

Biochemistry Student Association Newsletter

Upcoming BSA Events

On **May 4th**, Esha Dalvie, and on **May 18th**, Kathryn Brewer and Ivette Perez will present on their research for the **BSA Colloquium** from **4-5pm**. Come out and support your fellow Biochemists!

The BSA will be hosting **trivia** on Friday, **May 14th** - don't forget to sign up!

2021-2022 BSA Positions

We are looking for volunteers to serve on next year's BSA! The positions are:

- President
- Vice-President
- Postdoc Liaison
- Colloquium Committee
- Qualifying Exam Committee
- Retreat Committee
- Social Committee
- Social Media Committee
- Wellness Committee

If interested, email Tyler Hansen (tyler.j.hansen@vanderbilt.edu).

Student of the Month

Congratulations to Mac Castro for being Biochemistry's Student of the Month!

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

I am (reluctant to admit) a 5th year graduate student. I am in Charles (Chuck) Sanders' lab... soon the be the most senior graduate student in the lab (which is cool but also... yikes). My project is a chemical / structural biology project that involves investigating interactions

between the Alzheimer's disease-associated Amyloid Precursor Protein (APP) and small molecule fragments (in collaboration with Dr. Fesik), FDA-approved drugs, and other drug-like compounds. In the early days of the project, I used high-throughput NMR screening to find molecules that bind the APP transmembrane domain. These days, I am trying to figure out what my 'hits' do to the biochemistry and (coming soon) cell biology APP. I hope that one day, these compounds will be used in research to further probe the biology and pathology of Alzheimer's disease.

What do you like best about the Biochemistry department?

I have really enjoyed my time in the Biochemistry department in general, and it is hard to pinpoint a specific thing that I like most. In the early days of my PhD, I enjoyed the lax class curriculum. In the post-pandemic world, I can appreciate how robust our department has been and the sense of community we have continued to maintain. I harbor no regrets in steering rotation students towards the Department of Biochemistry.

What piece of advice would you give to other students?

As far as advice for other students goes, a piece of advice from my dear mentor, Dr. Sanders, has resonated with me throughout graduate school. He told me early on, "If you go mucking around in the woods, you never know what you're going to find". This concept has truth in both scientific research and in life. Go do the high-risk experiment that may help answer a difficult question; go push the boundaries of what is known, even if it may not give way to immediately useful information. Or you can take it literally as I sometimes do, and go backpacking the beautiful Tennessee wilderness... there are always cool things to discover and new friendships to make.

What is your favorite place to go in Nashville?

My favorite place in Nashville is, or rather was, The Cowan. The Cowan was a music venue attached to the basement of the TopGolf near downtown Nashville. Me and my friends used to go there all the time for underground music, and it had more of an atmosphere of a club than a typical Nashville music venue. Some real good memories were had there. Sadly, it was closed due to the pandemic, but I imagine it will open again and bring in underground music from across the world once more.

Nominate a Biochemistry student that's doing cool science!
Email nicole.d.kendrick@vanderbilt.edu



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 Center for Student Wellbeing has some great [weekly wellbeing practices](#) over Zoom, including meditation hours and Vanderbilt Recovery Support meetings for students. There are also [links for previously recorded workshop and meditation sessions on their website](#).

Social Wellness: Celebrate the warmer weather by grabbing some friends and having a socially-distant picnic combined with a [self-guided Vanderbilt campus tree tour](#). Outdoor gatherings on campus can have a maximum of 12 people. Another fun upcoming outdoor event is the [Tennessee Craft Fair](#) at nearby Centennial Park (May 7-9).

COVID-19 and Reopening News

Graduate students, make sure you use the [VandySafe App](#) for COVID-19 Self-Monitoring daily before coming to campus. 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](#).

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.