



BGSA NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2022



UPCOMING EVENTS

- BGSA Monthly Meeting.....Sept 12
- Welcome Ceremony for Incoming PhD Students....Sept 15

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Pitt BGSA



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MORGAN RICCI

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear School of Medicine,

Welcome back for another Fall semester at Pitt! First I would like to acknowledge Anu Balogun for her excellent work and exceptional leadership as Newsletter Editor this past year. The new committee will seek to maintain the high standard previous issues have set by Anu and her team.

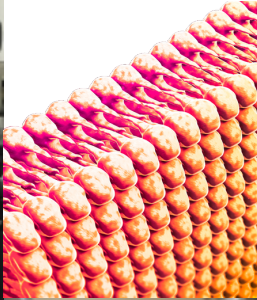
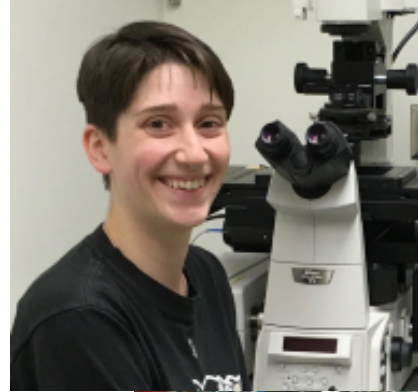
This issue will wrap up the summer of 2022. We are excited to include a Q&A with recent graduates Rachel Wills and Daniel Zuppo for our alumni spotlights. Both received their doctorates this July and are moving forward from two very successful and impactful careers here at Pitt. We also hear from new D&I Committee chairs Olayemi Akinyele and Joud Mulla in their first message addressing the committees recent successful Pitt Med Cultural Fest and upcoming events and plans for this Fall.

We have included a different section to help wrap up the summer and look towards fall named "Summer Roundup & Fall Roundup" by new BGSA President Anu Balogun. This gives an overview of the the work done this summer and what BGSA has planned for this upcoming semester to look forward to. Finally, scroll down to see our Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood section, highlighting some new food and drink businesses to Pittsburgh!

Here's to a great year ahead of us!

CHEERS,

MORGAN RICCI



September's Alumni Spotlights:

Rachel Wills and Daniel Zuppo



TRAVEL AWARDS

CONGRATULATIONS TO BOTH BADOI PHAN (CMP) AND SANJANA THOSAR (MGDB) WINNERS OF THE BGSA TRAVEL AWARDS FOR AUGUST.

PAST WINNERS

JULY: XAY SOMOULAY (PMI) AND ADAM BRYNES (PMI)

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE



OLAYEMI AKINYELE

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As the 2022/2023 academic year starts, the BGSA Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Committee are excited to serve both new and old students and share some upcoming initiatives. The new co-chairs of the D&I committee, Joud Mulla (3rd year in the CMP program) and Olayemi Akinyele (3rd year in the MPHL program), thank Sam Herron, Tiffany Taylor, and previous members for all their hard work and welcome this year's committee members: Julia Ferrick, Mische Holland, Amanda Suda, Ahmed Emam Abdelnaby, Smitha Edakalavan, Hsuan Yeh, and Mutasim Makeen. The major focus of the committee this year is to provide academic, mental, and professional resources and support to graduate students in the School of Medicine from diverse cultural backgrounds and ethnicities. Grad school should not be an isolated experience, so we will prioritize activities that encourage community building, networking, and student interactions.

We are already off to a great start! We had our first successful event with the First Pitt Med Cultural Fest, where the D&I represented the BGSA and Ph.D. students at Pitt Medical School. Shout out to incoming PMI student, Julia Ferrick, for making our BGSA table at the event a huge success! This year, we plan to have several exciting in-person events to promote inclusivity and diversity and celebrate the uniqueness of the SOM grad student body. Some highlights of this semester include a D&I welcome potluck, Women in STEM and Diversity in Science Panels, and Thanksgiving dinner with Pitt's Office of International Students (OIS). We will also work closely with Shea Heilman, BGSA Mental Health Liaison, to promote mental health in STEM.

We restructured the committee by including roles for each member, and we are currently looking for a social media manager. Social media is a powerful tool that we will utilize to make our voices heard and share our diverse experiences with others. Reach out to us if you are interested in joining!

Also, if you are passionate about any topic or event, please feel free to share your ideas with the committee. We will continue to uphold the initiatives and values our committee was built on, and we look forward to working with and representing the SOM grad students in this upcoming school year.





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FALL ROUNDUP

SUMMER RUNDOWN



Dear School of Medicine,

Welcome back, and congratulations on the beginning of another school year. As you know, with the new session comes a new BGSA executive board with the one true goal of advocating for students in the SOM. To that effect, while we work to refine and advance our current strategies, we have also taken several additional steps outlined below:

1. Re-establishing the Community Outreach Chair position with the primary goals of promoting careers in STEM, dispelling misconceptions about research and promoting education on the scientific methods, engaging in volunteering opportunities with patient serving groups connected to graduate student research, and uplifting the Pittsburgh community. Dana Julian currently chairs this committee.

2. The Diversity and Inclusion Committee (D&I) aims to broaden its horizon and reshape the graduate student community within the SOM. To achieve this, the committee has undergone some restructuring to create subgroups such as social media managers, event planners, logistic managers, and communications directors to ensure it is efficiently and effectively functioning. Olayemi Akinyele and Joud Mulla are currently chairing this committee.

3. Under the governance of Michelle Lynskey, the BGSA website has also undergone massive restructuring. We are deeply proud of Michelle's dedication to her craft and this new website that accurately represents the efforts of the BGSA. I encourage you to visit us at: www.bgsauniversityofpittsburgh.squarespace.com. The BGSA has also resumed in-person meetings. Historically, we provide refreshments at these meetings while discussing issues important to our growth and development as graduate students. Please join us every first Monday of the Month. Lastly, although our usual venue at the Vietnam Veterans Pavilion was unavailable this year, the welcome back/orientation picnic held at Bridgeside point was tremendously successful, with over a hundred graduate, med students, and faculty in attendance. We hope you had a great time and look forward to seeing you at our other events this year.



Best wishes,

ANU BALOGUN
BGSA PRESIDENT

Alumni Spotlight Q&A



RACHEL WILLS, PhD and
DANIEL ZUPPO, PhD



What advice can you give current graduate students about perseverance when the going gets tough?

Rachel: It is very important to understand how you, as an individual, respond to stress and stressful situations. Every person is unique, including Daniel and me. Sometimes the best thing to do is walk away for a bit; go grab a coffee or a beer with a friend, go cry in the microscope room, or go for a run or workout. I often feel guilty for walking away but at the end of the day, you need to know that you are worth your time. Going through graduate school during your mid to late 20's is an incredibly difficult and painful period of growth in every aspect of your life. Something that always helped me was to know that I wasn't ever going through the process alone. I find it incredibly important to talk to people, whether that be a friend or a licensed professional. If you are struggling with your mental health, please talk to someone.

Daniel: It is incredibly frustrating to have experiments fail or to find that your hypotheses were disproven after analysis of the data, so reducing one's level of frustration and stress is important. I've found it helpful to switch gears and perform an easier experiment that you know will give you some results, or I set aside some time for self-care such as pursuing hobbies. This helps reduce the amount of stress I'm currently feeling and then I try to approach the experiment from a new perspective the next time I attempt it.

How have friendships contributed towards your graduate experience?

Rachel: Honestly, without my friends I would never have made it through graduate school.

Having continuous support from people who understand what you are going through is truly invaluable. My friends have been there for me at the absolute lowest times of my life and were there to pick me up from the dirt and dust me off. On the other hand, the friends I made during grad school were in my wedding, one of the best times of my life.

Daniel: I would say that building strong friendships is one of the most important things about graduate school and it helped me to persevere whenever I've battled failure in the lab or depression. Finding people that experience some of the same events that you are and whom you can socialize with outside of work really helps because you can bounce research ideas off each other and support each other when dealing with rough circumstances.

What is making you excited right now in your career and what obstacles you are still facing?

Rachel: I am still trying to decide on my postdoc lab. Which is both exciting and stressful. I'm very enthusiastic to start something new and to learn a different set of techniques and skills. But trying to make the decision about a location and a new mentor is always daunting and will be a very difficult decision.

Daniel: I'm really excited to start my postdoctoral position, because I'll be able to expand my knowledge in developmental biology and study a new system in developing coronary arteries. But in that same vein, I'm feeling some effects of Imposter Syndrome because I don't have any background in this field. I spent the last 7 years becoming an expert on cardiomyocyte proliferation and cardiac regeneration, so I'm nervous about not fitting in immediately and that I need to learn a new field, which is also exciting.

A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

In this section you'll find some of the new and notable food and beverage locations in the city. For new comers to Pittsburgh it's a great place to start exploring. For those who have been around the block it may even bring different places to your attention.



MORGAN RICCI

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Georgie's Corner NEW

 5743 Walnut St. Pittsburgh

When you're looking for a fresh baked good and a cup o' Joe, newly opened Georgie's Corner Cafe in Shadyside won't disappoint. The small bakery-cafe provides "responsibly sourced and locally roasted coffee and espresso" and each baked good is made from scratch by expert in-house bakers.

Located just down the road from the main Walnut Street shops, it's warm, French bakery aesthetic makes a great location to eat, drink, and chat. For breakfast on the go you can't go wrong with their buttermilk biscuit or cafe breakfast sandwich, while the frittata of the day is perfect for a slow sit-down and eat kind of morning.



georgiescornercafe.com



Georgie's Corner Cafe



@georgiescornercafe

Black Forge Coffee House

 1206 Arlington Ave. Pittsburgh

This coffee house is worthy of recognition not only for their unique dark atmosphere but their enthusiastic support for local artists in both the music and art scenes.

Their in house lattes are deserving of praise with beans consciously acquired from small-scale, privately-owned farms.

Located just across the Monongahela River, their Allentown location provides local entertainment where coffee go-ers can enjoy music and non-music performances. Owner Ashley Cort proclaims this establishment a "Heavy Metal Woman-Owned Business Hailing from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania". A business worth the trip!



blackforgecoffee.com



Black Forge Coffee



@blackforageshop

A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD



Shorty's Pins x Pints

NEW

📍 353 N Shore Dr. Pittsburgh

Looking for a location that has fun entertainment and atmosphere? Shorty's has you covered, their duckpin lanes, giant Jenga, arcade games and old-school vibe bring their self-assigned "retrotainment" to the table. Both inside and out they have a variety of areas to sit back and enjoy a brew and apps with friends.

A great time for a Saturday night out and with fall approaching the perfect spot for a drink and chat around the campfire!

Goodlander

📍 6614 Hamilton Ave. Pittsburgh

Are you the type of person who goes to a brewery and wishes it were a fresh cocktail coming out of the tap instead of the normal gluten brew? Well your thoughts have been answered. Goodlander is a "first-of-its-kind" cocktail brewery with unique, high quality cocktails on tap. Their team makes a variety of drinks on site with delicious mixes of zests and juices.

Goodlander prides itself by making "drinks to delight + satisfy" and generates no unnecessary waste. Located in the Larimer neighborhood in Pittsburgh you can get a fresh highball-style cocktail with all the bubbly you could ask for.



goodlandercocktails.com

f Goodlander Cocktail Brewery

📷 @goodlandercocktails

Buddy Program

HELLO FIRST-YEARS! WELCOME TO THE BGSa BUDDY PROGRAM. KEEP AN EYE ON YOUR INBOXES AND THE SLACK CHANNEL AS YOUR BIG BUDDIES WILL BE CHECKING IN WITH YOU THIS SEMESTER. AND KEEP A SPECIAL EYE OUT FOR EMAILS ABOUT PROGRAM-WIDE EVENTS, INCLUDING HAPPY HOURS, MOVIE NIGHTS, EXAM CELEBRATIONS, APPLE PICKING, AND HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES!

~CLAIRE WECKERLY



Travel Awards

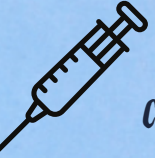
APPLY FOR THE BGSa OCTOBER TRAVEL AWARD BY SEPTEMBER 30! TWO \$250 AWARDS ARE GRANTED MONTHLY AND OCTOBER TRAVEL AWARD APPLICATIONS ARE NOW OPEN FOR SOM STUDENTS. SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION VIA GOOGLE FORM AT: [HTTPS://FORMS.GLE/2TVVXDXDJSYTNOMZ](https://forms.gle/2TVVXDXDJSYTNOMZ)

D&I Committee

THE COMMITTEE IS CURRENTLY LOOKING FOR A SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER, CONTACT JOUD MULLA OR OLAYEMI AKINYELE FOR MORE INFORMATION!



SEPTEMBER 2022 NOTICES



Get your COVID-19 booster!

THE PITT VACCINATION & HEALTH CONNECTION HUB IS PROVIDING ALL COVID-19 VACCINES BEGINNING THIS WEEK. STARTING SEPTEMBER 15 FLU VACCINES WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE HUB. FOR MORE INFORMATION/DETAILS GO TO: [CORONAVIRUS.PITT.EDU](https://coronavirus.pitt.edu)

Community Outreach Committee is looking for new members!

THE COMMITTEES MISSION IS TO PROVIDE VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES FOR BGSa MEMBERS. CONTACT COMMITTEE CHAIR DANA R. JULIAN FOR MORE INFORMATION!

Second Annual Welcome Ceremony for Incoming School of Medicine PhD Students is September 15!

UNIVERSITY CLUB, BALLROOM B
3:00PM-4:00PM
RECEPTION TO FOLLOW

RSVP HERE: [HTTPS://PITT.CO1.QUALTRICS.COM/JFE/FORM/SV_BRW5QZ#36TYDXQ](https://pitt.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/sv-brw5qz#36tydxq)



LOOKING FOR NEW
COMMITTEE MEMBERS
FOR THE UPCOMING
2022-2023 YEAR!

EMAIL MORGAN RICCI AT
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