, MS, Computational Biology. Advisor: Jan Krumsiek. Thesis: Machine Learning the Qatar Metabolomics Study on Type-2 Diabetes.


RAI, ARUN, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.


REPPUCCI, ANGELO DAVIDE, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.

RICHARDS, JAMES, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.


ROBBINS, DEBRA, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.

RONG, LISA, MS, Clinical Epidemiology & Health Service Research. Advisors: Hugh Hemmings, Mary Charlson, and Mario Gaudino. Thesis: Interventional Echo - Insights into the Aorta.

ROTHENBERG, JESSICA BARBARA, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.


SAMUELS, BRANDON LUIS, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.

SHAFFER, BRIAN CARL, MS, Clinical & Translational Investigation. Advisors: Julianne Imperato-McGinley and Dean Bajorin. Thesis: Prospective Killer Immunoglobulin-Like Receptor Genotype Evaluation of Hematopoietic Cell Donors is Feasible with Potential to Benefit Patients with Acute Myelogenous Leukemia.

SHMUKLER DRUZ, REGINA, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.


STEADMAN, MELISSA, MS, Health Sciences for Physician Assistants. Advisor: Joseph Murray. Thesis: The Effects of Probiotics on Anxiety in Healthy Adults.

STURGEON, CHRISTINA WONG, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.

TAPIA, ANGELIKA, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.


TSANG, DIANE, MS, Health Sciences for Physician Assistants. Advisor: Amy Hoffman. Thesis: Anxious and Depressive Symptoms in Adults Following Adolescent Exposure to Antipsychotics.

URBANSKI-FARRELL, ELIZABETH ANN, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.


VEMULAPALLI, PRATIBHA, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.

VOLZ, JUSTINE TRACEY, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.


WHANG, JUHO PATRICK, Executive MBA, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research.


CHEN, ZHIXIONG, MS, Healthcare Policy & Research. Advisor: Mark Weiner. Thesis: Is the Whole More or Less than the Sum of the Parts?


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DOCTORS OF PHILOSOPHY

August 17, 2020


BRUMFIELD, ALEXANDRIA M., PhD, Molecular Biology. Advisor: Timothy E. McGraw. Thesis: Insights into Insulin Regulation of GLUT4 Trafficking at the TGN.


CHO, SUNGYUN, PhD, Cell & Developmental Biology. Advisor: John Blenis. Thesis: Post-Transcriptional Regulation of RNA Metabolism by mTOR Signaling.


* Cornell/Rockefeller/Sloan Kettering Tri-Institutional MD-PhD Student


December 31, 2020


* Cornell/Rockefeller/Sloan Kettering Tri-Institutional MD-PhD Student


May 20, 2021


BEBERNITZ, CHRISTINA E., PhD, Pharmacology. Advisor: Renier Brentjens. Thesis: *Interleukin 12 and Interleukin 18 Combination Improves Activation of Adoptively Transferred T Cells in Solid Tumors.*


* Cornell/Rockefeller/Sloan Kettering Tri-Institutional MD-PhD Student


GOTTSHALL, JACKIE L., PhD, Neuroscience. Advisor: Nicholas Schiff. Thesis: Sleep-Specific Biomarkers of Large-Scale Brain Function in Chronic Disorders of Consciousness.


* Cornell/Rockefeller/Sloan Kettering Tri-Institutional MD-PhD Student
SCHRADER, SARAH MICHELLE*, PhD, Immunology & Microbial Pathogenesis. Advisors: Carl F. Nathan and Julien Vaubourgeix. Thesis: Perturbation of Arginine Biosynthesis in Mycobacteria Elicits Multiple Forms of Resistance to Antibiotics with Other Targets.


THIBADO, JORDANA KATHRYN, PhD, Physiology, Biophysics & Systems Biology. Advisor: Joshua Levitz. Thesis: Deciphering Transmembrane Domain Assembly and Activation in Metabotropic Glutamate Receptors.


XU, KE, PhD, Immunology & Microbial Pathogenesis. Advisor: Ming Li. Thesis: Metabolic Regulation of T Cell Immunity.

* Cornell/Rockefeller/Sloan Kettering Tri-Institutional MD-PhD Student