

**UC Irvine School of Medicine
Entering PhD Students – 2018**



David Au

Physiology & Biophysics

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David Au is a second-year graduate student in Todd Holmes' Lab. He received a B.S. in bioengineering and physics minor from the University of Utah. Early research focused on characterizing biomaterial interaction with foreign body response cells in *in vitro* microfluidic micro-environments. After realizing regulatory affairs in engineering is the bane of his existence, he switched his research focus to understanding light-evoked electrophysiological responses of drosophila expressing proteins such as mosquito Cryptochrome at UCI. In his free time, David likes to eat food.

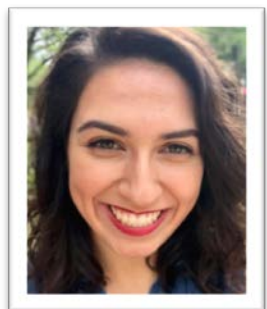


Morgan Dragan

Biological Chemistry

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Morgan Dragan received her B.S. in Molecular Biology from UC San Diego. She interned in various places including Dr. Richard Klemke's pathology lab and a biotechnology company, Ambrx. Following that, she worked as a research associate for Dr. Alan Saltiel studying insulin stimulated glucose uptake at UCSD. Currently, Morgan is a second year PhD student in Dr. Xing Dai's lab studying the molecular mechanism that mediates communication between skin epidermal and immune cells.



Brenda Gutierrez

Anatomy & Neurobiology

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Brenda Gutierrez was born and raised in Phoenix, Arizona. She received a B.S. from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County in Biochemistry & Molecular Biology. She is part of the Program in Medical Education for the Latino Community (PRIME-LC) and an MD/PhD student at UCI. Brenda will work with Dr. Lisa Flanagan conducting stroke and neural stem cell research.

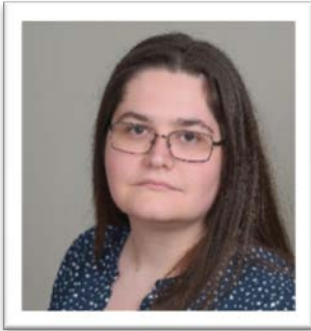


Guadalupe Gutierrez

Biological Chemistry

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Lupe Gutierrez received his B.S. from University of Idaho in Biology and then worked in a chemistry lab to synthesize a series of organic molecules and a microbiology lab to understand the spectrum of antibiotic resistance that arises after exposure to antibiotics. Lupe joined Dr. Xing Dai's lab where he is studying the cellular heterogeneity of mammary epithelium using single cell transcriptomics.



Leanne Hildebrand

Biological Chemistry

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Leanne Hildebrand received her B.S. in Cell and Developmental Biology from California State University, Fullerton. Her research interests include nucleoprotein assemblies, telomere dynamics contributing to the initiation and progression of cancer, and the design of cancer and anti-aging therapeutics. She is entering her second year of doctoral study under the mentorship of Dr. Feng Qiao.



Linzi Hosohama

Microbiology & Molecular
Genetics

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Linzi Hosohama is a second year PhD student in Dr. Marian Waterman's lab. She received her B.S. in Molecular, Cell and Developmental Biology from UCLA where she spent several years studying germ cell development and epigenetic reprogramming under the mentorship of Dr. Amander Clark. In the Waterman lab, her research focuses on tumor heterogeneity and cellular plasticity in colon cancer.

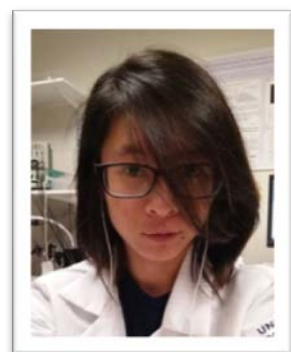


Sharon Jan

Physiology & Biophysics

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Sharon Jan is a second-year graduate student who earned her B.S. in Microbiology from UC Davis studying gene localization in *Giardia* which cultivated her interest in infectious diseases and microbial pathogenesis. Under the mentorship of Dr. Michael Cahalan, she works in Dr. Phil Felgner's lab where her current studies focus on the immunogenic bacterial exoskeleton, the "sacculus" and how it can be use as a scaffold for vaccine antigens.

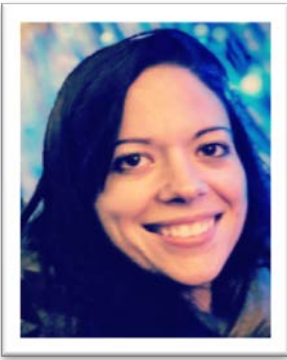


Aliza Le

Anatomy & Neurobiology

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Aliza Le received her B.S. in Biology at UC Irvine. She spent three years working with Dr. Christine Gall's lab studying how synaptic proteins in the rodent hippocampus change in response to spatial learning in mouse models of Fragile X and Down Syndrome. A graduate student in Dr. Gary Lynch's lab, she is exploring sex dimorphism in long-term potentiation and learning at the synaptic level. Her research interests include autism, synaptic plasticity, and hippocampal sex differences.



Sophia (Sophie) Levis

Anatomy & Neurobiology

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Sophie Levis is an MD/PhD student entering the first year of her PhD training. She is working in the labs of Drs. Mahler and Baram studying the effects of maternal stress on opiate addiction. She earned her bachelor's degree at CU Boulder where she studied addiction under Dr. Ryan Bachtell. Prior to returning to medical school, she spent two years working for the University of Colorado Hospital managing the department of Dermatology's clinical trials. Her clinical interests include neurology and psychiatry. After completing her training, Sophie plans to pursue a career in academic medicine.

After leaving his hometown in the San Bernardino mountains, Robert received his B.S. in Genetics at UC Irvine. As an undergraduate, he worked in the laboratory of Dr. Emiliana Borrelli where he described a novel cellular connection within a critical brain region (the striatum) involved in cocaine response. The fields of neuropharmacology and psychiatric pharmacogenetics were of particular interest. Robert continues in the Borrelli lab as a second year PhD student studying the involvement of dopamine/acetylcholine receptor signaling in the response to drugs of abuse using in vivo pharmacological and chemogenetic approaches.



Robert Lewis

Microbiology & Molecular
Genetics

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Catherine Liu completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Oregon and received her Masters in Bioinformatics and System Biology from New York University. After NYU, she worked as a statistician for the Department of Preventive Medicine at USC. When she returns from China, Catherine will join Dr. Trina Norden-Krichmar's lab where she will pursue her interests in the field of epigenetics and its applications in human disease research.

Liang Liu was born and grew up in China. He obtained his B.S. in Microbiology at Arizona State University. Under the mentorship of Dr. Rajeev Misra, his earlier research focused on outer membrane proteins that confer multi-drug resistance in different gram-negative bacteria. Currently, he is a second-year graduate student in Dr. Yongsheng Shi's lab studying viral-host interactions. Specifically, how the virion host shutoff protein of HSV-1 affects host gene expression and mRNA stability.



Xiaochen (Catherine) Liu

Epidemiology

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Liang Liu

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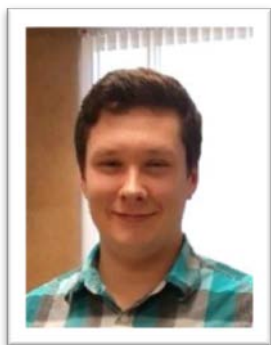


Samantha Merwin

Environmental Health Sciences

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Samantha Merwin holds a B.A. in Biological Sciences from Dartmouth College. She became interested in environmental health after an ongoing PFOA contamination was discovered in her hometown of Hoosick Falls, NY. She has spent the last several years working in the lab of Dr. Diane Re at Columbia University researching the environmental origins of neurodegenerative diseases, especially amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). For the past year, she has been working in the lab of Dr. Brandon Pearson at Columbia, studying how parental exposures can modify xenobiotic responses in offspring. Her mentor is Dr. Ulrike Luderer.

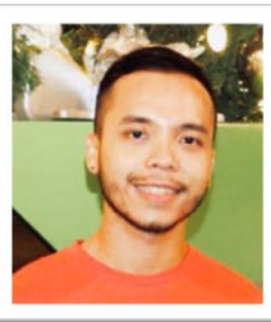


Michael Neel

Experimental Pathology

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Michael Neel received his B.S. in Neurobiology from UC Irvine and then worked in the lab of Dr. Ed Monuki where he studied the use of neural stem cell transplants in lysosomal storage disease and helped in the development of derivation protocols for choroid plexus epithelial cells. Currently, Michael is investigating disease and age-related pathologies of the choroid plexus. Michael is entering the Experimental Pathology PhD program.



Nam Nguyen

Biological Chemistry

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Nam Nguyen was born and grew up in Vietnam until he came to the U.S. at the age of fifteen. He received his B.S. in Biochemistry at UC Santa Barbara and M.S. in Pharmaceutical Sciences at Western University of Health and Sciences. He is currently doing research in epigenetic sequencing and bioinformatics with Dr. Kyoko Yokomori. After graduation, he plans to join the industry in the field of big genomic/epigenomic data.



Julian Quintanilla

Anatomy & Neurobiology

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Julian Quintanilla is a graduate student with Dr. Gary Lynch's lab and Steve Mahler's lab. He received his B.S. in Neurobiology from the UC Irvine. As a lab member, he studies the enhancing roles of emotion on the consolidation of memory and how these circuits can be manipulated. During his work at the California Science Center Museum, he found passion in sparking fascination about the brain and bringing the public into the world of science.



Bridget Ratitong

Physiology & Biophysics

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Bridget Ratitong received her B.S. with honors in Molecular Biology from UC San Diego. She interned at Takeda Pharmaceuticals in the analytical chemistry department before working as a technician in Dr. Michael Croft's lab at the La Jolla Institute for Allergy and Immunology studying T cell plasticity and dual antibody blockade treatment for asthma. Currently, Bridget is a second-year doctoral student researching the innate immune response against fungal infections in Dr. Eric Pearlman's lab.



Jared Salbato

Experimental Pathology

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Jared Salbato is a California native returning to UCI for doctoral study. His BS in Biological Sciences is from CSU San Bernardino and MS in Biological Sciences/Biotechnology from UCI. Jared has extensive experience in the biotechnology industry, working for companies such as Epicyte Pharmaceuticals. Jared's research interests include Pompe disease and lysosomal biology. He is mentored by Virginia Kimonis.



Jessica E. Sharpe

Environmental Health Sciences

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Hailing from Los Angeles, Jessica Sharpe seeks to find sustainable solutions to the myriad of pollution issues in southern CA. Research involves hydrophobic organic contaminants (HOC's) and water quality as a biodegradation and bioremediation researcher. With a B.S. from CSUDH, she studied biodegradation of PCB's. In her M.S. years at University of Florida, research included Interactions Between Nonpolar Compounds and Soil Organic Carbon Under Low Redox Potentials and implications for Bioavailability. Her first-authored textbook chapter has been published. She makes time for running, cycling, hiking and camping in the great outdoors. Sharpe is mentored by Dr. Jun Wu.



Lindsey Soles

Microbiology & Molecular
Genetics

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Lindsey is from Upstate New York and holds a B.S. in Biochemistry from SUNY Geneseo. After graduating, she moved to the Greater New York City area where she worked as a research assistant studying mechanisms of motor recovery and neuroplasticity in children with cerebral palsy under Dr. Kathleen Friel. She is now a second-year graduate student in the laboratory of Dr. Yongsheng Shi where she is studying the molecular mechanisms of 3'mRNA processing and regulation of poly(A) site selection.



James Tirtorahardjo

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Genetics

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James Tirtorahardjo holds a B.S. in Biological Sciences from the University of California Irvine. He spent five years as a pathology assistant at the cancer diagnostic lab, Clariant. He has also spent two years researching addiction neurobiology with Dr. Shahradd Lotfipour at UCI focusing on the effects of nicotine on the developing brain. Currently, James is a part of Dr. Rosa Andrade's lab, studying *Toxoplasma Gondii* and its encystation mechanisms.



Lauren Urban

Microbiology & Molecular
Genetics

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Lauren Urban, a second-year PhD student, is jointly mentored by Drs. Timothy Downing and Albert Siryaporn. Research interests are in Epigenetics, Mechanotransduction, Immunology, Developmental Biology and Neuroscience. Lauren earned a B.S. in Biophysics from Brown University with a focus in Neuroscience. She is investigating the effects of hypomethylated DNA on neuroinflammation in human microglia cells derived from iPSCs and brain organoids and also collaborating on a project examining the host metabolic changes that occur in response to bacterial infections (pending publication). A publication in *STEMTaught Journal* is forthcoming.



Kevin Wang

Microbiology & Molecular
Genetics

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Kevin Wang is a student in the joint lab of Dr. Ming Tan and Dr. Christine Suetterlin. As an MD/PhD student, he is beginning the PhD phase of his studies. He was raised in New Jersey and then moved to California where he went to UCLA for his undergraduate studies (And now he can't leave the California weather!). There, he sparked his research interest by characterizing proteins in *Toxoplasma* and now, while at UCI, he plans to research the interaction between Chlamydia and its host cell.



Cheuk Yui (Anthony) Yeung

Environmental Health Sciences

cyyeung@uci.edu

Anthony Yeung is from Hong Kong. He is a first year PhD student in the EHS Program with Dr. Ulrike Luderer. He holds a BSc from the Chinese University of Hong Kong majoring in Public Health and an MPH specializing in Epidemiology and Biostatistics from the Washington University in St. Louis. Anthony hopes that his experiences at UC Irvine will bring opportunities for different projects. His research interests include Green Space, Blue Space, Social Disparity, and Suicidality. After graduate school, he wants to continue his career in research.