

# Biochemistry Student Association Newsletter

## Upcoming BSA Events

The BSA will be holding the second **Social Issues in STEM Discussion** on **April 8th**, at **11am**. The topic of this discussion will be the film ***The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks***. You can [view the film](#) for free through the VU Library. Sign-up for the discussion [here!](#)

On **April 6th**, Robert Mann and Jessica Hill, and on **April 20th**, Nicole Kendrick will present on her research for the **BSA Colloquium** from **4-5pm**. Come out and support your fellow Biochemists!

The BSA Wellness Committee has just introduced **BSA Hangouts!** This is a space for students to chat and meet new people in an informal setting. These will be held monthly and the next one will be **April 16th**, at **12pm**.

Save the date for the rescheduled **Biochemistry/BSA Retreat, April 22-23, 2022** in Chattanooga, TN!

## Congratulations!

Congrats to Tata Kavlashvili for winning 2nd place in the 9th Annual Vanderbilt University 3-Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition that was held by the Graduate Student Council on March 4th.

## April Defenses

Congratulations to Katie Rothamel! Come support Katie's upcoming defense on **April 26 at 11AM**.

## Student of the Month

Congratulations to Samika Joshi for being Biochemistry's Student of the Month!

### What year are you in and whose lab do you work in?

I am a second year graduate student in David Cortez's lab. The lab is focused on different DNA damage repair pathways. I work on understanding the mechanism of three ATP-dependent translocases in catalyzing fork reversal.

### What do you like best about the Biochemistry department?

The active community and the opportunities that it offers. We have a great community of faculty members who really care about the students and encourage one another.

### What piece of advice would you give to other students?

Patience is critical when trying to work through scientific problems. Trying to rush or do too much will only result in frustrations. Asking simple, testable questions and respecting your own limits whether it is intellectual (and just get advice from a colleague) or physical (maybe take a break for a few days). It is key to maximizing the fun that is science. I am not great at following this advice myself, but it is the best advice I have received. And when I, on occasion, successfully follow it, there is no stopping the fun.

### What is your favorite place to go in Nashville?

Percy-Warner Park, I love the beautiful trails there. It is a very calming place, and the trails are super easy to walk and relax along. Especially with the weather warming up, I am sure it is going to be an even better climb.



Nominate a Biochemistry student that's doing cool science!

Email [nicole.d.kendrick@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:nicole.d.kendrick@vanderbilt.edu)

## Recent Student Publications

**Collins, J.A.** and Osheroff, N. (2021) 1,2-Naphthoquinone as a poison of human type II topoisomerases. *Chem. Res. Toxicol.*

## DEI Announcements

*We wanted to take a moment to highlight the past and upcoming events organized by various members of our community that directly relate to the mission of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.*

### PAST EVENTS

#### September 2020

The **"Fairplay"** workshop was offered in the fall. Participants played an online video game that was designed to teach concepts of implicit and unconscious biases. A discussion followed the game, led by Dr. Linda Sealy. This was an event co-organized by *Drs. Linda Sealy, Christine Keaton and Lourdes Estrada.*

#### October 2020

**"The Impact of Power and Privilege"** was a workshop organized by *Sam Lisy* and facilitated through the BSA colloquium. **Damisi Fawole**, from the Vanderbilt Student Center for Social Justice and Identity, led the discussion.

#### November 2020

The BSA Book Club chose to discuss **Superior**, by the award-winning British science journalist **Angela Saini**. The BSA social committee (*Jessica Collins, Kate Clowes, Kateryna Nabukhotna, and Tata Kavlashvili*) and *Jen Smith* organized the book club in the fall. This departmental event was dovetailed with a visit by Ms. Saini to the Vanderbilt campus as part of the University's MLK day events on Jan 13. Ms. Saini's visit was hosted by the Vanderbilt Evolutionary Studies Initiative.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### April 2020

For the second installment of the **Social Issues in STEM Discussion series**, we will watch and discuss ***The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*** film. We have received special access to [view this film](#) for free through the VU Library. We invite you to watch the film and/or attend the discussion. The discussion will be held **Thursday, April 8th at 11am via Zoom**. You will need to [register](#) for the discussion event. If you have any questions, please contact [Jessica.a.collins@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:Jessica.a.collins@vanderbilt.edu).

### DEI RESOURCES

If you are interested in staying informed about DEI-related events around campus, please [register](#) for the campus-wide Newsletter.

## Student Invited Speaker Interest Form

The BSA would like to put effort this coming year into a student driven speaker series. We hope these speakers will be diverse and representative of the variety of research we have ongoing as a department. If there are any specific speakers you have in mind, or a topic you would like to hear about [please let us know!](#)

## Mental Health Committee

**Mental Wellness:** The University Counseling Center is offering [weekly workshops and drop-in counseling online](#). "The Psychology of Peak Performance" workshop series is also available for post-docs.

**Physical Wellness:** There are free indoor fitness classes at Vanderbilt's Recreation and Wellness center (with limited spaces), including yoga, pilates, and indoor cycling!  
[Register in advance here.](#)

Want to try yoga at home? YouTube offers plenty of free yoga videos, [such as this one for stretching your neck and shoulders.](#)

**Social Wellness:** Happy Spring! Why not grab a friend and enjoy this weather with a short hike? [Nashville has a plethora of walking trails](#) to celebrate the season.

## COVID-19 and Reopening News

Graduate students, make sure you use the [VandySafe App](#) for COVID-19 Self-Monitoring daily before coming to campus. VU is still in [Phase 2+](#). Asymptomatic testing is currently required weekly for graduate students. If you are fully vaccinated, you can be exempt from testing and quarantine if you [submit your vaccination records](#). See more about the revised guidelines [here](#).

## Biochemistry Twitter

For updates on events and departmental news, follow the Biochemistry Department twitter [@VandyBiochem](#)

## Questions? Concerns?

If you have anything that you would like to be addressed by the department, you can submit it anonymously [here](#). This survey is regularly monitored by the BSA.