

Welcome to the first newsletter for the Howard Hughes Medical Institute – Cornell University Research Transfer (HHMI-CURT)

The 2018/19 CURTellian in retrospect!

If you have any feedback or comments about this newsletter, please email HHMI-CURT at himi-curt@cornell.edu.

Program Directors



Avery August, PhD.



Melanie J. Ragin, PhD.

This first year has been eventful for the HHMI-CURT community as it has been our first year in action, check out this [article](#) to see how we got started.

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This first year would not have been a smashing hit without your support and participation in the HHMI-CURT program. If you'd like to see more of what we are doing check out our website or social media platforms on [Instagram](#) or [Twitter](#)

Student Spotlights

Two students from the HHMI-CURT program have graduated with a bachelor's degree: Lawrence Onyekwere and Julio Salas.



Lawrence Onyekwere (HHMI-CURT scholar, 1st Cohort)

How has the HHMI program helped you prepare for the next steps or helped you become a better scientist - how has the community helped you through your program?

The HHMI program helped me be more prepared as a future professional. The program provided me with resume and personal statement development which would help me stand out as a better applicant. Also, my experience doing research at Cornell has enhanced my understanding of research methodology and lab techniques.

What advice would you give to incoming students?

Make the most out of the networking, research events, and professional development opportunities provided by the program.

Who is your adviser and what are you researching on and its objectives?

Adviser: Beth A. Howland

Research: *Mesocestoides* is a genus of cestodes that reside in the small intestines of a carnivorous definitive host. The current life cycle of *Mesocestoides* is composed of the first intermediate host (researching) eats proglottids or oncospheres released from feces of definitive host; a second intermediate (vertebrates) host and definitive (carnivorous) host. Adult cestode is matured in the small intestine. Our goal is to identify a primary intermediate host of *Mesocestoides lineata* involved in transmission of the infective meso proglottid. The implications of this study can help the field of parasitology identify arthropods that are involved in the mechanism of transferring infectious proglottids and the relationship between them.

What honors or awards received have you received lately?

Dean's List: Fall 2018, Spring 2019, Fall 2019

What are your hobbies?

I enjoy going to the gym to develop a bodybuilder physique and listening to rap/hip-hop podcasts.

Where is Lawrence Onyekwere now?

Lawrence has completed his BS in Biological Sciences and he is now the Diversity Programs Associate for the Division of General Internal Medicine at Weill Cornell Medicine.



Julio Salas (HHMI-CURT scholar, 1st Cohort)

How has the HHMI program helped you prepare for the next steps or helped you become a better scientist- how has the community helped you through your program?

The HHMI program has helped me prepare for the next steps because it has equipped me with both hard knowledge about being a scientist (e.g. data analysis) and soft knowledge (navigating the lab and speaking to faculty members). This has increased my confidence in calling and carrying myself as a young scientist. Before, I thought I could not bear that name unless I went to graduate school, but the truth is, I am a young scientist. And, I definitely give a lot of credit to the HHMI program in helping me confidently say that and represent that.

Another thing I would like to highlight of the HHMI program, is the financial contributions they have invested in me and the other scholars. The financial contributions are effective in the sense of developing the scholars in a holistic manner (funded summer research experience, team building activities, dinners, etc.). Without these contributions, I wouldn't be the young scientist I have become.

Lastly, the community has helped me because being a transfer student at an institution like Cornell consists of a million bad things (having to rush, not being on par academically, socially or even culturally). But, being with the other scholars brings about solidarity, and it's that solidarity that shows you that you can do it and others are going through it as well. It also shows you that being a transfer student also consists of a million good things (e.g. having a unique perspective and experience).

Who is your adviser and what are you researching on and its objectives?

My PI's are Drs. Eve De Rosa and Adam Anderson. The project I am working on, with five other undergraduates, is called Brain Days. What we do is design and teach neuroscience lesson plans to K-4th graders at the Syracuse Academy of Sciences. The lesson plans take a neutral framing (the biology of the brain), a purpose mindset framing and a growth mindset framing, and we want to compare the effects on academic achievement. This experience has hands down been one of the best experiences of my life and has led me to aspire to be a pediatrician.

What honors or awards received have you received lately?

Dean's list, Poster presenter at the 2019 Society for Neuroscience (SFN) conference, Poster presenter at the 2018 Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS), Humans of Queensborough Video and Article, Weill Cornell P3 Shadowing Program, P3/CSTEP Scholar, Kessler Presidential Scholar Mentor and Office of Academic Diversity Initiatives (OADI) Peer Mentor Visioning Group.

What are your hobbies?

I love reading anything that catches my eye, watching documentaries, finding new places to eat, drinking coffee, and from time to time, I love me a good sudoku puzzle.

Where is Julio Salas now?

Julio has now completed his BS in Human Development and he is currently studying for his MCAT in hopes of going to medical school.

Diversity Undergraduate Summer Research Symposium

The HHMI-CURT scholars had a great experience interacting with their fellow colleagues and presenting research at the Diversity Undergraduate Summer Research Symposium 2019 at Cornell University.



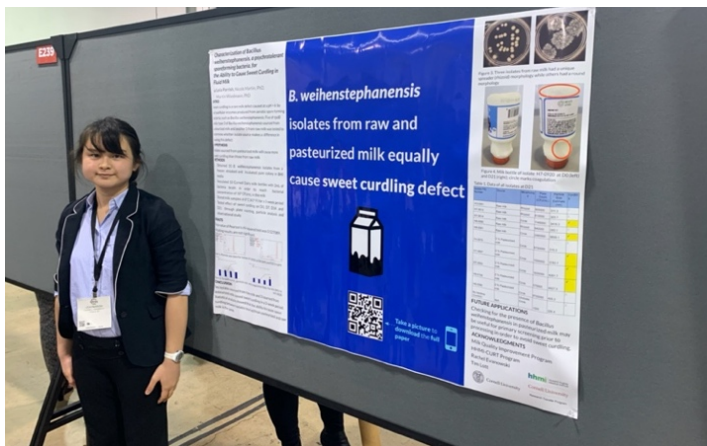
A snap shot of all who presented at the symposium.



Ayanna Dixon, Gabrielle Mcmillan, and Alexandria Anronikov (left to right).

Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS) conference

This was the first year that HHMI-CURT scholars participated in the annual ABRCMS conference 2019 in Los Angeles, California. This was a very productive conference where diverse people were able to present their research through poster presentations and participate in active learning workshops.



After much hard work HHMI-CURT and IMSD scholars go out to eat.



Avery August, Brian Imbiakha, Marguerite Aurora Pacheco, Destiny B. Van, Carter James Frost Henry, Melanie Ragin, Ky'ara Carr, and Marissa Baccas (left to right).



Melanie Ragin, Soledad O'Brien, and Brian Imbiakha (left to right).



Front row: Lawrence Onyekwere, Julio Salas, Nicholas Supron, Brandon Carlson-Clarke. Back row: Leia Parrish, Tzu Wing Law, Love Nemecek, Ayanna Dixon, Gabrielle McMillan, and Alexandra (Sasha) Anronikov (left to right).

Speaker Highlight

Of the many speakers that we had this year, we wanted to highlight Makenzie Peterson who is the Wellbeing Program Director for College of Veterinary Medicine. Here, she gave us some tips on self-care and emotional well-being.



This is Makenzie Peterson while she is presenting to the HHMI-CURT and IMSD scholars.



HHMI-CURT and IMSD scholars

“My favorite part of this workshop was learning the importance of self-care.”

Community Building Highlights

Marshmallow Challenge



Tsz Wing (Josephine) Law, Candice Limper, Brian Imbiakha, and Carmen Chan (left to right).

Leia Parrish, Naya Eady, Marissa Baccas, and Love Nemecek (left to right).



Julio Salas, Ayanna Dixon, and Mariela Alejandra Rivera-De Jesus (left to right).

Canoeing and Rock Climbing



Candice Limper, Jessica Elmore, Alexandra (Sasha) Anronikov, Brian Imbiakha, Leia Parrish, Gabrielle McMillan, Marissa Baccas, Ayanna Dixon, Daniel Istak Vitenson, and Garrett Wang (left to right).



Everyone is excited to face their fears and climb the wall.

Seasonal Celebrations



We enjoyed our November meal together.



We were fortunate to have a great meal and a gift exchange in December.

**“The blankets were the most popular gifts
this year.”**

Undergraduate Resources

[CAPS - mental health](#)

[Writing resources](#)

[Fellowship](#)

[Confidential pantry](#)

[Learning strategies center](#)

