2025 SMDP MedTech Scholars

Mufidah Abdulkadir, Morehouse School of Medicine

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Mufidah Abdulkadir is a Neuroscience graduate pursuing a Master of Science in Health Informatics at Morehouse School of Medicine, where she is expected to graduate in December 2025. With a strong academic foundation and hands-on experience in data analysis, applied AI research, and electronic health record (EHR) implementation, she is passionate about leveraging data-driven solutions to advance medical technology, improve healthcare delivery, and reduce health disparities. She aims to integrate her neuroscience background with informatics to enhance patient outcomes, particularly in underserved communities.

Beyond her academic and professional pursuits, Mufidah is deeply committed to community engagement and health equity. She has served as a fellow, volunteer, and youth advisor in multiple organizations, leading initiatives in research, advocacy, and healthcare accessibility. In her free time, she enjoys swimming, roller skating, and teaching Arabic and Islamic studies, reflecting her dedication to lifelong learning and service.

Tobi Adejumo, PhD, University of Illinois Chicago

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Tobi is a biomedical engineer and computer scientist dedicated to developing innovative imaging solutions for the detection and monitoring of neurodegenerative diseases. He completed his PhD in Biomedical Engineering at the University of Illinois Chicago where his research focused on advanced retinal imaging techniques to identify early biomarkers of neurodegenerative diseases such as diabetic retinopathy and Alzheimer's disease.

Leveraging a multidisciplinary background, Tobi combines software development, data science, and artificial intelligence to enhance medical imaging analysis and diagnostic accuracy. He has published multiple peer-reviewed articles and presented his findings at prominent international conferences, significantly contributing to the understanding of retinal neurovascular changes associated with cognitive decline.

Tobi has also excelled in case competitions, notably achieving third place in North America at the Think-Cell case competition, where he provided strategic consulting on product development and market entry strategies. His professional experience spans the entire healthcare value chain, from research and development to commercial strategy and operations.

Tobi aims to leverage his technical, analytical, and strategic expertise in impactful industry roles within MedTech and healthcare consulting, driving forward innovative healthcare solutions. Outside of his professional pursuits, he enjoys reading historical biographies, optimizing productivity workflows and exploring emerging technologies.

Juan Diego Carrizo, Columbia University

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Born and raised in Caracas, J.D. Carrizo moved to the United States to pursue his undergraduate studies at Johns Hopkins University, earning a degree in Materials Science and Engineering. Through his courses there, he discovered his passion for biomaterials and their life-saving applications. He built upon this interest by conducting research across multiple academic laboratories, including the Translational Tissue Engineering Center, the Dynamic Characterization Group, and the Stevens Group at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm.

After graduation, J.D. enrolled in the Biomedical Engineering Master's program at Columbia University, where he joined the Biomaterials Interface and Tissue Engineering Laboratory. Most recently, he completed a polymer science internship at TômTex, a biomaterials company developing the next generation of sustainable textiles. Outside the lab, J.D. enjoys biking around the city, attending concerts, and learning to play the guitar.

Elizabeth Cervantes, Mayo Clinic

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Elizabeth (Lizz) Cervantes is a first-generation Latina and neurodivergent scientist whose journey into research was inspired by her own late autism diagnosis. Determined to turn lived experience into impact, she is now a fourth-year PhD candidate in Clinical and Translational Science (CTS) track at the Mayo Clinic, where she studies how prenatal inflammation shapes infant neurodevelopment. Her work focuses on identifying placental biomarkers to help predict which children may be at risk for neurodevelopmental disorders, with the goal of creating earlier, more equitable paths to support.

Lizz began her scientific journey at the University of Texas at San Antonio, where she studied Biochemistry and was selected into the NIH-funded RISE program. That program gave her the mentorship and belief that she could belong in science - an experience she now pays forward through leadership, mentorship, and advocacy for underrepresented students. Beyond the lab, Lizz finds joy in arts and crafts, pottery, and crocheting, and she shares her life with two beloved cats, Keanu Reeves and Shrimptopher Cervantes.

Chipo Chapusha, University of Mississippi Medical Center

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Chipo A. Chapusha is a PhD candidate in Biomedical Materials Science at the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC), where she synthesizes novel polymeric microparticles for controlled drug delivery against bacterial-infection diseases. Originally from Zambia, her background has shaped her commitment to addressing healthcare disparities through biomedical research. Chipo earned her Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Engineering Technology (Summa Cum Laude) from Alcorn State University, receiving honors such as the President's Scholar Award and the Provost Scholarship.

Her research experience spans polymeric nano/microparticles for the controlled release of antibiotics and anti-mite agents, as well as biomedical engineering applications through programs at Alcorn State, UMMC, and the Mayo Clinic. Chipo has mentored undergraduate, dental, and medical students while contributing to departmental outreach initiatives. Her long-term goal is to develop innovative and accessible drug delivery systems that improve healthcare outcomes worldwide. Beyond research, Chipo enjoys cooking, dancing, spending time in nature and writing poetry.

Natasha Calxton PhD, University of Virginia

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Natasha Claxton is a first-year postdoctoral researcher at Tulane University in the biomedical engineering department, where she is working on two projects involving stem cell transplantation within granular hydrogels for sickle cell disease and ovarian cell transplantation to restore endocrine function during menopause. She completed her doctoral education at the University of Virginia in biomedical engineering. Her graduate research experience focused on engineering 3D in vitro granular hydrogel scaffolds for vasculogenesis, involving the development of poly(ethylene) glycol microgels. Her work extended beyond the bench, aiming to contribute to in vivo and clinical therapy for regenerating ischemic tissue. Natasha pioneered a novel polymer crosslinking chemistry that involved the use of focused ultrasound that altered material properties and endothelial cell behavior. Natasha also holds a Bachelor's degree in biomedical engineering from the University of Florida.

Looking ahead to her future career, Natasha envisions herself as a tenure-track professor leading initiatives and programs to increase the representation of marginalized individuals in higher education. Her goal is to bridge the gap between industry and academia within her research lab where she will be heavily collaborating with industry partners while developing treatments for diseases that impact women's health.

Beyond her research, Natasha is passionate about helping individuals succeed in education and giving back to her local community. She serves as a mentor and leader to several students both at her institution and in her local community.

Sebastián Correa, Case Western Reserve University

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Sebastián Correa (he/him/él) is a PhD candidate and National Science Foundation Fellow in Biomedical Engineering at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. He expects to graduate in 2026 to pursue a career that advances rehabilitation techniques for individuals with neurological impairments while also inspiring the next generation of Latine scientists.

Sebastián grew up in Pittsburgh with parents whose roots trace back to Ecuador. His interest in science was inspired early on by his mamá, who shared stories from her work as a naturalist guide in the Galápagos Islands. Sebastián earned his BS in Bioengineering at the University of Pittsburgh, where he gained exposure to the field of neuro-rehabilitation research. His time as an undergraduate student also saw him develop a strong commitment to diversity and global perspectives through advocacy and study abroad opportunities. Encouraged by his mentors at Pitt, Sebastián decided to pursue a PhD and is now in his fourth year at CWRU. Outside of his academic work, Sebastián is an avid soccer player and fan. He also enjoys making pottery, and loves spending time with his cat, Mandarina.

Anjana Dissanayaka, Georgia Tech & Emory University

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Anjana Dissanayaka is a PhD candidate in Biomedical Engineering at Georgia Tech and Emory University. His research aims to bridge the gap in accessible healthcare through innovative microfluidic technology. After witnessing the disparity in healthcare accessibility between his family in the United States and those he left behind in Sri Lanka, Anjana became committed to engineer novel technologies that democratize healthcare. Currently, he is pursuing two significant projects: developing a machine learning enabled carbapenemase detection platform and a sample recovery device - a low-cost microfluidic platform that enables comprehensive testing without sample loss, initially targeting dengue virus detection using NS1 antigen.

As a first-generation student, Anjana earned dual Bachelor's degrees in biomedical and electrical engineering from the University of Nevada, Reno, graduating magna cum laude. He is a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program recipient and Achievement Rewards for Academic Scientists (ARCS) Scholar. His undergraduate lab experiences introduced him to the world of independent research, and put simply, he fell in love with research. At Georgia Tech and Emory University, he has embraced every opportunity to make lasting impacts on both his academic community and society at large, presenting work at eight conferences, co-authoring five published papers, mentoring three aspiring researchers, and spearheading scientific outreach through social media with the "Scieneers" TikTok page that has over 4 million views, 16.7K followers and 590.1K likes. He served as Director of Communications for Nucleate Atlanta and Graduate Assistant for Project ENGAGES, leading initiatives to inspire the next generation of scientists. In his personal time, Anjana enjoys coding and is now learning the Godot game engine to develop "Risky," a strategic dice-based game that reimagines classic risk-style gameplay.

Aduago Emerson, University of Maryland College Park

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Adaugo Emerson earned her BS in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Maryland College Park and currently works as a Prosthetics and Orthotics Technician Assistant based in Baltimore. Outside of the classroom, Adaugo has been actively involved in the National Society of Black Engineers. She has served on all levels of student leadership in the organization, most recently serving as 23-24 National Academic Excellence Chair and now currently serving on the NSBE 2026 Convention Planning Committee Graduate Student Subcommittee. In her free time, Adaugo enjoys weight training and running while also fueling her creativity by drawing. Her personal mission statement is to leverage her engineering skills and passion for biomedical innovation to design and develop affordable, biomedical devices to enhance the quality of life for underserved populations.

Vanessa Huaco, University of California, Berkeley

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Vanessa Huaco recently graduated with a Master of Translational Medicine from the University of California, Berkeley and the University of California, San Francisco. During her program, she worked on the design and business development of a non-invasive solution to correct pediatric ear deformities. Prior to this, she earned a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering from University of California, Los Angeles, where she conducted research on chemical recycling of post-consumer use mattresses.

Vanessa was recently selected as a 2025-2026 IMPRINT Scholar through the Neurotech Collider Lab at UC Berkeley, an NIH-funded, year-long program focused on translational research and entrepreneurship in Alzheimer's and

dementia-related diseases. Following graduation, Vanessa has continued her Master's project in collaboration with UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital while preparing PhD applications for the upcoming cycle. In her free time, she enjoys listening to music, creating YouTube videos, and baking.

Patricia Jumelle, MD, Univ of Southern California Mann School of Pharmacy

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Patricia Jumelle, MD, MS, CQSP, is an anesthesiology-trained interventional pain management physician. She received her BA in Economics from Yale University and her MD from Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia. She completed her Anesthesiology residency at the University of Illinois at Chicago followed by a Pain Medicine fellowship at the University of Washington in Seattle.

Patricia recently graduated from the University of Southern California with a Master of Science in Regulatory Science. During her graduate studies, she worked as a quality assurance and regulatory affairs intern for the Quantitative Diagnostic Software Group (QUAD) at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center working on nuclear cardiac imaging software. She is now a Quality Assurance Regulatory Affairs Manager for QUAD. Patricia is a Certified Quality Science Professional (CQSP), and she completed her micro-credential with Honors. Outside of work, she is a lindy hop dancer and enjoys taking the occasional voice acting lesson.

Chelsea Kirkland, Stony Brook University

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Chelsea Kirkland is a 3rd year PhD candidate in Molecular and Cellular Pharmacology at Stony Brook University. Her research focuses on applying deep learning models to cancer genomics and using predictive modeling to advance precision medicine. In addition to her doctoral work, Chelsea has gained industry experience through internships in medical affairs and precision medicine, where she contributed to data-driven dashboards, literature reviews, and white papers supporting oncology programs.

Chelsea is passionate about leveraging AI and data science to advance equity in healthcare and plans to pursue a career at the intersection of oncology, artificial intelligence, and translational research. Outside of work, she enjoys traveling and working out.

Graciela Lagraba, University of Michigan Ann Arbor

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Graciela Lagraba is a Master of Health Informatics candidate at the University of Michigan, where she focuses on the intersection of public health, biomedical informatics and healthcare operations.
At UofM, Graciela has contributed to the Center for Healthcare Engineering and Patient Safety (CHEPS), working on simulation modeling, patient scheduling optimization, and operational improvement projects across ambulatory and specialty care. She is currently a Pinkert Healthcare Accelerator Scholar, exploring the integration of diagnostics and research translation into clinical workflows.

Graciela brings experience as a bilingual medical assistant at the University of Washington Medical Center, where she supported patients during the COVID-19 pandemic and deepened her commitment to health equity and accessible care. Her professional interests center on quality improvement, diagnostic innovation, and bridging the gap between research and implementation in health systems. Outside of her academic and professional work, she enjoys exploring local food cultures and spending time with her miniature schnauzer.

Teresa Le, University of Texas at Arlington

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Teresa Le is a biomedical engineer with a background in healthcare and a passion for advancing medical device innovation. She earned her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Biomedical Engineering, conducting research in bone microvasculature and biomaterials, and is a McNair Scholar, Honors Scholar, Tau Beta Pi member and published author. Teresa has presented at national conferences, including BMES and NCHC, participated in the NYU Summer Research and Clinical Immersion Program, and competed in Biomedical Make-a-Thons and the GOGEC competition, where her team earned bronze.

As a leader in SWE and the Genetic Engineering Society, Teresa has mentored students and fostered inclusive spaces for minority students in STEM. She is eager to learn from industry leaders and pursue her passion for improving patient care through engineering.

Isabelle Linares, University of Rochester

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Isabelle Linares received her BS in Biomedical Engineering from the University at Buffalo in 2021, where she graduated as a Presidential Scholar. She is currently a PhD candidate in Biomedical Engineering at the University of Rochester, where her research focuses on developing microphysiological systems to model inflammation and fibrosis in tendon injury. She has led the development of a modular, manufacturable tendon-on-a-chip platform that integrates fluid flow to mimic the vascular environment, enabling improved preclinical testing and disease modeling. Her work has resulted in peer-reviewed publications, a provisional patent, and collaborations with academic and industry partners.

Isabelle is passionate about translational research, interdisciplinary collaboration, and promoting diversity in STEM. She mentors high school and undergraduate students through programs such as STEP and the University of Rochester Future Scientists Program and serves as Co-President of the University of Rochester's Microphysiological Systems Network. Her long-term goal is to lead R&D efforts in the MedTech industry, developing biomimetic tools for musculoskeletal and immune-related disorders. Outside of the lab, Isabelle enjoys biking, planning her next hiking trip, and cooking Colombian and Greek recipes.

Gustavo Medina, The University of Texas at El Paso

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Gustavo Medina is a doctoral student in Electrical Engineering at The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). He is pursuing advanced research in nanofabrication and biomedical applications, with a particular focus on developing bioelectronic devices for healthcare. His academic journey has included hands-on research at the W.M. Keck Center for 3D Innovation, where he contributed to real-time monitoring systems for ceramic robocasting to enhance additive manufacturing precision and reliability. He also gained industry experience through an internship with Texas Instruments (TI), where he worked in semiconductor manufacturing, further strengthening his expertise in advanced fabrication processes.

Currently, his research interests center on leveraging nano- and microfabrication techniques to create wearable and implantable sensors for health monitoring. Beyond his academic and professional work, Gustavo enjoys strength training at the gym and engaging in technology-driven projects, bringing creativity, persistence, and technical expertise to collaborative research environments.

Marzia Momin, The Pennsylvania State University

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Marzia Momin is a PhD candidate in the Engineering Science and Mechanics department at The Pennsylvania State University. Her research focuses on developing personalized neural implants through advanced 3D printing and neuroengineering approaches, creating soft, biocompatible devices for brain-computer interfaces, neuromodulation, and therapeutic applications. Before beginning her doctoral studies, she earned an MS in Engineering at the Nano-scale program from the Department of Engineering Science and Mechanics at Penn State and a BSc in Biomedical Engineering from the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET). Her career experience spans both academia and industry: she currently serves as a Graduate Research Assistant and Lab Manager & Safety Officer at Penn State and has also contributed as an Entrepreneurial Lead in both National and Regional NSF I-Corps programs. She also holds several intellectual property portfolios based on her current research projects at Penn State.

In addition to her research, Marzia invests in entrepreneurship, leadership, and outreach. She has completed commercialization training through Penn State's Business of Science Bootcamp, the Business Model Canvas Workshop Series, NeuroTech's course on translating and commercializing neurotechnology, and the Foundations of Startup Leadership program. Her work has been recognized with multiple honors, including Winner of the 2025 Business of Science Bootcamp Pitch Competition, selection to NSF National I-Corps (Summer 2025, Cohort #1), and the Dana Foundation's Professional Development Award in Neuroscience and Society (December 2023). She also volunteered with Envision: STEM Career Day Supporting Young Women.

Outside of her academic and professional life, Marzia enjoys attending live concerts and experiencing different music genres.

Angie Montero, University of Miami

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Angie Montero is a first-generation Cuban American undergraduate student in the fourth year of a 5-year BS/MS program in Biomedical Engineering with a minor in Industrial and Systems Engineering at the University of Miami. She is passionate about advancing healthcare through engineering innovation with an interest in developing life-changing biomedical solutions. She gained significant research experience as an NSF SMASH Engineering REU Research Intern at the University of Notre Dame, where she applied hydrogel-based scaffolds to develop 3D biomimetic tissue culture models for metastatic prostate cancer and presented her findings at the Notre Dame Undergraduate Research Symposium. In addition, she has contributed to pre-clinical studies on nerve stimulation therapies for spinal cord injuries at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine's (UMMSOM) Miami Project to Cure Paralysis.

Angie has been actively involved in leadership including her work as President of UMaker and co-leader of MedMaker, where she collaborated with engineering students, faculty, and patients to develop personalized orthotic solutions for an individual with paralysis. This experience spurred her interest in biomedical product development and orthopedics as she also enjoys artistic projects and creative problem-solving, bringing a unique entrepreneurial mindset to her work.

Xochitl Morales, Columbia University

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Xochitl Morales is a dedicated Biomedical Engineering student in her senior year at Columbia University leveraging her research background to bridge the gap between advanced science and public understanding. Her hands-on experience spans from optimizing preclinical assays at Eli Lilly's Research Laboratories to prototyping artificial vascular networks at Stanford University's Cardiovascular Institute, showcasing her proficiency in tissue engineering, data analysis, and molecular biology techniques. Her work has contributed to a peer-reviewed publication in JOR Spine, and she has presented her findings at national conferences such as ABRCMS and the Stanford CVRS.

An accomplished scholar and leader, Xochitl has been recognized with multiple awards, including the Chuck Lorre Research Scholarship, the Brenda and Dave Rickey Endowed Scholarship, and a travel award to the Lesbians Who Tech Summit. As President of the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, Xochitl is committed to fostering diversity and inclusion within the STEM community. In her personal time, she enjoys mentoring aspiring engineers and spending time with her cat, Pedro.

Abbey Nkansah, University of Texas at Austin

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Abbey Nkansah is a 5th-year PhD candidate in Biomedical Engineering at the University of Texas at Austin, where her research focuses on developing durable, bioactive hydrogel coatings towards the development of synthetic cardiovascular devices. Driven by a commitment to advancing equitable healthcare, her doctoral work applies polymer engineering to design innovative biomaterials to enhance outcomes for patients from diverse backgrounds. Before her graduate studies, she attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where she earned a Bachelor's degree in Materials Science and Engineering.

Equally dedicated to broadening participation in STEM, she mentors the next generation of STEM leaders while actively creating supportive communities for underrepresented groups and fostering cross-disciplinary collaboration. She looks forward to working with cross-functional teams to develop innovative solutions that enhance patient outcomes and drive advancements in the medical technology and biotechnology sectors. In her free time, she enjoys rock climbing, making ceramics, and spending time with family and friends.

Amber Rogers, Indiana University School of Medicine

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Amber Rogers is a fourth year PhD candidate in the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology at the Indiana University School of Medicine. Originally from Anguilla, she holds a Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry from Towson University in Maryland. She completed a post-baccalaureate research program at Virginia Commonwealth University, where her commitment to reproductive health research was solidified. Her current work focuses on research at the intersection of reproductive health and pharmacology. The long-term goal of her thesis project is to optimize computational models to predict drug safety and efficacy during pregnancy. Outside of the lab Amber enjoys reading, volunteering with local community organizations and staying active by spinning, playing volleyball or netball.

Alyssa Shen, University of California, Riverside

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Alyssa Shen is a driven and passionate bioengineering student currently pursuing her Master's degree at the University of California, San Diego. Originally from a small suburb near Sacramento, she graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Science in Bioengineering from the University of California, Riverside. Her undergraduate work ranged from designing a phantom shoulder for an assistive device to leading a design project that developed a cell-seeded flow loop for aneurysm device testing. This incorporated patient-specific vascular geometries and in-vivo conditions to support the improved biodegradable flow diverters.

Beyond her academic work, Alyssa enjoys a well-rounded life filled with dancing hula and salsa, reading, and spending time outdoors with family and friends - activities that fuel her creativity and balance her technical pursuits. She also seeks opportunities to bridge engineering innovation with real-world impact. Most recently, she participated in the Shriners Children's Philadelphia Medical Research Summer Immersion program, gaining insight into how medical technology advances patient care. Inspired by innovations that help people overcome physical limitations Alyssa continues to explore the intersection of engineering, medicine, and human resilience.

Silvana Sidhom, University of Florida

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Silvana Sidhom is a pre-doctoral candidate. She received a Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Sciences and Biotechnology from University of Central Florida. At Florida, she investigated how to enhance women's health through use of machine learning in a community clinic providing care to rural patients. As a bench researcher, her goal is to translate scientific discoveries into clinical applications, directly impacting patient outcomes.

Kayla Simmion PharmD, Florida A&M University, College of Pharmacy

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Kayla Simmion is a Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) graduate from Florida A&M University whose professional background reflects versatility and a genuine commitment to excellence. She has gained experience across both public and private sectors, including roles with the Department of Homeland Security, the Attorney General's Office, and an internship with Eli Lilly. These opportunities have strengthened her ability to lead in dynamic environments, collaborate across disciplines, and navigate complex challenges with confidence. They have also shaped her growing interest in patient-centered care and the impact of innovation in improving healthcare delivery.

Kayla is guided by a deep appreciation for people, understanding, and purpose. She is drawn to meaningful conversations, moments of reflection, and experiences that broaden her view of the world. In her free time, she enjoys exploring global cuisines, learning new languages, and uncovering international stories through film and literature. She values cultural exchange and believes that being open to different perspectives is essential to both personal and professional growth.

Brianna Smith, University of California, Los Angeles

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Brianna Smith is an aspiring public health professional with a BS in Biology from Duke University. Her passions for research and advocacy influenced her career pursuit of using interdisciplinary research to address health outcomes in minority communities. She has an extensive basic science background and is currently working with the UCLA CTSI to conduct community-engaged sickle cell disease research. In her free time, Brianna enjoys reading and photography.

Marc Torres, University of North Texas

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Marc Anthony Torres is a biomedical engineering graduate student at the University of North Texas (UNT), where he is beginning his Master's studies with a concentration in biomaterials. In the Smart Polymers for Biomedical Applications lab, he focuses on advanced hydrogels and shape memory polymers. His current work involves synthesizing GelAGE hydrogels through thiol-click chemistry to mimic human tissue, with applications in regenerative medicine. Marc has shared his research at national conferences, competed in research poster exhibitions and contributed as a co-author to peer-reviewed publications in Polymers, Journal of Biomaterials and Heliyon.

Beyond research, Marc has demonstrated strong leadership as President of the UNT Biomedical Engineering Society (BMES), where he organized the 2024 and 2025 UNT BMES Medical Device Make-A-Thon. This interdisciplinary academic competition engaged students to design medical device solutions under a strict time constraint and was recognized by the university with the Outstanding Student Organization Event Award. Outside of academics, Marc enjoys playing the violin, staying active through basketball, and giving back to his community by volunteering with the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE).

Olaedo Umeh, University of Miami

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Ola Umeh is a junior at the University of Miami, where she studies Data Science & AI with an additional major in Mathematics on the pre-med track. With an interest in the intersection of medicine and machine learning, she has been building experience in both fields through her work as a pediatric medical assistant and as an intern at AI companies with a healthcare focus. Her research spans toxicology studies on zebrafish, the behavior of large language models and cancer cell modeling.

On campus, Ola serves as Internal Vice President of a technology fraternity and Co-President of ColorStack UM, a chapter she co-founded to support Black and Latinx students pursuing careers in tech. She also co-founded the Genny & Ola Foundation in Nigeria, an initiative dedicated to improving children's literacy and digital education. These experiences have shaped her perspective and strengthened her commitment to exploring how machine learning can advance medical research and patient care. Looking ahead, she hopes to become a leader in the biotech industry while keeping patients at the center of her work.

Hannah Umoeka, Louisiana Tech University

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Hannah Umoeka is a third-year PhD student in Biomedical Engineering at Louisiana Tech University, where her research focuses on developing biomaterials for wound healing and tissue regeneration. She holds a BS in Biomedical Engineering with a minor in Materials Science from the University of Texas at Arlington and is also pursuing an MS in Industrial Engineering.

Hannah is certified in Lean Manufacturing and holds a Six Sigma Green Belt. She is also a certified pharmacy technician and serves as a MATLAB Student Ambassador. In her free time, she enjoys reading, dancing, and attempting to teach herself how to roller-skate backwards.

Claudia Valenzuela, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

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Claudia is a biomedical neuroscience Master's student at the Icahn School of Medicine in the Waters Lab at Mount Sinai's Nash Family Center for Advanced Circuit Therapeutics. She has collaborated with industry partners to evaluate novel neuromodulation devices, including a wearable headband for improving sleep in Parkinson's patients and a vibrotactile glove to reduce tremors. Previously, she worked as a clinical research coordinator, gaining expertise in trial design, regulatory processes, and patient engagement. She has also completed a MedTech commercialization course, where she analyzed intellectual property, market fit, and regulatory strategy for a neurostimulation device. Beyond research, Claudia is passionate about supporting her community and serves as president of First-Generation Scholars, leading mentorship and outreach programs to support underrepresented students in STEM.

Ayan Waite, Brown University

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Ayan Waite was born and raised in White Plains, NY. She received her BS in Biomedical Engineering with a minor in Electrical Engineering from Boston University. Following her undergraduate studies, she was a research assistant at MIT, working on a project implementing a closed-loop anesthesia delivery system in non-human primates. Currently, Ayan is a PhD candidate and NSF GRFP Fellow in Electrical and Computer Engineering at Brown University. Her research is focused on investigating the progression of human exploratory procedures in haptic shape recognition and how the underlying representation extends to the visual modality. While at Brown, she has enjoyed serving as a teaching assistant in both neuroscience and engineering, being involved with the Black Graduate Student Association as the Chair of Finance, and mentoring undergraduate students interested in pursuing graduate school.

In her spare time, Ayan enjoys yoga and long-distance running.