



iJOBS Career Panel: Life After Graduate School

Friday March 16, 2018

3:30-5pm

Deans Conference Room, RWJMS



Leia Novak, Ph.D.

HIV/AIDS Scientific Program Manager

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Leia Novak, Ph.D., graduated from East Tennessee State University in 2005 with a B.S. in Biology. She then joined Rutgers University as a laboratory technician in the Department of Toxicology until she was accepted into the Rutgers Molecular Biosciences graduate program in 2007. She earned her Ph.D. in 2013 in the Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics in the laboratory of Joseph Dougherty, Ph.D., where she studied molecular mechanisms governing the establishment and maintenance of HIV latency. She then pursued her first postdoctoral training appointment at the National Cancer Institute at the NIH under the mentorship of Marjorie Robert-Guroff where she received a competitive Cancer Research Training Award to conduct pre-clinical HIV vaccine studies focusing on identifying immune correlates of protection from SIV infection in Rhesus macaques. Following 2.5 years at the NIH, she pursued her second postdoctoral training appointment at the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research at the FDA under the mentorship of Daniela Verthelyi, MD. Ph.D., where she evaluated Zika infection-induced, immune-mediated, neuropathogenesis in mice. Following one year at the FDA, she accepted a position at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) at the NIH as the scientific program manager for NHLBI's HIV/AIDS grants portfolio. As the HIV scientific program manager she develops funding opportunity announcements and leads a team charged with prioritizing and recommending HIV grant applications for funding, conducts grants portfolio analyses, conducts literature reviews and attends scientific meetings to prepare, present, and disseminate information regarding the current state of HIV research and advances in promising new approaches, and arranges seminars and workshops to generate interest in HIV-related heart, lung, and blood research.



James Novak, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
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James Novak, Ph.D., graduated with a B.S. in Molecular Biology and Genetics from the University of Maryland in 2007, before joining the Rutgers University Molecular Biosciences graduate program. He completed his Ph.D. under the mentorship of Alexey Ryazanov, Ph.D., in the Department of Pharmacology in 2013, where he investigated the role of EF2 kinase signaling and translational regulation on germ cell development. He then went on to pursue his postdoctoral training with Terence Partridge, Ph.D., at Children's National Medical Center in Washington D.C., where he was accepted into a competitive NIH-NIAMS T32 postdoctoral training fellowship to investigate muscle satellite cell function and muscle repair in the context of disease and aging, as well as, therapeutic 'exon-skipping' drug development for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD). In 2017, he was awarded two career development grants and promoted to faculty in the Center for Genetic Medicine at Children's National. In addition, he was appointed to Assistant Professor of Genomics and Precision Medicine at The George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences in D.C. His research spans both basic and translational science, focusing on inflammation and muscle repair, as well as, preclinical development of leading 'exon-skipping' drugs with particular interest on the mechanisms that regulate drug delivery in the context of muscle disease.



Abby Hare-Harris, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor in the Department Biological and Allied Health Sciences at Bloomsburg University
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I completed my undergraduate degree in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Ursinus College in 2003 and joined the Molecular Biosciences PhD program in that same year. During my time at Rutgers, I worked in the Brzustowicz laboratory studying the genetics of language impairment in autism spectrum disorders. I completed my PhD in Microbiology and Molecular Genetics and the Excellence in Mentoring Fellowship Program in 2013. Following my time at Rutgers, I became a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Autism & Developmental Medicine Institute (ADMI) at Geisinger Health System in Lewisburg, PA. While at ADMI, I also became the director of the Summer Autism and Neurodevelopmental Internship (SANDI) Program for undergraduate research students and mentored 10 research students within this program. At ADMI, I worked directly with Drs. Christa Martin and David Ledbetter to investigate the role of rare copy number

variants in the clinical manifestation of developmental brain disorders. My primary research focus was to develop bioinformatics algorithms to aid in the characterization of these genetic variants by linking whole exome sequencing data to electronic health records. I presented this data at the American Society of Human Genetics Conference and, in recognition for this work, I am a two-time semifinalist for the Charles J. Epstein Award for Excellence in Human Genetics Research. In August 2017, I became an Assistant Professor in the Department Biological and Allied Health Sciences at Bloomsburg University. In this role, I am the lead advisor for the Medical Genomics and Genetic Counseling Certificate Program. My teaching responsibilities include courses in Bioinformatics, Medical Genomics, Genetics, Anatomy & Physiology, and General Biology. My primary research focus is the characterization of the clinical manifestation of 16p11.2 and 15q13.3 deletions using electronic health record data from the DiscovEHR project. I am also developing a clinical metric to assess atypical developmental trajectories of language development in individuals with autism spectrum disorder. My lab currently consists of one graduate and three undergraduate research students.



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I am a recent Rutgers University Biomedical Sciences PhD graduate, and now work to translate small biotech news to the investor world at Tiberend Strategic Advisors. During my biochemistry PhD at Rutgers I worked in Dr. Monica Roth's research lab to identify the Chromatin Tethering and Nuclear Retention functions of the Murine Leukemia Virus p12 Protein in MLV's Retroviral Integration Machinery. I have worked at Tiberend Strategic Advisors, a biotech communications consulting agency, for 1.5 years as an investor relations account supervisor, generating messages for strategic communication of corporate milestones, clinical study outcomes and quarterly financial updates. I service nine client accounts spanning the fields of anti-infectives, immuno-oncology, ADHD, drug delivery, and the human microbiome. Day to day activities including developing key messaging, planning strategic news flow, writing press releases and web copy, rebuilding and tweaking investor pitch decks, scheduling client meetings with bankers and investors 'on the road' and at biotech conferences, and attending client/investor meetings and conferences.