

Service Statement

My scientific training would feel incomplete without incorporating ample service opportunities. I have found service both within and outside my scientific discipline to be incredibly rewarding. A few of these volunteer activities, described in more detail below, include leading science outreach, organizing events to serve the Durham community, planning symposia on Bacterial Pathogenesis and Campus Food Insecurity, serving as a student ambassador for programs offered through the Duke Graduate School, and co-leading the Plant Climate Innovation Center series to build community and foster collaboration among the plant labs in the Duke Biology Department.

Outside of STEM

Alongside my graduate research I worked to improve the graduate student experience in several ways. As the Graduate and Professional Student Council (GPSC) [Director of Community Outreach](#) I collaborated with Duke oSTEM to organize an Amateur Drag Show benefiting the Durham LGBTQ Center, raising over \$2,000 to support inclusion for Duke LGBTQIA students. My team also organized activity nights at the Ronald McDonald House, which provides housing for families with children receiving treatment at Duke hospital, and book donation drives for Book Harvest, which provides low-income families with books and literacy support.

Through the [Emerging Leaders Institute](#), I worked with fellow students to create a [guide](#) with Duke resources on harassment and discrimination. I continued this initiative as chair of the GPSC Resource Directory Task Force to create an easily accessible, [searchable electronic guide](#). Importantly, this online directory expanded the original project to include resources on basic needs, healthcare, transportation, and housing. In parallel to this student-led effort, I collaborated with departments to distribute resource guides in orientation packets and with The Graduate School to design an [online reference](#) and [resource posters](#) that can be distributed and displayed all over campus.

I have also volunteered with the [GPSC Community Pantry](#) to help food insecure graduate and professional students meet their basic needs. Since opening in 2017, we have expanded the pantry services to include a weekly bag program and to serve graduate student parents by providing diapers and baby care items. These efforts led to collaboration with UNC Chapel Hill, North Carolina State University, and other local universities when I co-founded the [Campus Pantry Collaborative](#), funded initially by a grant from the [Kenan Biddle Partnership](#). As part of this initiative, I helped plan a yearly [symposium](#) to raise awareness about food insecurity on college campuses and develop action steps that individuals, departments, and administration at Duke can use to increase food security among students. Currently, I serve as an advisor for the Campus Pantry Collaborative and plan to continue volunteering for the annual symposium.

STEM Related

I am committed to increasing diversity and mentoring women in science as shown through my leadership of several outreach organizations at both the department and university level. As leader of the MGM Department Outreach Program, I redesigned the [outreach curriculum](#) to be more inclusive and interactive in our efforts to bring science to underserved schools in Durham. At the university level, I worked with Durham public schools through GPSC to connect high school students with Duke graduate students for tutoring and to teach students more about applying to college and the college experience. Individually, I have also participated in the [SciREN Lesson Plan Workshop](#) and Networking Event, where I designed a science [lesson plan](#) that meets NC teaching standards and is made easily available to triangle area educators. From this event, I connected with and subsequently led workshops for [Catalyst](#), which provides STEM workshops

for high school students with disabilities, and [Wonder Connection](#), a group that leads science activities for pediatric patients. I have also volunteered since 2016 for the annual [FEMMES Capstone event](#), where I guided female middle school students through a series of microbiology experiments.

In the lab, I show my commitment to service, diversity, equity, and inclusion by mentoring undergraduate, rotation, and graduate students. To date, I have mentored six graduate rotation students. Five of these students were women and three were from underrepresented groups in higher education. I also contribute informally to mentoring students in the lab by answering questions, demonstrating techniques, and offering to provide hands-on experience with techniques they may not see through their formal mentoring experiences.

During my postdoctoral career, I have also initiated and currently lead our lab's professional development series. This series occurs once a month during our normal lab meeting time and includes workshops led by different lab members or outside speakers. These workshops feature topics including basic programming in R, finding funding, and preparing for academic interviews, as well as topics on diversity and inclusion such as microaggressions and mental health resources. This series has been met with positive feedback from lab members and, within the lab has also sparked a conversation on lab culture and how to improve the experience of women and minority researchers in our group.

University and Department Service

As part of my outreach and service, I have worked with teams in my department and across the university to plan symposia and support Duke Graduate School programs and initiatives. Related to my research, I worked with students in [Duke's Center for Host-Microbial Interactions](#) in 2019 to plan our first annual Bacterial Pathogenesis Symposium. This symposium attracted attendees from surrounding institutions in the Triangle including from North Carolina State University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Excitingly, we had nearly 100 attendees at our inaugural event!

In addition to being a scientifically engaging event, I also realized how beneficial it can be to volunteer as an organizer. In this position, I had the opportunity to work closely with our invited speakers. I was able to talk to them in detail about their research and ask questions one on one. They also provided valuable feedback on my research and offered advice on careers in academia. As a result of this rewarding experience, I volunteered to help organize the 2020 Bacterial Pathogenesis Symposium.

Continuing this line of service into my postdoctoral career, I currently co-lead the Plant Climate Innovation Center series to build community and foster collaboration among the plant labs in the Duke Biology Department. In 2022, we launched a seminar series that alternated between Works-In-Progress presentations from members of the different plant groups and journal club discussions to learn more about how climate change is impacting food production and plant systems. In 2023, we plan to adapt the structure of this series based on feedback from participants. For the new format, we will have one to two half-day, symposium-style events that feature talks from researchers at surrounding institutions, discussions with industry leaders, and experts from established climate change centers at universities across the country.

As mentioned above, I have also volunteered to organize symposia outside of my research area that benefit the larger university community. The [2020 Food Insecurity Symposium](#) brought



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together administrators from Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, representatives from other Triangle Area universities, key stakeholders at Duke including the head of dining services and the financial aid office, and experts on food insecurity on college campuses. Importantly, we were also able to recruit speakers from Duke, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and NC State University to present data on food insecurity among students at each of these universities. With this critical group of attendees, we facilitated a working group session to discuss the root causes of food insecurity and effective policy changes to reduce food insecurity among students on our campus. As a direct result of this second symposium, I worked with fellow students and key administrators to write Duke's Food Security Strategic Plan. I am excited to continue addressing food insecurity on Duke's campus in collaboration with administrators in Student Affairs and The Graduate School and with leaders of Duke's Alumni Association.

Throughout my graduate school career, I took part in numerous programs offered by The Graduate School including the [Emerging Leaders Institute](#), [Preparing Future Faculty](#), and the [Certificate in College Teaching](#), as well as their [professional development series](#) on careers inside and outside of academia. These initiatives have been instrumental to my success in graduate school and will continue to help me as I move through my career. As such, it was an absolute honor to be asked to represent any one of these programs at events such as the [Board of Visitors](#) quarterly meeting. Having an opportunity to support and give back to programs that have contributed so much to my career is a no-brainer.