

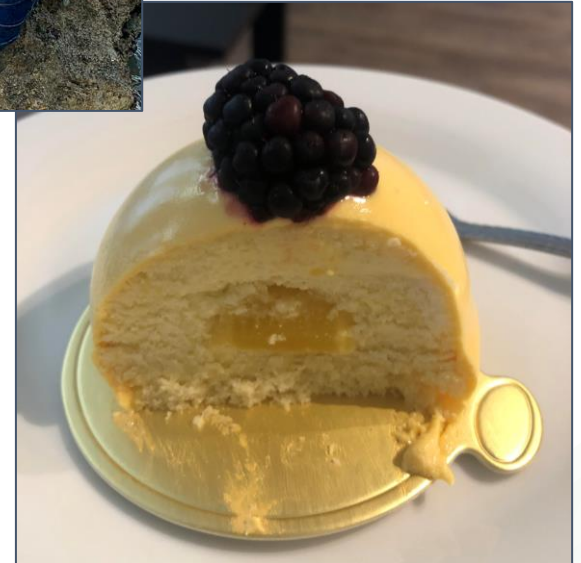


Genetics and Genomics Students

Get to know a bit about current students
through these mini bios!

Ashley Burke

- Email: ashley.burke@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 1
- Hometown: Miramar, FL
- Undergrad: Stanford University - Biology
- What I do for fun: Playing video games, cooking/baking, eating, watching plays/musicals, watching reality tv (Love Island UK, anyone??)
- What I love about Houston: Diverse food options, big city convenience, AFFORDABLE housing, good city for people who like to drive, no snow
- What I love about BCM: Friendly, open environment with lots of collaboration; guaranteed funding; really strong research labs; one year of classes; located in Houston



Fangfei Guo

- Email: Fangfei.Guo@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 1
- Hometown: Jiangxi, China
- Undergrad: Tongji University, Biotechnology
- What I do for fun: Hiking, cooking, shopping
- What I love about Houston: Food
- What I love about BCM: Nice people



Gary Huang

- Email: gary.huang@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 1
- Hometown: St. Louis, MO
- Undergrad: Washington University in St. Louis; Biology & Legal Studies
- What I do for fun: Cook, hike (not so much anymore), parks, coffee shops
- What I love about Houston: Amazing restaurant scene
- What I love about BCM: Great views from work (if your lab is high enough)
- Other: I love meeting people, and both BCM and Houston are great!! Feel free to ask me anything you want to know about moving to a new state and starting grad school during a pandemic!!



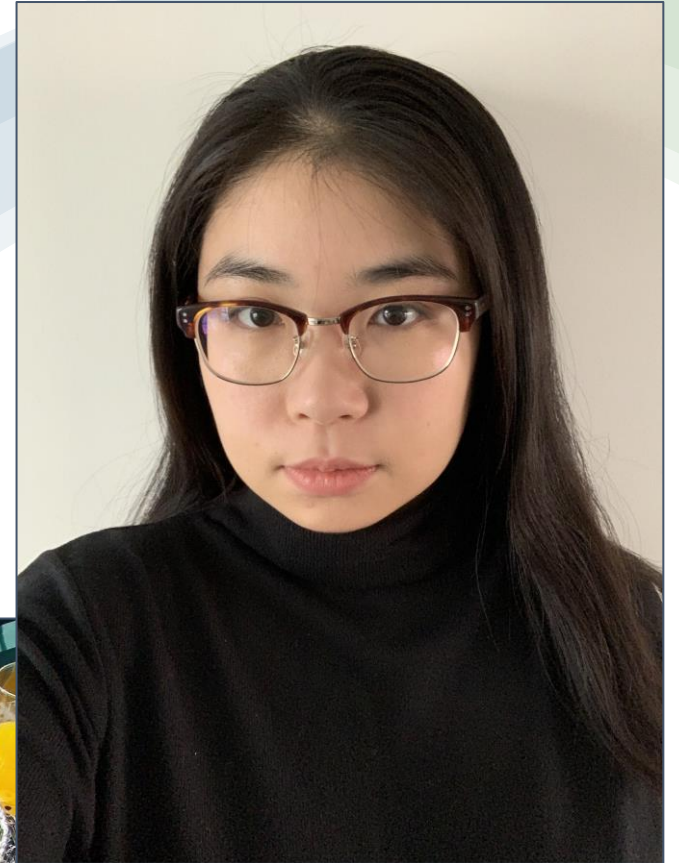
Sidhant Kalia

- Email: sidhant.kalia@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 1
- Undergrad: University of Delhi, Biomedical Sciences
- What I do for fun: Singing and learning musical instruments, writing, reading, gardening, traveling, and photography.
- Other: I am the happy plant dad of 25 plant babies.



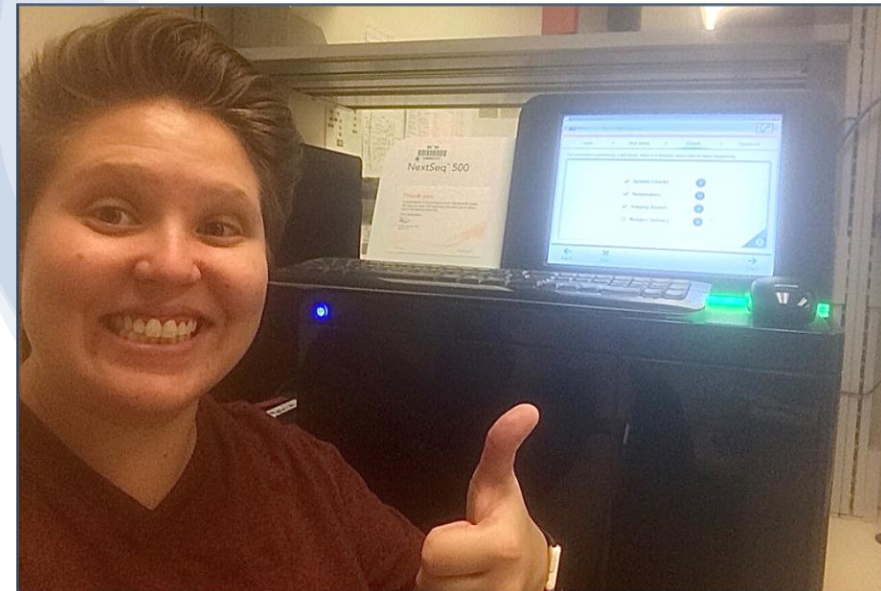
Yan Li

- Email: yan.li@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 1
- Hometown: Tianjin, China
- Undergrad: Rochester, NY- Molecular genetics
- What I do for fun: Hiking, yoga
- What I love about Houston: Nice weather, Coffee and food
- Other: A program with people who care about you is the most important thing to consider when choosing a program.



Brittney Lozzi

- Email: lozzi@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 1
- Hometown: Maryland
- Undergrad: Salisbury University
- What I love about Houston: Galveston, NASA
- What I love about BCM: Great resources
- Other: In my undergrad lab, we used wild yeast to brew great beer



Christina Magyar

- Email: christina.magyar@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 1
- Hometown: Upper Michigan
- Undergrad: Lake Superior State University - Biochemistry, Math
- What I do for fun: Hang out with my dogs
- What I love about Houston: Hermann Park
- What I love about BCM: Friendly atmosphere



Toni Martinez

- Email: antoinette.martinez@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 1
- Hometown: Houston, TX
- Undergrad: University of St. Thomas, BS in Bioinformatics
- What I do for fun: Cook, garden, attend concerts and shows
- What I love about Houston: There's something for everyone here.
- What I love about BCM: Being surrounded by so many brilliant people



Katie Pendleton

- Email: katherine.Pendleton@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 1
- Hometown: Powder Springs, GA
- Undergrad: Georgia Tech
- What I do for fun: Travel, mud races, swim, cook, experiment with new cocktails, and host traditional high tea parties
- Other: In college, I played clarinet for the marching band.



Eddie Pietryk

- Email: Edward.pietrykiii@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 1
- Hometown: Salisbury, NC
- Undergrad: University of North Carolina
- What I do for fun: Cook, bake, read, spend time outside.
- Other: Fun fact! I once lived in an ashram and became a flower garland pro and had a mountain cow friend.



Kevin Wilhelm

- Email: kevin.wilhelm@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 1
- Hometown: Omaha, NE
- Undergrad: University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences
- What I do for fun: Workout, watch sports, golf, play basketball, read
- What I love about Houston: Texans games, patio bars everywhere, nice weather year-round
- What I love about BCM: Inclusive, easy to reach out to mentors and the collaborative environment
- Other: Houston is a fantastic place to live and learn, easy to focus on your work yet have so many opportunities to unwind!



Andrew Yang

- Email: adyang@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 1
- Hometown: Taipei, Taiwan
- Undergrad: University of California San Diego
- What I do for fun: Cook, with an emphasis on Asian cuisine
- Other: Fun fact, I was a professional Yu-Gi-Oh player.



Matthew Cooke

- Email: mcooke@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 2
- Lab: Christophe Herman
- Hometown: Fresno, California
- Undergrad: UC Santa Cruz, Molecular Biology
- What I do for fun: Exercise, cook, bake, mix drinks, travel, hike
- What I love about Houston: It has the feel of a town, but there's all of the things to do of a large city.



Moez Dawood

- Email: mdawood@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 2
- Lab: Richard Gibbs
- Hometown: Chicago, IL
- Undergrad: Rice University, Chemistry
- What I do for fun: Fantasy football
- What I love about BCM: The people
- Other: One time I reenacted a scene from Game of Thrones with a BCM faculty member.



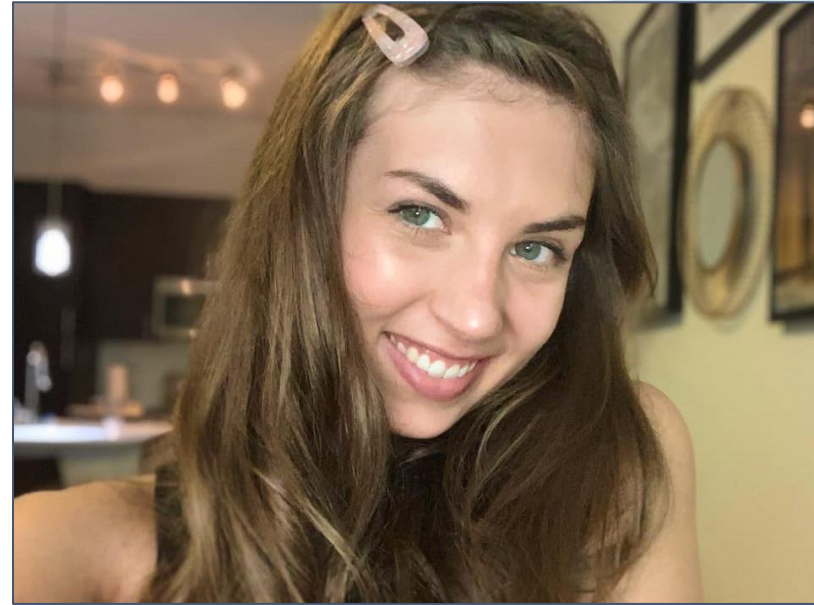
Kristy Jay

- Email: kjay@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 2
- Lab: Michael Wangler
- Hometown: Minnesota
- Undergrad: University of Minnesota
- What I do for fun: Travel with my family
- Other: After undergrad, I worked as a lab technician at UMN.



Jordan Lee

- Email: jordan.lee@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 2
- Lab: Greg Ira
- Hometown: DeWitt, Michigan
- Undergrad: Ferris State University, Biotechnology
- What I do for fun: Go two-stepping (pre Covid)
- What I love about Houston: My church, and attending the rodeo. I love the country music and all the animals! There is no shortage of fun things to do in Houston!
- Other: I ran varsity cross country and track and field in college.



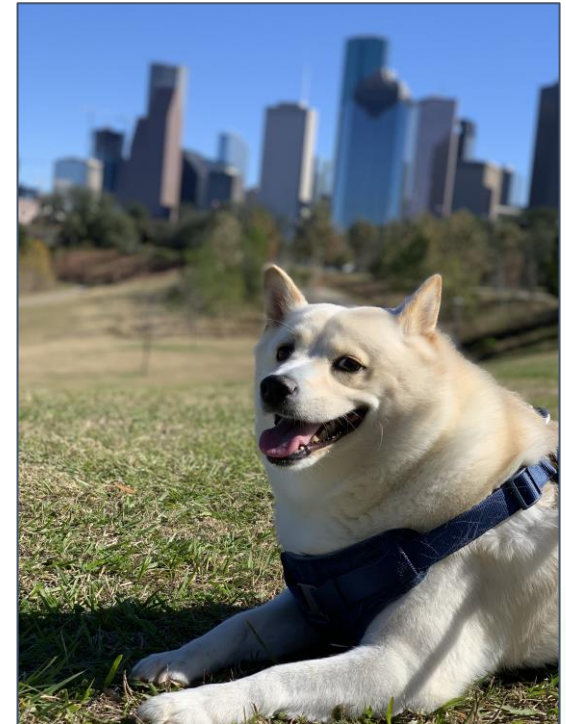
Howard Lin

- Email: howard.lin@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 2
- Lab: Will Parsons
- Hometown: Houston
- Undergrad: University of Texas at Austin (Biomedical Engineering)
- What I do for fun: Tennis, Basketball, Biking, Video Games,
- What I love about Houston: Museum of Fine Arts, Climbing, Eating
- What I love about BCM: Friendly atmosphere, world class science



Edgar Andres (Andy) Rivera Munoz

- Email: em12@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 2
- Lab: Jennifer Posey
- Hometown: San Salvador, El Salvador
- Undergrad: UNC Chapel Hill. B.S. Biology
- What I do for fun: Dancing, working out, exploring houston, play with my dog, and video games
- What I love about Houston: Montrose/heights area, parks, coffee shops
- What I love about BCM: Judi!
- Other: Ask me about LGBTQ life in Houston!



Janel Peterson

- Email: janelp@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 2
- Lab: Tom Cooper
- Hometown: California
- Undergrad: University of California Davis, Genetics and Genomics
- What I do for fun: Aerial arts, online games with friends, cooking, baking, and eating.
- Other: I worked as the lab manager for a horse genetics lab after undergrad!



Laura Deus Ramírez

- Email: lr7@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 2
- Lab: Christophe Herman
- Hometown: Málaga, Spain
- Undergrad: Biomedical Sciences,
University of Surrey, UK



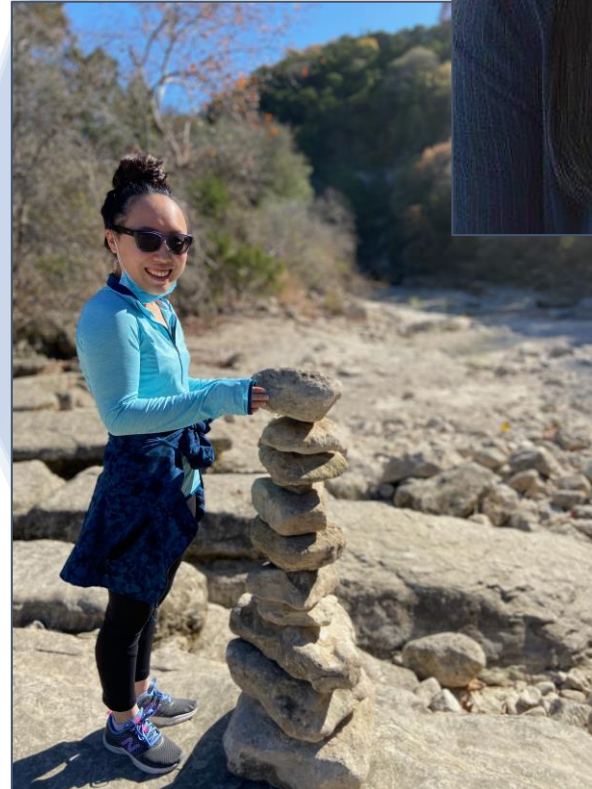
Morgan Stephens

- Email: morgans@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 2
- Lab: Juan Botas
- Hometown: New Hampshire
- Undergrad: Virginia Tech, Animal Sciences and Leadership
- What I do for fun: Game nights with other grad students
- What I love about Houston: In the winter it really is great weather to be outside, and of course the food
- What I love about BCM: The faculty and students are incredibly supportive of one another
- Other: Imposter syndrome is real, but you are exactly where you are supposed to be!



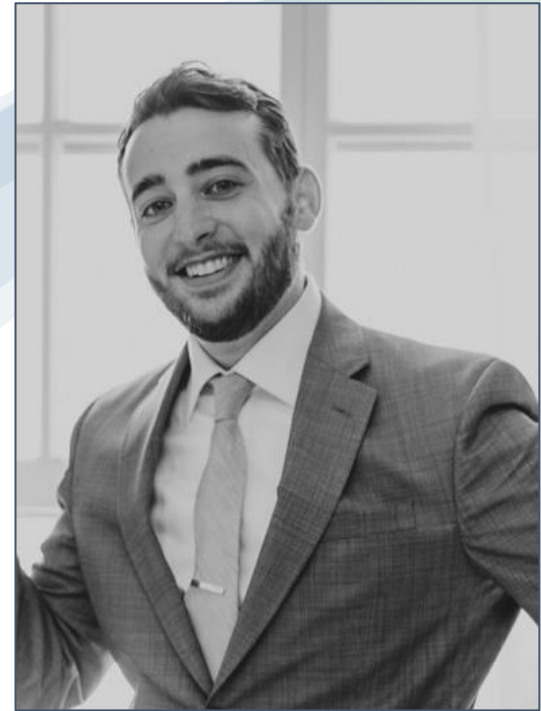
Nicole Wang

- Email: nywang@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 2
- Lab: Chonghui Cheng
- Hometown: Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
- Undergrad: Princeton University, Molecular Biology and Global Health
- What I do for fun: Hiking, travel, eating, game nights.
- What I love about BCM: Great opportunities in the medical and science fields.
- Other: I am also part of the MD/PhD program at BCM.



Phillip "Adam" Weinstein

- Email: Phillip.weinstein@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 2
- Lab: Sharon Plon
- Hometown: Livermore, CA
- Undergrad: UC Berkeley - Integrative Biology
- What I do for fun: Go on dog walks, play board/card games, attend sporting events, play fantasy sports, bake, run/work out (when I can!)
- What I love about Houston: Affordable housing, great food, spacious, mild winters, and very dog-friendly!
- What I love about BCM: Excellent faculty and staff, helpful classes, welcoming/friendly students, great opportunities to collaborate with other Med Center institutions, and obviously BCM is situated at the center of the beautiful TMC.
- Other: I'm married with a dog! And I picked BCM because the current students seemed the happiest!



Xuyein (Alice) Wen

- Email: xwen@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 2
- Lab: Christophe Herman
- Hometown: Portland, Oregon
- Undergrad: MIT, Brain and Cognitive Sciences
- What I do for fun: Running, hiking, reading, cooking
- What I love about Houston: The food scene, the parks, housing options
- What I love about BCM: The people



Bing Xie

- Email: bing.xie@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 2
- Lab: James Martin
- Hometown: China
- Undergrad: Zhejiang University, Biology
- What I do for fun: Watch movies
- What I love about Houston: Chinese restaurants
- What I love about BCM: Cafeteria



Keyang Yu

- Email: keyang.yu@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 2
- Lab: Aleksandar Milosavljevic
- Hometown: Shanghai, China
- Undergrad: Wake Forest University, B.S. in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
- What I do for fun: Reading, gaming, solve 1000+ jigsaw puzzles (mostly geeky stuff)
- What I love about Houston: Lots of things to do - Walking along the bayou on sunny afternoons, visiting the zoo and museums on weekends, go hiking with friends, and cuisine.
- What I love about BCM: There's a real sense of community here. People help each others out a lot even if we are in different programs/grades/labs.
- Other: I have two cats (not too different from kids really)



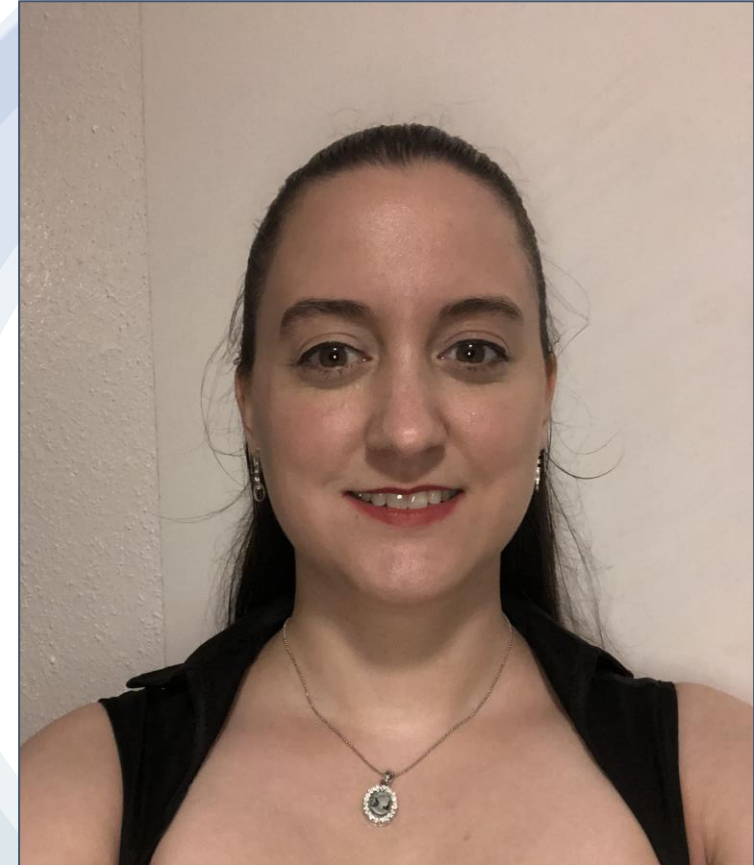
Vince Duan

- Email: rduan@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 3
- Lab: Jim Lupski
- Hometown: Baoji, Shaanxi, China
- Undergrad: Southwest Jiaotong University
- What I do for fun: Travel, hiking
- What I love about BCM: Student organizations like the Baylor Chinese Students & Scholars Association (BCSSA).
- Other: I have lived in many cities all over China.



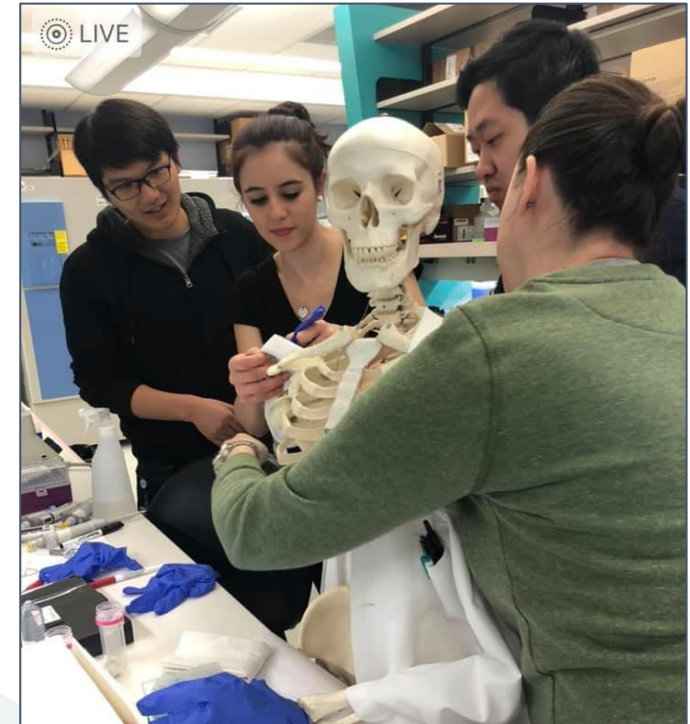
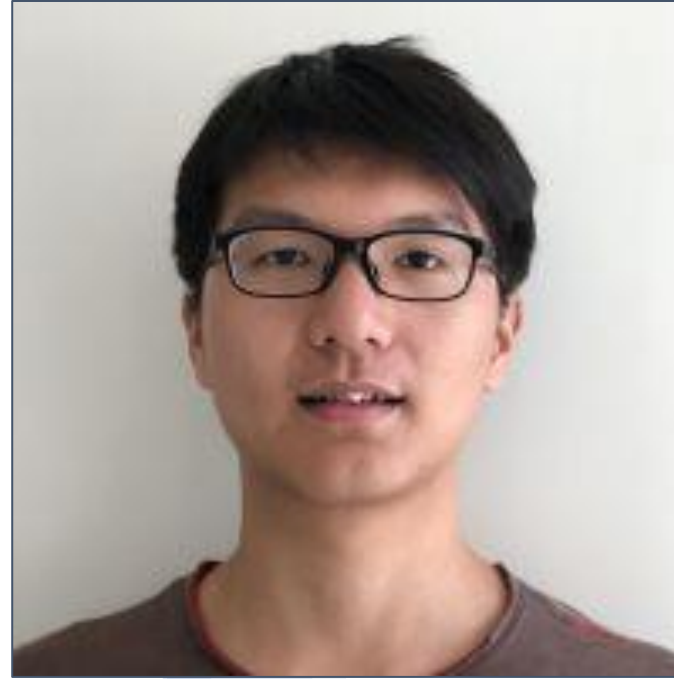
Bree Lege

- Email: bree.lege@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 3
- Lab: Chonghui Cheng
- Hometown: Texas
- Undergrad: Texas A&M - Biomedical science
- What I do for fun: Arts and crafts, video games



Xuwen Li

- Email: xuwen.li@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 3
- Lab: Tao Wu
- Hometown: Hunan province, China
- Undergrad: Biology, University of Science and Technology of China
- What I do for fun: Video game, Pets
- What I love about Houston: Cheap, lots of space



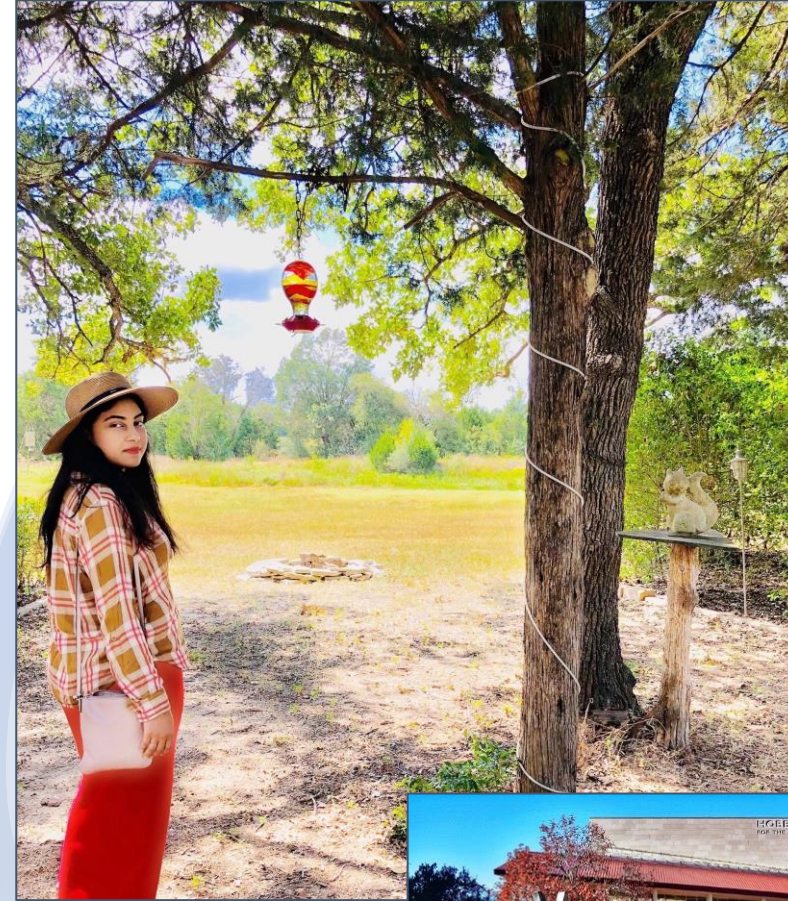
Megan Mair

- Email: mair@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 3
- Lab: Juan Botas
- Hometown: Fredericksburg, VA
- Undergrad: Virginia Commonwealth University, Bioinformatics
- What I do for fun: Play with my dog, Nellie.
- Other: In addition to science, I really love history!



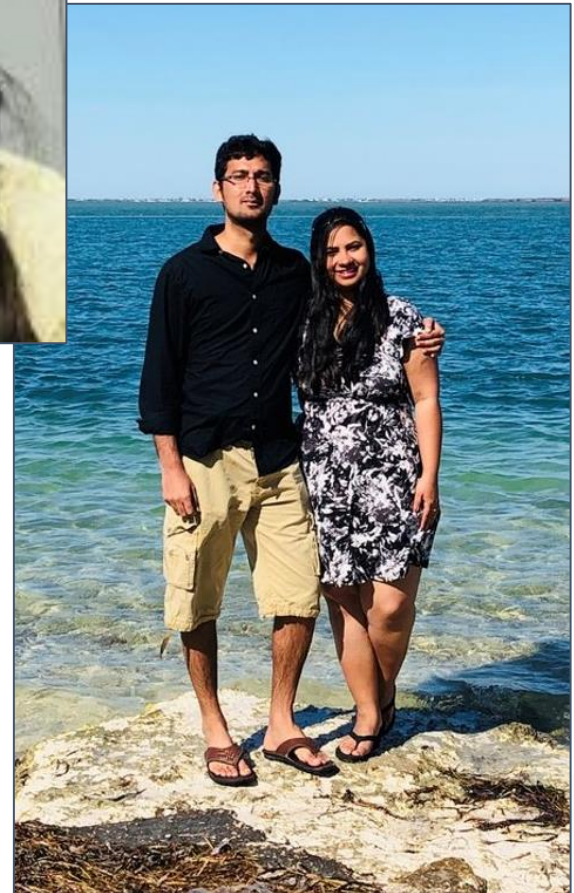
Dharaniya Sakthivel

- Email: dharaniya.sakthivel@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 3
- Lab: Benny Abraham Kaipparettu
- Hometown: Chennai, India
- Undergrad: Chennai, India B.Tech Biotechnology
- What I do for fun: Photography, Travel
- What I love about Houston: Weather, Space, Rodeo, Tex-Mex, Arboretums, Authentic Indian Food
- What I love about BCM: 1) Great Program Director, Gadi. 2) Diversity in Culture. 3) Affordable cost of living for grad school.



Harini Pallikarana Tirumala

- Email: tirumala@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 3
- Lab: Huda Zoghbi
- Hometown: India
- What I do for fun: Garden and use my home-grown vegetables to cook Indian food
- Other: My husband and I love beach vacations and kayaking, basically anything to do with the sea!



Eder Xhako

- Email: xhako@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 3
- Lab: Dr. Zoghbi
- Hometown: Zionsville, IN
- Undergrad: Purdue, Biochemistry and Genetics
- What I do for fun: Bake
- What I love about Houston: The food!
- What I love about BCM: The people that you get to work with



Matthew Avalos

- Email: avalos@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 4
- Lab: Juan Botas
- Hometown: Arlington, TX
- Undergrad: Rice University, Biochemistry
- What I do for fun: Big sports fan (Rangers, Cowboys), running/cycling along the bayou, and watching my cat Forrest grow up
- Other: I worked as a lab technician at BCM before starting grad school.



Cathy Bradley

- Email: ccbradle@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 4
- Lab: Christophe Herman
- Hometown: Oklahoma and Texas
- Undergrad: Texas A&M/Biomedical Science
- What I do for fun: Hiking, running, cooking, concerts, reading, travel, movie nights with friends
- What I love about Houston: Food and craft beer scene, arboretum/parks/bayou greenways, Miller outdoor theatre with free concerts, sunny weather, affordable living, diversity of people and things to do
- What I love about BCM: Collegiality, friendliness, fantastic genetics department, location in the Texas Medical Center, proximity to Herman Park/Houston Zoo/Rice University
- Other: I'm engaged to a wonderful, supportive partner. We've been long-distance for nearly 4 years, so I'm happy to answer questions about that.
- Grad school has its challenges, but the awesome classmates and supportive faculty that I've met at BCM have been invaluable to my personal growth and happiness here in Houston :)



Varuna Chander

- Email: chander@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 4
- Lab: Richard Gibbs
- Hometown: Chennai, India
- What I do for fun: Travel, play with my baby
- What I love about BCM: Great batchmates!
- Other: I worked in industry for a few years before starting my PhD.



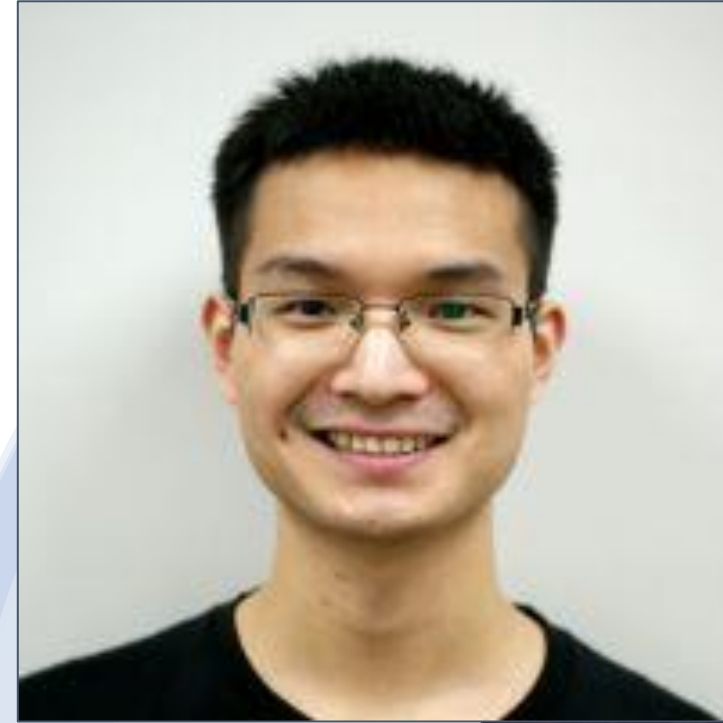
Stephanie Coffin

- Email: coffin@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 4
- Lab: Huda Zoghbi
- Hometown: Dubuque, Iowa
- Undergrad: University of Iowa, Health and Human Physiology
- What I do for fun: Yoga, Run, Bike, Go to Concerts, Play Games, Read
- What I love about Houston: Weather - warm year round :)
- What I love about BCM: How supportive fellow students and faculty are



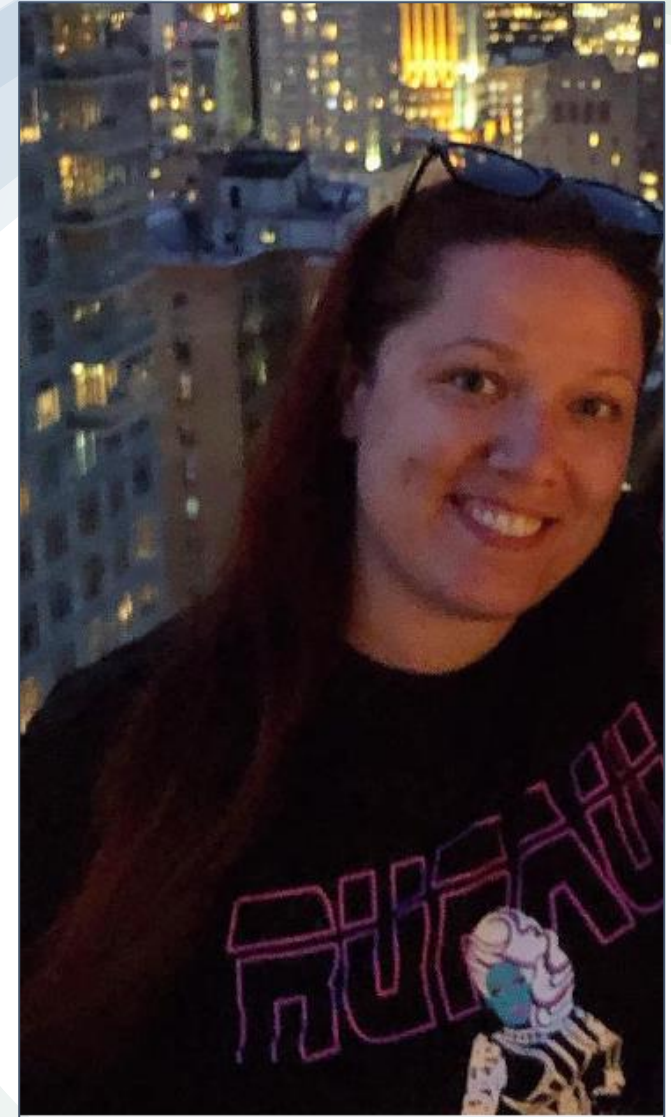
Haowei Du

- Email: haowei.du@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 4
- Lab: Jim Lupski
- Hometown: Zhejiang, China
- What I do for fun: Play basketball, snowboard



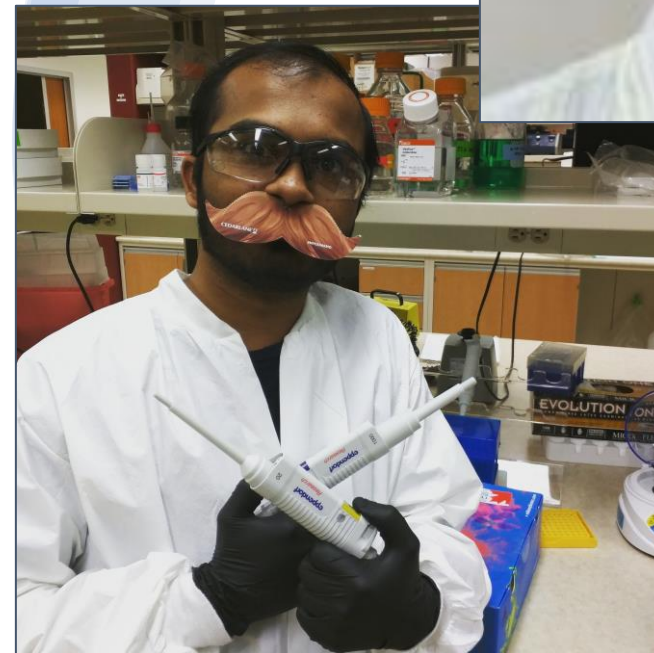
Colleen Dupuis

- Email: cdupuis@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 4
- Lab: Andy Groves
- Hometown: Chelmsford, Massachusetts
- Undergrad: Northeastern University, studied biology with a business minor
- What I do for fun: I love watching/playing football and other sports, Boston sports teams, trying new beers, and of course Netflix binges too.
- What I love about Houston: Diversity in the city and the people I've met
- What I love about BCM: Judi! And fellow grad students :)
- Other: I worked in industry for many years before grad school



Ishwar Hosamani

- Email: hosamani@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 4
- Lab: Andy Groves
- Hometown: Gulbarga, India
- What I do for fun: Reading (from fantasy to biographies), watch sci-fi TV shows
- What I love about BCM: Very supportive leaders in the Genetics program (Gadi and Judi) who helped me when I needed to change labs.
- Other: I am fluent in Kannada, Hindi, and English, and semi-fluent in Marathi, Telugu, and French.



Guo Hu

- Email: guo.hu@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 4
- Lab: Meng Wang
- Hometown: Beijing, China
- Undergrad: University of North Carolina, Nutrition
- What I do for fun: My all time favorite is food! I love to cook and bake. I also enjoy hiking, running, gardening, playing with my dog and cats, and watching my baby.
- Other: One of my favorite memories is running a 200 mile relay race over 2 days with 11 teammates in the Smoky Mountains.



Emily LaPlante

- Email: emily.laplante@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 4
- Lab: Aleksandar Milosavljevic
- Hometown: Wyoming
- Undergrad: Michigan State University
- What I do for fun: Making bread, baking, cross stitching, ceramics
- What I love about BCM: Great friends in my cohort and coworkers
- Other: One of my favorite parts of the Genetics program is the skits for Genetics retreat!



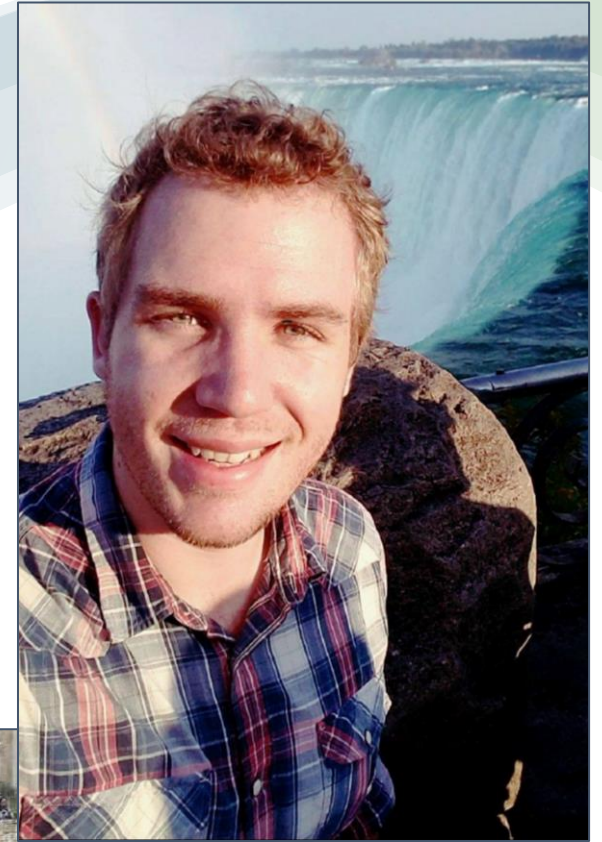
Christopher Grochowski

- Email: grochows@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 5
- Lab: James Lupski
- Hometown: New Jersey
- Undergrad: American University, Biology and Religion
- What I do for fun: Running, Bars, Restaurants, Museums
- What I love about Houston: The winter weather, the huge variety of cuisines and bars
- What I love about BCM: The resources available at the Texas Medical Center
- Other: Houston has been an amazing place to live for my boyfriend and me!



Mike Harnish

- Email: harnish@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 5
- Lab: Shinya Yamamoto
- Hometown: Avon, Indiana
- Undergrad: Indiana University
- What I love about Houston: Food (Korean BBQ hotdogs? Why not?), music (opera houses, outdoor venues, and dingy punk clubs)
- What I love about BCM: Amazing mentors and internship opportunities.
- Other: I have a dog named Zoey. She loves me even when my experiments don't work.



Patrick J. Hunt

- Email: PJHunt@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 5
- Lab: Ben Arenkiel
- Hometown: Plano, TX
- Undergrad: UT Austin, Biology & Computer Science
- What I do for fun: I run, swim, paint, read. and listen to music
- What I love about Houston: Excellent city for running
- What I love about BCM: The people



Celina Jones

- Email: cyjones@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 5
- Lab: Alison Bertuch
- Hometown: Panama City, Panama
- Undergrad: Pepperdine University, Biology
- What I do for fun: Cook, bake, try out new coffee shops/restaurants/cocktail bars, try to keep my plants alive
- What I love about Houston: It is the most ethnically diverse city in the country, which leads to amazing opportunity to meet people from all over and experience all sort of cuisine! The food scene here is incredible.
- What I love about BCM: The program leadership truly cares about their students' well being. Plus, working at the world-class Texas Medical Center is such a treat.
- Other: I've found wonderful community here through BCM and my church. I'm so thankful I chose to come here!



Michael Khayat

- Email: khayat@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 5
- Lab: Richard Gibbs
- Hometown: Ramallah, Palestine
- Undergrad: Guilford College: BS with a double major in Biology and Computing Technology and Information Systems
- What I do for fun: Salsa dance, read, Catan and online gaming with friends
- What I love about Houston: Restaurants! Hopdoddy Burger Bar (Rice Village), Thai Gourmet (Restaurant on Richmond Ave.)
- What I love about BCM: Besides the many opportunities and avenues for intellectual engagement, I enjoy the pool/foosball table in the student lounge and the view from the Human Genome Sequencing Center!
- Other: Come to Baylor! It is a great place with a lot of great people!



Daniel Sutton

- Email: daniel.sutton@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 5
- Lab: Andy Groves
- Hometown: Goldsboro, NC
- Undergrad: University of Mount Olive, Biology
- What I do for fun: play video games, browse the internet, watch movies/tv
- What I love about Houston: weather, nice area
- What I love about BCM: Lots of really good faculty, good facilities, lots of collaboration



Denice Palmos

- Email: palmos@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 5
- Lab: Will Parsons
- Hometown: Manila, Philippines
- Undergrad: University of the Philippines, BS Molecular Biology and Biotechnology
- What I do for fun: Pure Barre, walk my dogs, stand up paddle boarding
- What I love about Houston: The food!! All of them.
- What I love about BCM: the people <3



Varduhi Petrosyan

- Email: petrosya@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 5
- Lab: Aleksandar Milosavljevic
- Hometown: Plano, Texas
- Undergrad: UT Austin, Biochemistry
- What I do for fun: Hike, read, play with puppy
- What I love about Houston: Good food, museums, outdoor spaces
- What I love about BCM: Collaborative feeling



Thomas Ravenscroft

- Email: thomas.ravenscroft@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 5
- Lab: Hugo Bellen
- Hometown: Lincoln, England
- Undergrad: University of Manchester, Biochemistry
- What I do for fun: Cycling along the bayou, frequenting fun bars in Houston's social neighborhoods (pre Covid)
- What I love about Houston: Great social sports leagues like football (aka soccer), kickball, and cornhole. Of these, I have only won at cornhole...
- Other: Before BCM, I worked at the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, FL. Go jags!



Chaofan Zhang

- Email: chaofanz@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 5
- Lab: James Lupski
- Hometown: China
- Undergrad: Zhejiang University, Biological Science
- What I do for fun: Play with cats, legos, gundam, video game, read books, baking
- What I love about Houston: Food
- What I love about BCM: lovely people
- Other: I have 3 cats



Hilary Chester

- Email: hilary.chester@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 6
- Lab: Juan Botas
- Hometown: Pennsylvania
- Undergrad: Chestnut Hill College
- What I do for fun: Baking, rock climbing, skiing, attending car shows
- What I love about BCM: The people!
- Other: Currently I live with my Great Dane, Kryptonite, and 4 ball pythons (Mango, Papaya, Pixel and Maple)



Sean Dooling

- Email: sean.dooling@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 6
- Lab: Mauro Costa-Mattioli
- Hometown: Philadelphia, PA
- Undergrad: Penn State University - double major in Biological Anthropology and French & Francophone Studies
- What I do for fun: Sports (Soccer, Tennis, Volleyball, Running); Cook/Grill; get together with friends
- What I love about Houston: The diversity & food
- What I love about BCM: The people
- Other: There are a lot of resources here and everyone is willing to help!



Jessica Swanson

- Email: jessica.swanson@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 6
- Lab: Ben Arenkiel
- Hometown: Minnesota
- Undergrad: University of Minnesota
- What I do for fun: Riding horses! Also cooking, gardening, rock climbing, running, playing with my dog, and dancing.
- Other: Some of my favorite memories from grad school are trips to CO and MN with my cohort.



Pamela Lurie

- Email: pamela.russell@bcm.edu
- Year in graduate school: 6
- Lab: Dr. Neil Hanchard
- Hometown: Altadena, CA
- Undergrad: CSU Fullerton Biology, joined a spider silk lab
- What I do for fun: Go to theatre performances (opera, ballet, etc.)
- What I love about Houston: Everything is accessible by metro rail
- What I love about BCM: The people
- Other: I'm married with 1 kid. My husband was also in the G&G program, my dog is an athlete, and I put my family before everything.

