

Winter 2022



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
CHICAGO



# IMSD Newsletter

Dear IMSD students, alums, and friends,  
Happy Winter and holidays to all! The IMSD office received so many exciting student updates these past few months that we wanted to share with all of you. Please read on to learn about graduations, fellowships, and awards activities that IMSD students have been involved in this year and some exciting program updates from Dr. Schwartz.

*The UChicago IMSD staff*

## IMSD Graduations and Accolades

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Several IMSD students have defended their theses and graduated with their PhDs since our last newsletter! Congratulations to the following students:

**Elaine Kouame**, PhD in Immunology (Jabri Lab), July 2022

**Evelyn Campbell**, PhD in Microbiology (Nagler Lab), July 2022

**Roy Morgan**, PhD in Genetics, Genomics & Systems Biology (Kee Lab), October 2022

We are so proud of our new graduates! To date 14 IMSD students have completed their PhDs and 3 students have graduated with MS degrees. We will miss them but are certain that their hard work both in and out of the lab, on and off campus, through mentoring activities, outreach, volunteering, and advocacy will have a lasting impact at UChicago. While we can't list all of the successes and activities of these amazing students, below is a brief summary of some of the achievements of the IMSD graduates while at UChicago. Previous IMSD graduates can be found listed on our website: <https://imsd.uchicago.edu/alumni/>.



**Dr. Elaine Kouame** graduated with her PhD in Immunology in July 2022. During her time in graduate school, Elaine has been an active member of the UChicago community through her volunteer work and leadership. She served as the Director of GRIT, working to increase and retain students and faculty from diverse backgrounds in BSD. Elaine co-founded Black in Immuno, which is a platform that seeks to celebrate and support Black people in Immunology (read more about her work with Black Immuno [here](#)). She published two articles in the Journal of Immunology about Black in Immuno (which may be found [here](#)). For her extensive DEI work for the UChicago community, Elaine received a Trainee Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Award from the BSD Diversity Committee in 2021. In addition to her leadership and DEI work, Elaine served as a STEM instructor for Target HOPE, designing and teaching biology curriculum to high school students. During her time in graduate school, Elaine has been the recipient of several prestigious honors and awards, such as the Bridge Builders Award (May 2021) and the Fitch Scholarship Fund. Elaine will start her postdoctoral studies in the coming months at the University of California San Francisco (UCSF).



## IMSD Graduations and Accolades



**Dr. Evelyn Campbell** defended her thesis and graduated with her PhD in July 2022. After graduating, Evelyn began a new position as a Preceptor for the UChicago Data Science Institute as part of the new Data Science Preceptorship Program, which is part of a partnership between UChicago and the City College of Chicago. The program places new PhD graduates in teaching positions at both partner institutions to foster more inclusive learning environments and seeks to increase the diversity of professionals entering STEM education and careers. Over the course of her academic career, Evelyn has published five articles, including one article this year on intestinal immune response (which may be found [here](#)). During graduate school, Evelyn was active in multiple mentorship initiatives, such as serving as a STEM Educator for Target HOPE for local high school students and as a volunteer poster judge and mentor with the Louis Stokes

Alliances for Minority Participation (LSAMP) Symposium. At UChicago, Evelyn served as the Board Chair of the UChicago Diversity Advisory Board where she assisted in developing programs and resources related to diversity in graduate education in order to support graduate students and postdocs from racial/ethnic and other historically underrepresented groups in higher education.

**Dr. Roy Morgan** successfully defended his thesis in October 2022 and will graduate with his PhD in December 2022. His dissertation was titled, “Identifying a Role for Transcription Factor Ets1 in Post-Selected Natural Killer T Cells.” During his time at the University of Chicago, he has demonstrated a clear commitment to using his skills and expertise to give back to his community. Over the years, he has participated in the Computational STEM Lab, Tutoring Chicago (where he held a leadership position), and Chicago Youth Program volunteering his time teaching and tutoring K-12 students in STEM and English. During graduate school, Roy has published three articles examining the response and function of immune cells, with a fourth currently in preparation. His most recent article may be found [here](#). In 2022, Roy received an AAI Young Investigator Award and gave oral and poster presentations of his research at the Autumn Immunology Conference, with additional presentations scheduled for early 2023 conferences. Roy is currently exploring career opportunities with the goal of completing a postdoc to build his teaching credentials and then, working in science education and outreach.



**Dr. Daniel Ruiz** graduated with his PhD in Molecular Metabolism and Nutrition from UChicago in 2019, as the first UChicago IMSD graduate. He is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at Emory University School of Medicine in the Department of Human Genetics. At Emory University, Daniel is conducting research on the epigenetic inheritance of phenotypes across generations. This year he was awarded a prestigious F32 NRSA NIH Postdoctoral Research Fellowship by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. Daniel has authored ten articles over the course of his academic career, including an [article that was just published in PNAS](#) on the inheritance of BPA-induced obesity. Daniel enjoys mentoring junior trainees in his lab and has long been active in outreach and volunteering. In 2019 Daniel received a Special Recognition Teaching

Award from Target H.O.P.E. for his exemplary dedication to the educational advancement of high school students attending Chicago Public Schools, and he currently serves on his department’s DEI Outreach Taskforce and Committee. Daniel also recently participated in the Endocrine Society’s Diabetes Hill Day, where he spoke with the Georgia’s Senator staff about the importance of an insulin price cap, funding for the CDC, and diabetes-related NIH funding.



## IRACDA Postdoctoral Training Grant Announcement

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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, 2023.

Please see our website [here](#) for more details and let us know if you have recently graduated (or will soon) and are interested in applying!

## IMSD Grant Renewal

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Dr. Schwartz is preparing to submit the IMSD grant renewal this January, 2023 for the next five year period. Thank you to everyone who has submitted our IMSD student progress report for gathering the information we need for the grant application. If you haven't yet submitted your form, current students can do so [here](#), and alums [here](#), or send your updated CV by replying to this email.

## IMSD Student Awards

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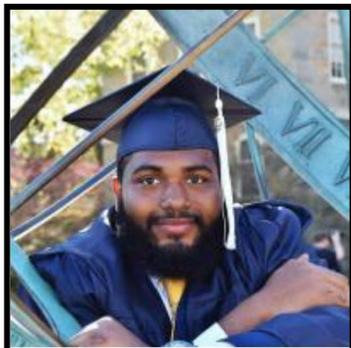


On November 14<sup>th</sup>, the BSD DEI Committee announced the winners of the 2022 BSD Diversity Equity and Inclusion Awards. Congratulations to all ten students and postdocs who were recognized! A full list of award recipients and their accomplishments can be found [here](#). IMSD students **Joash Lake** and **Briana Banks** were recognized for their outstanding contributions to DEI leadership and initiatives at UChicago.



## IMSD Student Awards

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**Joash Lake** was awarded the BSD Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award in recognition of Exceptional DEI Leadership and Service. Joash is a 4<sup>th</sup> year PhD student in the Immunology program, conducting his dissertation research in Dr. Eugene Chang's laboratory. Joash has committed to ensuring that the sciences are accessible to students of color. He has been a tutor and mentor for students of color in Chicago working with nonprofits, like Tutoring Chicago and Target Hope. He is currently the STEM Faculty Lead Lecturer for Target Hope, teaching weekly classes to high school students. He has also brought UChicago professors to present their research to Target Hope students. Joash has also served as a mentor for many undergraduate researchers in his role at Pritzker SOM's CAMP summer research program. He has held a variety of leadership positions across different student organizations simultaneously, such as the Black Graduate Coalition. He assisted with UChicago's Vaccine Drive in which BSD graduate and medical students worked with Howard Brown Health to distribute vaccines to South Side community members.

**Briana Banks** received the BSD Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commendation in recognition of meaningful DEI Leadership and Service in recognition for her work on the BSD DEI Committee. Briana is a 4<sup>th</sup> year PhD student in the Cancer Biology program, conducting her dissertation research in the Brady lab. From 2021 to 2022, Briana served as the President of Graduate Council's DEI Committee. She spearheaded the planning and facilitation of the Graduate Council's DEI programming for the 2021 to 2022 academic year. Some of her notable accomplishments include the Graduate Council's Juneteenth celebrations and partnering with Crossroads and the DuSable Museum to create speaking events to educate the graduate community and students. As a part of this vital work, she created the Dynamic Black Women Speaker Series, which brought Dr. Eve Ewing and Valerie Jarrett to participate in fireside chats with members of the UChicago community. Briana also created a series of workshops for UChicago faculty in partnership with "Still We Rise" to teach ways to create course materials and class discussions that are inclusive of all student backgrounds and identities.



Congrats again to all the 2022 DEI Award winners, especially to Joash and Briana! We are excited to see what you will do in the future!

## IMSD Evaluation Project

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Our long-term IMSD Evaluation project is on-going at this time. Thank you to all who participated in the beta testing last year and the online surveys that were developed in collaboration with NORC. These skill-based assessment forms are designed to track students' progress through graduate school and cover 8 categories of skills that have been shown to be essential for doctoral student development: Knowledge of Research Specialization, Critical Thinking, Experimental, Computational, Communication, Management, Leadership and Resiliency Skills. Both student and mentor versions have been developed for evaluation in both directions. You can expect to receive a survey as you move through your early, middle, and late stages of graduate school. Your responses are much appreciated and will be used to inform and improve the training for future graduate students at UChicago.



## PREP and IMSD Summer Social

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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!

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We'd love to hear from you! If you have any recent awards or career news to share or have an idea for an article for a future IMSD newsletter, please e-mail us at [irisner1@peds.bsd.uchicago.edu](mailto:irisner1@peds.bsd.uchicago.edu).

Visit the University of Chicago IMSD website: <https://imsd.uchicago.edu/>