Grad Slam 2018 Screening Judges

These preliminary judges will review the video presentations submitted by students and will choose the finalists for the Grad Slam contest. See also the final judges [1], who will choose the winner and runner-up.

Sergio Baranzini, PhD is a professor of neurology at UCSF. Research in his lab focuses on the genetics and molecular mechanisms underlying complex diseases. In particular, they use a combination of wet and dry lab approaches to investigate multiple sclerosis (MS), an autoimmune disorder of the central nervous system. He received a PhD in human molecular genetics from the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina, and conducted postdoctoral research here at UCSF. He is a collaborator in the International MS Microbiome Study (iMSMS) [2], which investigates the role of gut bacteria (microbiota) and their genes (microbiome) in MS, with the goal of designing a clinical trial that will evaluate an entirely new approach to the treatment of MS.

Ariel Deardorff, MLIS is a data services librarian at the UCSF Campus Library. Her areas of interest include data visualization, research data management, consumer health and clinical librarianship, library assessment, marketing, user experience, and web design. She is instrumental in the Library’s Data Science Initiative [3], which teaches scientists how to program, create data visualizations, analyze large biomedical datasets, manage and share their data, and more. Deardorff received her Masters in Library and Information Studies from the University of British Columbia.

Sarah Engelberth, PhD is a postdoctoral scholar at UCSF in the lab of Stefan Habelitz, where research focuses on understanding how matrix proteins control mineralization in enamel and dentin. Engelberth’s 2017 Postdoc Slam talk on “The Tooth: Small but Mighty [4]” explained her research into generating a material that mimics natural enamel, and earned her the top prize in the competition. She received a PhD in nanoscale engineering from the State University of New York, Albany.
Maria Glymour, ScD, MS is a professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at UCSF, and director of the PhD program in Epidemiology and Translational Science. Her research focuses on how social factors experienced across the lifecourse, from infancy to adulthood, influence cognitive function, dementia, stroke, and other health outcomes in old age. She received her graduate degrees from the Harvard School of Public Health, and did postdoctoral research at Columbia University. Glymour is also a member of the core leadership team for SF BUILD, a partnership between SF State and UCSF that aims to enhance diversity of the biomedical research workforce. Read more about her background and educational journey.

Megan Laurance, PhD is program manager of the Molecular Oncology Initiative at UCSF’s Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center. The Initiative focuses on integrating genomic findings from molecular diagnostic tests with the increasing number of therapeutics being developed in translational research and clinical practice, to improve patient outcomes. Previously, Megan was a research informationist with the UCSF Campus Library, where she helped researchers use various bioinformatics methods, databases and software, and to integrate those tools into their own data analysis and interpretation workflows. She received a BS in biology and English from Boston University and a PhD in molecular and cellular biology from Oregon Health and Science University.

Navneet Matharu, PhD is a postdoctoral scholar in the lab of Nadav Ahituv at UCSF, where she seeks to better understand the complex nature of regulatory elements and their functional mechanisms for controlling gene expression during development and evolution. She was runner-up and “people's choice” winner in UCSF's 2016 Postdoc Slam competition. In fall 2017, Matharu received the Charles J. Epstein Trainee Award for Excellence in Human Genetics Research at the annual meeting of the American Society of Human Genetics. Recently, she was a featured speaker in Research!America’s webinar on "Leveraging Public Opinion in Support of Science." Watch Navneet's Postdoc Slam talk (23:42).

Todd McDevitt, PhD is a professor of bioengineering and therapeutic sciences at UCSF, a senior investigator at the Gladstone Institutes, and the program director and executive committee co-chair of the joint UCSF/UC Berkeley PhD program in Bioengineering. Research in the McDevitt Lab focuses on engineering technologies that direct the differentiation and morphogenesis of stem cells into functional tissue constructs. The lab is working to create human tissue models that can be used to study development and new approaches to treat multiple diseases that afflict the cardiovascular, neurological, immunological, and musculoskeletal systems. McDevitt received his PhD in bioengineering from the University of Washington.

Elizabeth Silva, PhD is associate dean for graduate programs in the UCSF Graduate Division. She trained as a developmental biologist and geneticist in Canada, the U.K. and the U.S., and has interests and experience in science policy, particularly relating to publication and research ethics, reproducibility of research, and training of biomedical graduate students and postdocs. Before becoming associate dean, Silva was director of UCSF’s NIH-funded Motivating INformed Decisions (MIND) program, one of 17 experimental programs across the country that aim to bring biomedical research training in line with the realities of the career outcomes for graduate students and postdocs. Recently, she has spearheaded the Graduate Division's Advocating for Science and Scientists series. Silva received her PhD from University College London, and did postdoctoral training at UCSF with mentor Patrick O'Farrell.
Nicholas Weiler, PhD joined UCSF University Relations in 2015 as a public information representative. He covers new developments in basic biological research at UCSF, including stem cell biology, neuroscience, and cancer biology. A native of Oakland, Nick has a PhD in neuroscience from Stanford University and a certificate in science communication from UC Santa Cruz. He has covered science, nature, and the environment for local and national publications including Science Magazine, the San Jose Mercury News, Stanford Magazine, and mongabay.com. Read his recent article on UCSF researchers’ work to create an atlas of the developing human brain [11].

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