

FELLOWS PROGRAM



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Keystone Symposia Fellows Program is a key initiative in the organization's Diversity in Life Science (DLSP) portfolio, designed to advance diversity in leadership positions across the biomedical workforce.

The program provides early-career scientists from underrepresented (UR) backgrounds (i.e., UR racial and ethnic groups and individuals from disadvantaged or underserved backgrounds) in the US with leadership training and mentorship at this critical stage of career development. Fellows are paired with a distinguished member of our Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) for one-on-one mentorship throughout the year to enable them to achieve their career goals, and participate in monthly virtual group sessions tailored to address early-career challenges. In addition, they are invited to participate in twice-yearly SAB meetings, where

"...my view of how I fit into the scientific community expanded immensely to see a cross-disciplinary group of thinkers come together to impact scientific conferences as an immediate goal, and hopefully influence the growth of science as a broader vision."

Jonathan Deane, PhD
Kumquat Biosciences | Keystone Fellow 2011

they engage with about 100 scientific thought-leaders to discuss the frontiers of biomedical research and curate scientific programming for our internationally acclaimed conference series.

Graduates of the Keystone Symposia Fellows Program become members of a unique cadre of scientists who are well-connected, knowledgeable and capable members of the life sciences community, and active proponents of inclusive practice in life science research. Since its inception in 2009, the Fellows Program has enhanced the professional and career development of 78 early-career investigators, many of whom now hold leadership roles throughout academia, industry and government. Importantly, "alumni" Fellows remain connected to Keystone Symposia, as speakers and organizers of our conferences, as mentors to current Fellows, and as strategic advisors on our Board of Directors and Scientific Advisory Board, thereby further advancing our mission to promote inclusive excellence in the life sciences.

2022 FELLOWS UPDATE

This past year (fiscal year from July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022), Keystone Symposia welcomed nine new Fellows who represent a range of scientific research interests. This year also saw increased external funding for the Program, including support from the Burroughs Wellcome Fund, Eli Lilly and Company, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Boettcher Foundation, and individual gifts from Geoff Ginsburg, Bei Zhang and Mark Erion, which largely supported the program costs for the year.

In June, our 2022 Fellows attended their first in-person SAB meeting in Keystone, Colorado, where they had the opportunity to also connect with graduating 2020 Fellows. For both classes this was a landmark event to be able to network with SAB members and each other in-person, finally, after two years of being forced to convene virtually due to the pandemic. In total 12 Fellows from the 2020 and 2022 class cohorts attended, kicking off the 2-day event with a Pre-SAB Leadership Skills Session led by SAB member panelists Geoff Ginsburg, MD, PhD (Chief Medical and Scientific Officer, NIH All of Us Research Program), Elizabeth Villa, PhD (HHMI Investigator, Associate Professor, UC San Diego) and Arturo Zychlinsky, PhD (Director of the Department of Cellular Microbiology, Max Planck Institute for Infection Biology). Panelists discussed various leadership skills such as promoting oneself, helping junior scientists achieve their full potential, and navigating power dynamics. The session culminated with roundtable discussions between the Fellows and various SAB mentors who dropped in to participate and share their perspectives. Importantly, the session also provided a unique opportunity for mentors to learn first-hand from Fellows about the leadership issues that early-stage investigators navigate.

On day two, Fellows were embedded in SAB committee discussions to peer review conference proposals for the 2024 conference season, and participated in a strategic planning workshop on Health Equity programming. In addition, four of the 2020 Fellows presented Lightning Talks on their research to the SAB and Board of Directors, to cap off their Fellows Program experience and receive feedback from this esteemed group.

- **Zaida Ramirez Ortiz** *SCARF1: Efferocytosis and Autoimmunity*
- **Martín Riccomagno** *Glial-Neuronal Interactions in Development and Disease*
- **Rachel Roth Flach** *Developing Novel Therapeutics for Patients with Metabolic Disease & Heart Failure with Preserved Ejection Fraction*
- **Ramon (Ray) Whitson** *Transcription Factor Targeting via Covalent Drug Discovery*

Our congratulations go out to the entire graduating class of 2020, and we look forward to seeing our 2022 Fellows again for their second in-person SAB experience in January 2023!



FELLOWS ATTEST TO PROGRAM VALUE

We rely on the Fellows' feedback and recommendations to continually improve our programming. In a post-program survey, the 2020 class reported the following key benefits from their experience:

- increased professional competence
- expanded professional networks
- access to a new professional support system.

All plan to recommend the Fellows Program to eligible scientists in their network and are likewise committed to continued involvement in the Keystone Symposia Fellow Alumni network.



"The Keystone Symposia Fellows Program made me more savvy and optimistic about my career path. The Fellows Friday writing sessions were especially helpful and played a big part in getting my first last-author paper published in PNAS."

Tamia Harris-Tryon, MD, PhD
University of Texas
Southwestern Medical
Center | KS Fellow
2020/21

FELLOWS FRIDAYS

Fellows Fridays are monthly virtual group discussions designed to address unique challenges faced at this pivotal early-career stage, and to provide strategies and skills to successfully pursue professional goals.

Members of our Board of Directors, Scientific Advisory Board, alumni Fellows, and other key thought-leaders in the Keystone Symposia community are all invited to share their expertise and lessons learned with the current Fellows. Some of the topics covered with the 2020 and 2022 Fellows included:

- *Building a Positive and Productive Lab Culture*
- *Promoting Your Science & Gaining Visibility as an Independent PI*
- *Grant Strategies to Promote Success*
- *Publication Strategies & Demystifying the Editorial Process*
- *Tenure and Promotion Strategies*
- *Strategies to Combat Apprehension, to Enhance Networking, and Seize Opportunities*
- *Aspire Higher: Think Bigger*
- *Overcoming COVID Challenges*
- *Federal Contracts, Preclinical and Clinical Services, and SBIR/STTR grants*

In addition to supporting Fellows' professional development, Fellows Fridays also provide critical networking experiences. These sessions connect Fellows with SAB members beyond their one-on-one mentors, providing additional expertise and perspectives

from those who may not have been able to serve as formal mentors but have an interest in supporting the program and its participants. In addition, these informal meetings throughout the year lower the barriers for Fellows to engage with these thought-leaders at the in-person SAB meetings.

Second, Fellows Fridays connect current Fellows with alumni as subject matter experts and potential peer mentors and collaborators. For example, across the topics above, nine alumni served as panelists to mentor this next-generation of Fellows following in their footsteps: De'Broski Herbert (Fellows class of 2009), Cherié Butts (2009), Manu Platt (2012), Curtis Henry (2014), Amanda Brown (2014), Vinicio de Jesus Perez (2014), Stacey Finley (2016), Samira Musah (2018), and Kizzmekia Corbett (2018). The extension of the 2020 Fellows Program due to the pandemic also presented an opportunity to invite overlapping classes to participate in Fellows Fridays and build connections across the 2020/2022 class cohorts.

We are grateful to the dedicated members of Keystone Symposia's Scientific Advisory Board and the Keystone Fellows Community who have contributed their time and expertise to mentoring and advising our Fellows!

FELLOWS AMONG KEYSTONE SYMPOSIA LEADERSHIP

Keystone Symposia Fellows alumni have served leadership roles on Keystone Symposia's Board of Directors (BoD) and Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) over the years:



DE'BROSKI HERBERT
CLASS OF 2009

- BoD (2020-2021)
- SAB (2015-2021)



**KIZZMEKIA
CORBETT**
CLASS OF 2018

- SAB membership
confirmed July 1, 2022

CHERIÉ BUTTS
CLASS OF 2009

- BoD & SAB (2017-present)



MANU PLATT
CLASS OF 2012

- SAB membership
confirmed July 1, 2022

STACEY FINLEY
CLASS OF 2016

Has also been invited to ad hoc on the SAB. She has deferred her participation while she is on sabbatical with the prestigious École Polytechnique in Lausanne, and we look forward to having her join us in 2023!



FELLOWS AT THE PODIUM

Beyond the Fellows Program experience, Keystone Symposia Fellows and alumni also shared their scientific expertise as invited speakers at last year's conferences:

KIZZMEKIA CORBETT Class of 2018

• *Lessons from the Pandemic: Responding to Emerging Zoonotic Viral Diseases*

Talk Title: "Using Viral Immunology to Inform Vaccines for Pandemic Preparedness"

ALSO SERVED AS SESSION CHAIR

• *Positive-Strand RNA Viruses*

Talk Title: "Rapid Development of mRNA-1273: Then and Now"

CURTIS HENRY Class of 2014

• *Cancer: Aging in the Driver's Seat*

Talk Title: "Delineating the Impact of Inflamm-aging on Leukemia Development and the Efficacy of Chimeric Antigen Receptor T-cell Therapy"

ALSO SERVED AS SESSION CHAIR / CAREER ROUNDTABLE PANELIST

THOMAS MARTÍNEZ Class of 2022

• *Micropeptides: Biogenesis and Function*

Talk Title: "Discovery and Characterization of Microproteins in Mouse Primary Adipocytes"

SAMIRA MUSAH Class of 2018

• *Organoids as Tools for Fundamental Discovery and Translation*

Talk Title: "Stem Cell-Derived Organ Chips for Disease Modeling"

DENISE OKAFOR Class of 2020

• *Gene Regulation: From Emerging Technologies to New Models*

Talk Title: "Ligand Interactions that Determine Transcriptional Outcomes"

ALSO SERVED AS SESSION CHAIR / CAREER ROUNDTABLE PANELIST

RACHEL ROTH FLACH (Class of 2020)

• *Mitochondria, Metabolism and Heart*

Talk Title: "Metabolic Targets for Heart Failure"

CHRISTIE TOWERS (Class of 2022)

• *Tumor Metabolism*

Talk Title: "Circumventing Autophagy Inhibition in Cancer Cells"

Additional Fellows were selected for short talk presentations, including **Zaida Ramirez Ortiz** (Class of 2020) and **Xavier Revelo** (Class of 2022), and Fellow **Michael Coronado** (Class of 2016) served as a Career Roundtable panelist, supporting our mission to foster diversity and career-development in the life-science community.



STAY TUNED!

Keystone Symposia Fellows will be stepping up to the podium as speakers, short talk and workshop presenters at 9 conferences in our upcoming 2023 conference season!



FELLOWS IN THE NEWS

In addition, DLSP consistently works to amplify Fellows' accomplishments posted to social media (Twitter and LinkedIn). Here we feature Fellows in the News with a sampling of achievements by our 2020 and 2022 Fellows:

BREANN BROWN (Class of 2020) received an NIH New Innovator Award for high-risk, high-reward research.

 <https://bit.ly/3DqEgYC>

DAVID GONZALEZ (Class of 2020) was the recipient of a 2020 Chan-Zuckerberg Research Award for his research on Pediatric Inflammatory Bowel Disease (with co-investigators Hiutung Chu and Mamata Sivagnanam), as well as a 2022 Janssen Award in Immunology and 2022 Leducq Foundation Award.


TAMIA HARRIS-TRYON (Class of 2020) published a review article in Science

 <https://bit.ly/3S76Odt>

DENISE OKAFOR (Class of 2020) received a Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) award from the National Science Foundation.

 <https://bit.ly/3RFEwa>

ZAIDA RAMIREZ ORTIZ'S (Class of 2020) research on the SCARF1 receptor molecule earned her a 2021 Lupus Innovation Award and she also received a Lupus Impact Award from the Department of Defense.

 <https://bit.ly/3DpRi8I>

RACHEL ROTH FLACH (Class of 2020) has been selected by the SAB to organize a meeting on Unraveling Vascular Layers to Understand Human Disease for Keystone Symposia in 2024. >>

"Our regular meetings allow for a low-pressure environment that facilitates candid discussions...we have had impactful discussions on what it means to be a mentor, how to resolve conflicts in the lab, and strategies for balancing the obligations faculty face."

Quinton Smith, PhD / University of California, Irvine / KS Fellow 2022

RAMON WHITSON (Class of 2020) was recently selected to lead a Novartis initiative aimed at applying novel chemistry tools to target transcription factors.

ALEXANDER CARTAGENA-RIVERA (Class of 2022) was recently selected to participate as a member of the New York Academy of Sciences (NYAS) Interstellar Initiative 2022.

MAKHOSI EDMONDSON (Class of 2022) was recently nominated as a PAH Discovery-External Opportunity Target Reviewer, supporting Janssen R&D senior leadership in the due diligence of external opportunities for pulmonary indications.

THOMAS MARTINEZ (Class of 2022) is part of a microprotein community consortium that recently published in Nature Biotech. Martinez's postdoctoral research helped inform the final list of the consortia's initial confident microprotein annotations to include in GENCODE.

 <https://go.nature.com/3QLpjTI>

ERIKA MOORE (Class of 2022) received the Lupus Research Alliance Career Development Award.

 <https://bit.ly/3DqnQzw>

JULIE MORENO (Class of 2022) received the prestigious Boehringer Ingelheim 1st Annual Veterinary Summer Scholars Program Outstanding Mentoring Award, recognizing her dedication in sponsoring an undergrad from Tuskegee University as well as a vet student in her research lab.

XAVIER REVELO (Class of 2022) was awarded a McKnight Land-Grant Professorship, one of the highest honors at University of Minnesota across all disciplines.

 <https://bit.ly/3LIQDHm>



"...being part of Keystone Symposia as a Fellow you become part of a larger family. Fellows from prior years are there to provide advice and you want to celebrate their good news with them. I hope that I can do the same for future Fellows! "

Zaida G. Ramirez Ortiz, PhD
University of Massachusetts Medical School
KS Fellow 2020/21

JON SILVER (Class of 2022) was recently promoted to Associate Principal Scientist in the Early Respiratory and Inflammation group at AstraZeneca.

QUINTON SMITH (Class of 2022) published two review articles in 2022:

Wang, Y., Keshavarz, M., Barhouse, P., Smith, Q. Strategies for Regenerative Vascular Tissue Engineering. Advanced Biology 2022, 2200050.

 <https://bit.ly/3QDK8AJ>

Barhouse, PS., Andrade, MJ., Smith Q. Home Away from Home: Bioengineering Advancements to Mimic the Developmental and Adult Stem Cell Niche. Frontiers in Chemical Engineering 2022, p.16.

 <https://bit.ly/3LeA000>

CHRISTIE TOWERS (Class of 2022) was named a 2022 Pew-Stewart Scholar for Cancer Research.

 <https://bit.ly/3S5dOb2>



For more information, including a directory of past Keystone Symposia Fellows, visit

keystonesymposia.org/diversity/fellows-program

If you have questions, please email **DLSP@keystonesymposia.org**

RAISING VISIBILITY FOR KEYSTONE SYMPOSIA'S FELLOWS

As part of our goal to raise visibility for the Fellows, we launched an updated [Fellows Directory](#) and published several blog pieces and social media campaigns in collaboration with our Fellows Community.

These included a *Keypoint* Newsletter piece [Introducing The New Fellows Class Of 2022](#) (29 Nov 2021), as well as *Keypoint* blogs featuring Fellows in celebration of [Hispanic Heritage Month](#) (27 Sept 2021), [Black History & Juneteenth](#) (9 Feb 2022), and [Women's History Month](#) (11 Mar 2022).

Alumni Fellows also participated in our "5 Questions" Spotlight series in support of Fellows recruitment in the fall of 2021. These vignettes were publicized via social media and featured Fellows' research goals as well as perspectives on their Fellows Program experience.



41 MIN READ

CELEBRATING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH WITH KEYSTONE SYMPOSIA FELLOWS

Mar 11, 2022 by Keystone Symposia

For Women's History Month, we are highlighting the many inspiring women who are making history in science and medicine!

SUPPORT KEYSTONE SYMPOSIA

Keystone Symposia serves as a catalyst for the advancement of life-science research and medicine by convening the world's leading researchers, clinicians, global health experts and other biomedical players to discuss and solve today's greatest biomedical challenges. This mission is made possible by financial support from organizations and individuals throughout the global life science community. These generous gifts and grants fund many aspects of our meeting programs and scholarship opportunities, as a 501(c)(3) educational nonprofit organization.



LEARN MORE ABOUT SUPPORTING KEYSTONE SYMPOSIA
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