



# PREP Newsletter

## *Happy Holidays from the UChicago PREP!*

The University of Chicago PREP Program would like to wish Happy Holidays to all of our PREP Scholars, alums, mentors and friends, and best wishes for the New Year in 2022! We are proud of all that our alums have accomplished, and as always, would love to hear from you. Wishing you all peace, health and happiness this holiday season and throughout 2022,

*The UChicago PREP staff*

## UChicago 2021-2022 PREP Scholars

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In Summer 2021, the UChicago PREP welcomed 8 new PREP Scholars to the program from Northwestern University, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Colorado College, University of Georgia, DePaul University, California State University at Northridge, and Florida International University. All settled into their labs in areas of neuroscience, developmental biology, endocrinology, psychology, ecology and evolution, and cancer biology.

Many faculty mentors are new to the PREP Program this year, including Drs. Cara Brook, Marc Berman, Shannon Elf, Robert Carrillo, Sliman Bensmaia, Sarah Keedy, and Raghu Mirmira and Isabel Casimiro. Welcome and thank you all for your interest in mentoring the PREP Scholars this year!

This Fall, the Scholars have been taking classes, participating in Journal Club, and attended conferences including SACNAS, ABRCMS, Society for Neuroscience and American Society for Hematology. The Scholars have now submitted applications to PhD programs of interest and are currently anxiously waiting their interviews and decisions regarding graduate school next year. Good luck to all!

## UChicago PREP New Evaluation Project

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In 2021, PREP Director Dr. Nancy Schwartz received a supplement award from the NIH to enhance the evaluation capacity for the PREP Program. We are working with Dr. Martha Van Haitsma in the University of Chicago Survey Lab to carry out an initial set of confidential conversational interviews with some of our alums to get a fuller picture of how well our program works and how it could be improved. If you have been contacted for this purpose please consider participating in order to share your thoughts and experiences, which will ultimately improve the PREP experience for future participants. Please note that Dr. Van Haitsma will not share any details of your confidential conversation with the PREP office.

## UChicago PREP Application

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The 2022 PREP application is now open! Interested students can apply through our website by March 31, 2022: <https://bsdprep.uchicago.edu/>. Applicants are selected on a rolling basis, so all are encouraged to apply early.



## PREP Alum Updates

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44 UChicago PREP alums have now received PhD, PharmD, or MD degrees, and over 10 others have completed Master's degrees. Congratulations and well done everyone!

### 2021 PhD Graduates

Ogechi Nwadinobi, PhD, University of Texas at Arlington  
Ruben Lastra, PhD, Northwestern University  
Camila Barrios-Camacho, PhD, Tufts University  
Christina Roman, PhD, University of Chicago  
Jacqueto Zephyr, PhD, University of Massachusetts  
Mikal Woods, PhD, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center  
Yves Robert Juste, PhD, Albert Einstein College of Medicine

Our full list of graduates is posted on our [website](#). If you've graduated recently, [please let us know](#)!

## PREP Alum Spotlight

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**Whitney Stevens-Sostre** (PREP alum 2016, Schwartz/Domowicz lab) is enrolled in the Neuroscience PhD Training Program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for her graduate studies. Under the mentorship of her thesis advisor, Dr. Gail Robertson, Whitney studies structure-function relationships in the KCNH family of voltage-gated potassium channels using structural, biochemical and electro-physiological approaches. Her dissertation research has led to 2 publications thus far. As a graduate student, Whitney was awarded a Science and Medicine Graduate Research Scholars Fellowship, earned slots on two institutional T32 grants, and was awarded travel grants to present her research at national and international meetings, including BPS and the joint 2019 SOBLA/SGP meeting in Valparaiso, Chile. Whitney is a 2019 Yale Ciencia Academy Fellow and is passionate about mentoring the next generation of scientists. In 2021, she was also awarded a prestigious NIH Blueprint Diversity Specialized Predoctoral to Postdoctoral Advancement in Neuroscience (D-SPAN) Award (F99/K00).



**Whitney Stevens-Sostre**

In addition to her research work, Whitney founded [Black In Biophysics](#), an organization/movement that aims to recognize and celebrate Black biophysicists. She also co-organized [#BlackInBiophysicsWeek](#), an international social media initiative that highlighted and celebrated Black scholars in biophysics and related fields. The 2021 Black In Biophysics Week recorded events can be accessed [here](#) and you can connect with this organization on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BlackInBiophys>.

Congratulations Whitney on all your accomplishments thus far!

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*If you have any recent awards or career news that you would like to share, please e-mail us at [lrisher1@peds.bsd.uchicago.edu](mailto:lrisher1@peds.bsd.uchicago.edu) or fill out our [2021 PREP Alum Survey](#). We'd love to hear from you!*

Visit the UChicago PREP website at: <http://bsdprep.uchicago.edu/>