The UIC MSTP welcomed ten M1 students into the program family during summer 2022. After spending part or all of the summer pursuing their first UIC lab rotations, they were officially welcomed into the entering COM M1 class at the White Coat Ceremony on August 12.

Pictured left to right they are (front row): Earon Grinage, Gaytri Sanku, Kia Holt, Shay Keiser, Sarah Maggipinto, Adith Shvisatra, Hannah Maluvac, Albert Yen, Alyssa Horwitz, Edward Huang

They are all high academic achievers who have had extensive research training—both as undergraduates and in their post-graduate work, as well as, extensive clinical exposure. Yet they have also managed to devote countless passionate hours to community service in areas such as food pantries, homeless services, medical missions, first-aid responder, nursing homes, Americorps and other housing organizations, crisis counseling. As well as develop interesting hobbies that include painting, running, competitive K-Pop dancing and competitive American Go.

**Earon Grinage**

Home town: Belize City, Belize

Degree: BS, Molecular and Cell Biology, Illinois State University, 2020

Research Interests: Microbiology, Infectious Disease, Immunology and Global Health

2022 Rotation: Lab of Deepak Shukla, PhD, Professor of Ophthalmology

Why MD/PhD? In my native country of Belize, healthcare is a privilege rather than a necessity. My hope to is to study healthcare disparities present in underserved communities globally, to conduct research of those communities, as well as, to provide patient outreach.

(Continued on pages 2 and 3)
Meet the 2022 Entering Class, continued from p. 1

Kia Holt  
Home town: East Cleveland, Ohio  
Degree: BS, Biology. The Ohio State University, 2018  
Research Interests: Immunology and microbiology. Additionally, interested in cancer biology, neurology and regenerative medicine  
2022 Rotation: Lab of Nancy Freitag PhD, Professor, Dept. of Pharmaceutical Sciences  
Why MD/PhD? It would allow me to not only combine my love for research and medicine by studying disease, examining how it disproportionately affects communities of color, and both serving those communities and finding ways to manage disease. I believe that a doctor who understands research and the scientific literature is a better informed and more well rounded practitioner and has the ability to be a better and more educated advocate for my patients and people of color.

Alyssa Horwitz  
Home town: Glenview, IL  
Degree: BS, Biochemistry, Muhlenberg College, 2019  
Research Interests: Enzyme kinetics, cancer biology, molecular/cell biology, immunology  
2022 Rotation: Lab of Donald Vander Griend, PhD, Associate Prof., Dept. of Pathology  
Why MD/PhD? In considering both research and medicine as potential vocations, I discovered that the role of physician-scientist would allow me to solve complex scientific problems as well as witness humanity at its very best and very worst... My passion for interpersonal service drives me towards medicine, where research alone could not fulfill this motivation.

Edward Huang  
Home town: Chicago, IL  
Degree: BS, Integrative Biology Honors, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, 2022  
Research Interests: Novel and innovative solutions to combat antibiotic resistance, including natural product discovery and analysis of any biological systems in which potential antimicrobial mechanisms have evolved.  
2022 Rotation: Lab of Nancy Freitag, Professor, Dept. of Pharmaceutical Sciences,  
Why MD/PhD: me with the opportunity to directly translate my personal research endeavors into medical practice... A career as a physician scientist would allow me to contribute a special perspective as a researcher– one that includes critical insights from patient experiences. I hope to bridge that connection from the lab bench to the patient room.

Shaylyn “Shay” Keiser  
Home town: Hillsboro, IL  
Degree: BS, Integrative Biology, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, 2020  
Research Interests: Gastrointestinal diseases, skin infections, inflammation, host/pathogen/microbiome interactions.  
2022 Rotation: Lab of Luisa DiPietro, DDS. PhD, Professor, Dept. of Oral Sciences  
Why MD/PhD: As a physician-scientist, I hope to study how our adaptive immune system and microbiome fight pathogens and use these findings to improve treatment of infection. This training will broaden the strategies and tools I can use to approach complex clinical questions.

Sarah Maggipinto  
Home town: Monmouth, NJ  
Degree: BS, Biomedical Engineering, Boston University, 2020  
Research Interests: Molecular and cellular biology, molecular genetics, oncology, biomedical engineering, and regenerative medicine.  
2022 Rotation: Lab of Dawood Darbar. MBChB, MD, Professor, Dept. of Medicine– Cardiology  
Why MD/PhD? It will prepare me for a career in genetics where I can work on discovering and creating better treatments and possible cures to genetic conditions. I continue to be inspired by the life changing effects that I know the combination of clinical and research work can provide to patients' lives.
Hannah Maluvac  
**Home town:** Porter, Indiana  
**Degree:** BS, Biology and Neuroscience, Indiana University, 2021  
**Research Interests:** Psychiatric illnesses-specifically mood disorders, microRNAs, sex differences in psychiatric illnesses, molecular and epigenetic mechanisms  
**2022 Rotation:** Lab of Pauline Maki, PhD, Professor, Department of Psychiatry  
**Why MD/PhD?** Formative experiences demonstrated to me that science was the limiting factor of medicine and I want to pursue training that will merge my interests in patient care and research specifically focusing on women and mental health.

Gaytri Sanku  
**Home town:** Naperville, IL  
**Degree:** BS, Neuroscience, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2015  
**Research Interests:** Elucidating the impact of chronic parasitic infections on viral immunity  
**Why MD/PhD?** Designing the future of health requires conductors. Physician scientists trained to create and act, are positioned to conduct the translational process of discovery into patient impact. I aim to be a physician in addition to a scientist to learn how to act by clinical practice and conduct the translation of infectious disease and public health into patient research contexts.

Adith Srivatsa  
**Home town:** Sacramento, CA  
**Degree:** BS, Biomedical Engineering, Georgia Institute of Technology, 2021  
**Research Interests:** Medical and molecular imaging, signal and image processing, structural biology, molecular dynamics simulations, wearable device development  
**2022 Rotation:** Lab of James Patton, MD, Professor Department of Orthopaedic Surgery  
**Why MD/PhD?** As a biomedical engineer with growing skills in processing images and signals, artificial intelligence, and designing hardware and software products, I can fill a need as a physician innovator, identify research opportunities and create solutions for healthcare.

Albert Yen  
**Home town:** Winnetka, IL  
**Degree** BS Math and Computer Science, University of Illinois at Chicago 2022  
**Research Interests:** Bioinformatics, big data, health informatics, biostatistics, genomics, public health.  
**2022 Rotation:** Lab of Saria Awadalla, PhD, Assoc. Prof, Dept of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, School of Public Health  
**Why MD/PhD?** In the post pandemic world, it is even more important to approach medicine from a societal level, as our health is intricately connected to the health of people around us. I want to utilize my inquisitive nature and passion for medicine to prevent disease on a large scale.

M1 students share a festive “Friends-Giving” leading into the Thanksgiving holiday
After our hybrid retreat in the Fall of 2021 we resumed our annual retreats this year with a two day in person event held in Chicago. We kicked things off on Thursday with the MSTP poster session held in Faculty Alumni Lounge with lunch. 15 students presented posters to the MSTP Leadership, MSTP Advisory Committee (MAC) and other invited guests. Everyone enjoyed the opportunity to interact in person and view the work of their peers.

The retreat continued on Friday at the Hyatt Place where we started early with breakfast prior to getting into the other planned events. Executive Dean, Mark Rosenblatt, MD, PhD, MBA, MHA opened the day with a state of the program overview, followed by a “Passing of the Gavel” to welcome Dr. Dawood Darbar and Dr. Olu Ajilore on board as the Co-Directors of the MSTP. Other sessions included student research presentations, a Professionalism session led by Dr. Ajilore, a wellness session, M3-M4 advice panel and cohort meetings. The scientific keynote address was given by Dr. Nancy Freitag, former Associate Director of the MSTP and newly named Department Chair or Pharmaceutical Sciences in the College of Pharmacy. Dr. Freitag’s talk was entitled, “Microbial invaders and the MSTP: joining forces to battle bad bugs”. The day concluded with a Field Day competition between the advising houses. Students from each of the four MSTP advising houses (Adenine, Thymine, Cytosine and Guanine) competed against each other in relay races, water balloon toss, building the tallest structure from marshmallows and toothpicks, and hula-hoop pass. This year Cytosine House led by Dr. Finn was able to nudge out Thymine House led by Dr. Darbar to win the Field Day competition. At the end of the day the students had a BBQ where they continued to socialize.

(Right: Poster presentations by Tova Bergsten (G4) and Maggie Weiss (G3) at the 2022 Retreat on Thursday in Faculty Alumni Lounge)

(Left: Passing of the Gavel– Executive Dean Rosenblatt is stepping down as Director of the MSTP and will serve as Director Emeritus of the MSTP. Dr. Dawood Darbar (left) and Dr. Olu Ajilore (middle) will serve as Co-Directors of the MSTP. )

(Below: Suzi Alvernaz (G2) presents on her research: Michael Metrick (M3) in Adenine House competes with his team at Field Day as they work together to build the tallest structure: MSTP Retreat Photo at the end of Field Days.)
The 4th Annual MSTP Lecture took place on Wednesday, October 5th via Zoom. This year the students welcomed Euan Ashley, MD, PhD. Dr. Ashley is Associate Dean and Professor of Medicine and Genetics at Stanford University in California. Over the last decade his team has focused on the application of the human genome to medicine. He was recognized by the Obama White House for his contributions to Personalized Medicine and awarded the American Heart Association Medal of Honor for Genomic and Precision Medicine. His book *The Genome Odyssey – Medical Mysteries and the Incredible Quest to Solve Them* was released in 2021. He is co-founder of three companies: Personalis, DeepCell and SVEXA.

Left: Ben Gordon (G4) wins first prize for his oral presentation on breast cancer metastasis at the Center for Cardiovascular Research (CCVR) Day.

MSTP, GEMS and College of Pharmacy and PREP working at Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS) in Anaheim CA—November 9-12, 2022

Left: MSTP Students off to the races—2022 Chicago Bank of America Marathon Finishers–Brenna Kirkpatrick (G1) and Maggie Weiss (G3) and Michelle Sheena (G3) Congratulations to all participants and finishers!

Above: Center for Bioinformatics and Quantitative Biology 2nd Annual Research Symposium—October 21, 2022 participants: Julianne Jorgensen (G2), Ali Farhat (G2) and Suzi Alvernaz (G2)

Above: MSTP students gathered for an interactive USMLE Step 1 question writer workshop held by McGraw Hill for their First Aid book series. This project was led by MSTP students Joe Geraghty (M4), Cutler Lewandowski (M4) and Maggie Weiss (G3)
Awards and Honors
MSTP Alumni Association, Edward P. Cohen Award 2022 was presented to Daniel Principe (M3). (left) This award is presented annually to a MSTP student who has completed their PhD Training and successfully defended their thesis and is returning to medical school. Students submit an application and the awardee is voted on by the entire MSTP Alumni Association. They are recognized at a fall dinner seminar with a certificate and small monetary award. This award is coordinated by alumnus, David Ramsey, MD, PhD, MPH (2008)

Congratulations to our M4’s for their recognition in AOA and Gold Humanism

Alpha Omega Alpha (AOA) Honor Society:
Russell Dulman, Joseph Geraghty
Cutler Lewandowski and Christina Su

Gold Humanism Society
Osama El-Sayed, Joseph Geraghty, and Cutler Lewandowski

Wedding Bells
Congratulations

Bianca Bigit (M2) (below) married Sam on May 23rd– the 6th anniversary of their first date. The marriage took place at the Gage Restaurant on Michigan Avenue

Deedee Keen (G1) (right) married Casey Aman on October 26, 2022 in Chicago. Casey is a PGY-1 in the Med

Greg Heller (G5) (right) got engaged to Adrienne on 1/22/22. (an early birthday present!) The wedding is planned for March 11, 2023 in Los Gatos, CA

Kyle Kremiller (G2) (left) got engaged to Megan Irene Baer on March 13, 2022. They are getting married on August 26th 2023

Osama El-Sayed (M4) (Left) with his wife, Heba Ansari and his son Musa El-Sayed, born on June 20,
Alumni News

Welcoming our newest alumni into the group at the MSTP Graduation Banquet held on Thursday, May 5th in the Faculty Alumni Lounge. Executive Dean, Mark Rosenblatt presided over the ceremony recognizing our 6 very accomplished graduates and wishing them well in their medical residency. Family, friends, mentors and current MSTP students were in attendance. All 6 were awarded their MD and PhD degrees at the College of Medicine graduation the following day. Pictured from left: Dr. Larry Tobacman, (former MSTP Director) Nathaniel Campbell, Artemis Gogos, Dr. Patricia Finn, Cory Reiter, Allison Kirchner Ellis, Joshua Jones, Executive Dean, Dr. Mark Rosenblatt, Dr. Dawood Darbar, Dr. Olu Ajilore, Julie Mann Director of Program Administration and Roberta Bernstein former Director of Program Administration.

In the Alumni Mailbag

From: Lila Glotfelty  
Sent: Thursday, May 26, 2022  
Subject: Hello from Colorado! I love the alumni newsletters, please don't ever stop sending them!  
I hope all is well at UIC, things look to be going swimmingly from the insane publication list and smiling faces. =)  
I finished my GI fellowship at UPenn last year and joined Sanofi as a full-time clinical research director. It's a phenomenal global company, really interesting work. I'm also a part time clinical assistant professor in the GI department at University of Colorado because why would I only do 1 job (!) and I like being a doctor.  
Alicia Rizzo is here for her PSTP in Pulm-Crit, but is moving to Boston to finish her training at MGH as her mentor was recruited to be the new chair of Pulm. We are going to her wedding in July!  
I'll be in Chicago June 10-18 and I'd love to stop by sometime and see you all if you have time! I miss UIC terribly!
Best,
Lila Glotfelty

P.S. I'm still in touch with my mentor, Gail Hecht, she sends her regards!

Editors Note: After receiving this email we were fortunate to have Lila give a dinner seminar on June 14th while she was in town with her family. It was great to catch up with Lila and the current students loved hearing about her experiences and moving into industry.

From: Joseph Turek  
Sent: October 19, 2022  
Subject: UI:COM MSTP Spring 2022 Newsletter  
Hi Julie,
I wanted to pass on a few newsworthy things we have been doing here at Duke in my lab that have translated to the bedside in big ways. UIC MD/PhD prepared me well! Thought you would enjoy.

https://www.cbs.com/shows/video/5R3B0rtNbl_46hVkJng8PtLiYj797uJd/
https://www.today.com/video/5-month-old-healthy-after-receiving-first-ever-partial-heart-transplant-147984453591
https://today.duke.edu/2022/09/duke-health-performs-world%E2%80%99s-first-partial-

Note to all alumni: Please keep the updates on your news coming. If you're going to be in Chicago, please stop by for an informal visit or to give a formal presentation on your work.

Advertisement

UIC MSTP Alumni Association
The purpose of the UIC MSTP Alumni Association is to encourage networking among alumni and to support current medical scientist trainees at UIC. Since 2009, the Alumni Association has also sponsored the “Dr. Edward P. Cohen Medical Scientist Training Award” given each year to an outstanding student who has completed his or her PhD and is returning to the 3rd year of medical school. Please email David Ramsey, MD, PhD (2008) dram800@gmail.com in order to join and encourage your fellow UIC MSTP Alumni to signup for the group! Donations to support this award may be sent to: UIC MSTP Alumni Association*, COM Dean's Office, MC 784, 1853 West Polk Street, Chicago IL 60612
New MSTP Associate Directors Named

We are pleased to announce the appointment of two new MSTP Associate Directors: Tory Eisenlohr-Moul, PhD (left) and Ravinder Gill, PhD (right). The announcement was made on October 6th at an MSTP Town Hall. Both have jumped right into their new role with the MSTP!

Dr. Eisenlohr-Moul is an Associate Professor of Psychiatry and the Director of the CLEAR Lab. Her research interest are steroid pathophysiology of reproductive mood disorders. She is the leader of the G1-G2 Cohort and the Guanine House.

Dr. Gill is an Associate Professor of Medicine in the Division of Gastroenterology & Hepatology in the Department of Medicine. Her research interest are gut epithelial physiology, inflammation and microbiota. She is the leader of the G3-G5 cohort and the Cytosine House.

MSTP Updates from Dawood Darbar, Olu Ajilore, Ravinder Gill and Tory Eisenlohr-Moul

As we transition back into person activities this academic year it has been a busy fall for the MSTP. We are enjoying our new roles as leaders of the MSTP and we continue to be amazed and proud of all of our students’ accomplishments.

First off, we want to welcome our M1 students to the program. This year we welcomed 10 new students who started in this past summer with a 6 week lab rotation prior to starting their M1 year. They all just completed their first semester and they are taking a well deserved winter break. To learn more about our new students see pages 1-3 for a brief bio.

It was with mixed emotions that we said good-bye to MSTP Associate Director Dr. Finn left UIC and the MSTP in late August to become the Dean of the School of Medicine at the University of New Mexico. We are excited for her new opportunity but she is missed by the students because of her advocacy on their behalf. Dr. Finn and Dr. Perkins trained 7 MSTP students in their lab in, as well as, serving in leadership roles with the MSTP. In addition, Dr. Finn led the Cytosine Advising House for the MSTP, where her team won the annual field day competition that took place during our retreat.

Other program administration updates include Dr. Brian Layden being appointed to head of the MSTP Advisory Committee (MAC) and serve as its chair. Dr. Layden took over for Dr. Perkins this fall. He had previously served as a MAC member and he has worked to increase the number MAC mentors to 15. Dr. Layden’s first initiative as MAC Chair was to expand the committee’s responsibilities and he assigned all MSTP students a MAC mentor and had the MAC mentor meet with their assigned students. The purpose of the MAC is to provide the MSTP students with an additional scientific resource. The MAC consists of faculty from diverse disciplines and programs. Next steps include involving MAC members on the MSTP Admissions Committee and with MSTP programming.

Dr. Darbar has been working all fall to finalize an articulation agreement between the MSTP and the School of Public Health. The purpose of this agreement would be to codify the shared credits between the two schools for students who want to pursue their PhD in a School of Public Health discipline. We are looking forward to finalizing the details and moving forward with this partnership.

Lastly, we want to thank all of you for your dedication to your physician scientist training. We know MD-PhD training is a big commitment and we want you to know that we are here to support and advocate for you at each stage of your training.

Want the latest MSTP updates? Follow us on social media:
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Facebook: UICMSTP
LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/university-of-illinois-college-of-medicine-mstp-alumni/