



# PREP Newsletter

## Happy Holidays from the UChicago PREP!

The University of Chicago PREP Program wishes Happy Holidays to all our PREP Scholars, alums, mentors and friends. We are looking forward to an exciting New Year in 2023! We are so proud of all that our alums have accomplished, and as always, would love to hear from you.

Wishing you all health and happiness and a rejuvenating holiday season,  
*The UChicago PREP staff*

## UChicago 2022-2023 PREP Scholars



*The UChicago PREP Scholars attended the ABRCMS professional development and graduate fair conference this November and are now preparing for their PhD admission interviews.*

In Summer 2022, the UChicago PREP welcomed 8 new PREP Scholars to the program. They have joined labs in the areas of neuroscience/psychology, developmental biology, cancer biology, biochemistry, virology, genetics, and biophysics. PREP Faculty Mentors this year include: Dr. Sarah Keedy, Dr. Jocelyn Malamy, Dr. Heng-Chi Lee, Dr. Glenn Randall, Dr. Margaret Gardel, Dr. Megan McNerney, Dr. Tobin Sosnick, and Dr. Maanasa Raghavan. Thank you to all the PREP Mentors as well as their lab members for their dedicated mentorship of the PREP Scholars.

This quarter, our incredible Scholars have been taking graduate courses while participating in Journal Club, attending the ABRCMS conference and preparing their PhD applications. The Scholars are currently awaiting interviews and admission decisions. Good luck, Scholars!

## UChicago PREP Application

The 2023 PREP application is now open! Interested students can apply through the PREP website by March 31, 2023: <https://bsdprep.uchicago.edu/>. Applicants are selected on a rolling basis, so early submissions are encouraged.



## UChicago PREP Grant Renewal

Dr. Schwartz is preparing to submit the PREP grant renewal this January for the next five-year period. Thank you very much to everyone who has submitted our [PREP Alum update form](#), which we are using to gather the information needed for the grant application. If you haven't yet submitted your form, [please do so here](#) or send your updated CV as a response to this email. We also wish to thank all alums who completed the anonymous PREP alum outcomes survey administered by the UChicago Survey Lab. We had a wonderful response and look forward to analyzing the results.

## PREP Alum Updates

Congratulations to our [50 UChicago PREP alums](#) who have received PhD, PharmD, or MD degrees, and 18 who have completed Master's degrees. If you've graduated recently, [please let us know!](#)

### 2022 PhD and MD Graduates

Ruth A. Osborne, MD  
Dianicha Santana-Nunez, PhD  
Nyasha Maforo, PhD

Daisy Castillo Guzman, PhD  
Diandra Vaval Taylor, PhD  
Arnold Olali, PhD

Lisa Wren, PhD  
Shanan Emmanuel, PhD

We are very proud to highlight below two PREP alumnae who have exciting professional updates! Please join us as we congratulate **Dr. Marlene Brito-Millán** who has started a faculty position at Loyola University Chicago this year and **Dr. Brandon Hatcher** who was recently promoted to Director for the Office of Laboratory Safety for the CDC. To learn more about their scientific and academic achievements, please read their profiles below! Additional PREP alum spotlights can be found on the [PREP website](#).

## PREP Alum Spotlight

**Dr. Marlene Brito-Millán** (PREP Alum 2007) has recently accepted an Assistant Professor position in the School of Environmental Sustainability at Loyola University Chicago. Following the PREP program, where she worked with Dr. Catherine Pfister in the department of Ecology and Evolution, Marlene entered the Scripps Institution of Oceanography/UCSD where she earned her MS in 2014 and her PhD in 2017. During her time as a graduate student, Marlene was awarded an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship, a Ford Foundation Fellowship, the UC President's Dissertation Year Fellowship among numerous other prestigious awards and fellowships. Following graduate school, Marlene held Postdoctoral Research and Teaching Fellow positions at the University of San Diego, UCMEXUS / Universidad Autónoma



de Guerrero and Northwestern University. During her time as a postdoc, Marlene was awarded the USD Diversity Postdoctoral Teaching Fellowship, a National Academy of Sciences/Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship and several other grants. In 2022, Dr. Marlene Brito-Millán accepted her faculty position at Loyola where she applies ecological, environmental justice, and complexity science frameworks to her research of coastal and terrestrial socio-environmental systems. Marlene is also working to establish the 'Laboratory for Indigenous Complex Socio-Environmental Systems' at Loyola, and she is a co-organizer at the [Center for Interdisciplinary Environmental Justice](#).





## PREP Alum Spotlight

**Dr. Brandon Hatcher** (PREP Alum 2007) is now serving as the Director for the Office of Laboratory Safety for the Center of Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia. Previously, he has served as a Lead Scientist for Booz Allen Hamilton and the Corporate Biosafety Officer at GlaxoSmithKline. Dr. Hatcher received his PhD in Microbiology from the University of Alabama in 2014 where he studied the mechanism of nonhematogenous central nervous system invasion of streptococcus pneumoniae. He then completed his postdoctoral fellowship through the National Biosafety and Biocontainment Training Program at the NIH. During his time in PREP at the University of Chicago, he worked with Dr. Kenneth Alexander, the Chief of Pediatric Infectious Disease, studying the Human Papilloma Virus oncoproteins E6 and E7 interactions with NF- $\kappa$ B regulator protein CYLD during the establishment of infection. Brandon recently shared the following about his PREP experience: “The PREP program gave me the confidence and experience needed to be successful in graduate school. In addition, the skills I learned apply to traditional research settings (i.e., running a laboratory) as well as related scientific fields. I use the skills I learned from PREP daily, and I am grateful for my time in the program.” Thank you, Brandon!



We look forward to following Dr. Hatcher and Dr. Brito-Millán's careers!

## PREP/IMSD Summer Social

*The PREP/IMSD office hosted an end of summer picnic in late August on the Science quad. Thank you to all who attended. We hope to make this an annual event!*



## UChicago IRACDA Postdoctoral Training Grant Announcement

We have exciting news to share that Dr. Nancy Schwartz was recently awarded an NIH K12 IRACDA grant for postdoctoral training. The Institutional Research and Academic Career Development Award ([IRACDA](#)) is an opportunity for University of Chicago postdocs to combine a high-quality research experience with a mentored teaching and training experience at two local partner institutions, Northeastern Illinois University and Chicago State University. Participants will work with a faculty Research Mentor at the University of Chicago, where they will develop research-related skills and faculty Teaching Mentors at partner institutions, where they will experience classroom teaching and pedagogical training. The application is now open with a deadline of February 1. Please see the [IRACDA website](#) for details and let us know if you have recently graduated (or will soon) and are interested in applying!