PREP Newsletter

Welcome!

Welcome to the University of Chicago PREP Newsletter! We have exciting news to share that the UChicago PREP grant was renewed in 2018 for an additional five years. The UChicago PREP Program started in 2004, and 89 Scholars have now completed the program. We couldn’t have done it without all of you – your hard work and academic achievements in the PREP, through graduate school and beyond has helped to secure continuation and growth for the UChicago PREP. Congratulations to all alums!

PREP Symposium 2019

Congratulations to the University of Chicago PREP Scholars class of 2019! Eight Scholars finished the PREP program and presented their research at the PREP Symposium on June 12, 2019. They will be enrolling in graduate school to continue their studies at institutions including Emory, Baylor, Northwestern, Georgia State, and UCSD this Fall. They had a great year at UChicago and we wish them the best in their future research careers!

Welcome to the 2019-20 UChicago PREP Scholars!

The new PREP Scholars arrived in July, 2019 and represent the following undergraduate institutions: St. Francis College, University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez, Case Western Reserve University, Appalachian State University, California State University at Long Beach, Northwestern University, University of Central Florida and University of Puerto Rico at Bayamón.

Their research interests include chemical biology, virology, neuroscience, cancer biology, genetics, immunology, and microbiology. We anticipate a great year of research and preparation for graduate school for all.
Glenn Randall, PhD, is a Professor in the Department of Microbiology at University of Chicago. His laboratory studies virus-host interactions, specifically focusing on hepatitis C and dengue virus. Dr. Randall has set the record so far for mentoring eight PREP Scholars since 2008, along with the help of several graduate students and postdocs in his laboratory. All eight of Dr. Randall’s former PREP Scholars enrolled in graduate school and two have now completed their PhDs. Typical comments from past PREP scholars include: “He is an amazing mentor”; “He makes you think like a scientist! I now have confidence to tackle problems and overcome experimental roadblocks.” We thank Dr. Randall for his dedication and commitment to mentoring PREP Scholars and congratulate him on recently being promoted to full Professor!

PREP Alum Updates

Congrats to all of our former PREP Scholars who have completed their graduate degrees! 28 UChicago PREP alums have received a PhD thus far and overall over 97% of our alums have matriculated into higher education graduate programs. We are very proud of all of you!

2019 PhD and MD Graduates

Yaiyr Astudillo-Scalia, PhD (PREP class of 2013)
Leila Reyes Ruiz, PhD (PREP class of 2014)
Natassia Buckridge, MD (PREP class of 2015)
Liz Garcia Peterson, PhD (PREP class of 2015)

Our full list of graduates is posted on our website. If you’ve graduated recently, please let us know! Fill out our 2019 PREP Alum Survey.

PREP Alum Spotlight

Xiomarie Alejandro-Navarreto, who received her Bachelor’s degree from the University of Puerto Rico at Humacao, participated in the University of Chicago PREP Program in 2015-16. As a PREP Scholar, Xiomarie joined the laboratory of Sean Crosson in the Department of Microbiology. Her PREP research was recently published in 2019 in the Molecular Microbiology Journal. After the PREP, Xiomarie enrolled in the University of Illinois at Chicago, Graduate Education in Biomedical Sciences (GEMS) program, where she was awarded an NSF Bridge to the Doctorate Fellowship for her first two years of graduate school. Xiomarie joined the laboratory of Dr. Nancy Freitag at UIC and is continuing her research in Microbiology. In graduate school, Xiomarie has been the recipient of multiple travel grants to conferences to present her research, and was awarded the AAAS/Science Program for Excellence in Science Fellowship in 2018. She passed her qualifying exams this past year and has been involved in teaching, mentoring undergraduate trainees in her lab, and is active in her local SACNAS chapter serving as Secretary of the Board. Congrats Xiomarie on all your accomplishments!
The 2019 Midwest Regional PREP/IMSD Symposium was held on May 10-11, 2019 and was hosted by the University of Chicago and Northwestern University PREP and IMSD Programs at the Big Ten Conference Center. The 85 participants from 7 Midwestern institutions included 29 PREP Scholars, 38 graduate students, 7 guest speakers and panelists, and 11 PREP/IMSD program directors. The theme of the 2019 Symposium was “From Here to There: My Science, Our Community, Our Stories” and was organized by a student-led committee of PREP Scholars and IMSD graduate students from the University of Chicago and Northwestern University, and included scientific research sessions, professional development, and networking opportunities. The Symposium was designed to highlight the stories and journeys of individuals from underrepresented groups pursuing scientific careers, and how students and professionals alike overcame adversity to be where they are today.

UChicago PREP Scholars on the Symposium planning committee included: Stacey Jones, Katiannah Moise, Yemko Pryor and Christopher Ware.

Click here for full summary article of this event or find it posted on our website.

If you have any recent awards or career news that you would like to share, please e-mail us at Irisner1@pedsbsd.uchicago.edu or fill out our 2019 PREP Alum Survey. We’d love to hear from you!

The University of Chicago PREP has a new website! Visit us at: http://bsdprep.uchicago.edu/