



Center for Collaborative Research
in Health Disparities

RCMI- CCRHD Research Training Awards Summer 2022

Professional
Development Program



Professional Development Program

Graduate Students

Kevin Ortiz Ramos
Graduate Student
Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology
School of Public Health

*During the first weekend of May 2022, I had the opportunity to present part of my research at the **2022 ACOG Annual Clinical & Scientific Meeting** celebrated in **San Diego, California**. The poster, titled “Hispanic Knowledge and Attitudes About Transgender Individuals”, started a conversation about transgender disparities in healthcare. This opportunity led to networking opportunities, mentorship, strengthening of my communication skills, and the publication of my abstract in the *Green Journal*. I am very grateful for the support of the *RCMI*! This experience inspired to me to continue my work in underserved populations in Puerto Rico.*



Professional Development Program

Early-Stage Investigator

Laura Vicente, PhD

Post-Doctoral Fellow

Department of Anatomy and Neurobiology

School of Medicine

*Thanks to the RCMI Travel Award I received the financial support to attend the **annual meeting of the United States Association for the Study of Pain (USASP), and to visit the National Institutes of Health (NIH)**. The USASP meeting was held in the University of Cincinnati at Ohio in May 2022. There, I learned about the latest scientific advances in the pain field, and I met outstanding researchers including Dr. Yarimar Carrasquillo who is a Puerto Rican expert in pain and our collaborator and figures as a co-mentor in my current research project. Meeting her in person strengthened our collaborative ties. Indeed, two weeks after the conference I visited her lab at the NIH and learned different behavioral techniques to evaluate pain-states in rodents. These two experiences helped me to start developing my scientific skills in the pain field which will undoubtedly bring benefits for my future professional goals.*



Professional Development Program

Early-Stage Investigator

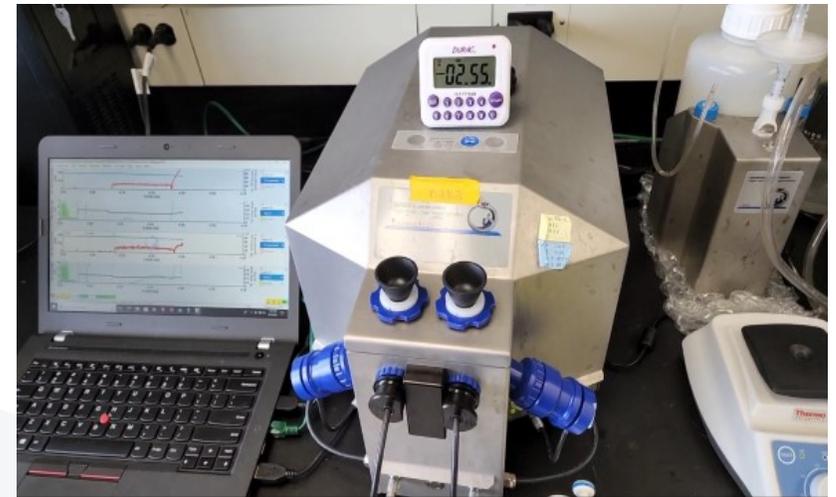
Xavier Chapa, PhD

Post-Doctoral Fellow

Department of Physiology

School of Medicine

*The Research Training Award allowed me to attend **the laboratory of Dr. Jason Bazil, a distinguished University Professor in the Department of Physiology at Michigan State University.** I travelled to Michigan State University to explore the relationship between OPA-1, OMA-1, and the CJ by using various inhibitors of OPA-1 and OMA-1 on freshly isolated heart mitochondria from Sprague Dawley rats. During the trip, I placed freshly isolated mitochondria under various energetic stress conditions, which include collapsing the membrane potential and inducing swelling, to evaluate how activation and/or inhibition of OPA-1 and OMA-1 affect the morphological structure of the IMM, specifically the CJ. Attending Dr. Bazil's lab has contributed to the preparation of a new manuscript and grant applications which are expected to enhance our collaborative efforts and bring external funds for our respective institutions.*



Graduate Students

Professional Development Program

Joseph Bloom Colón

Graduate Student

Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences

School of Pharmacy

*The training took place in the **University of Florida College of Pharmacy with Dr. Valvarena Vozmediano Esteban** from May 8th – May 14th. This training helped me be better prepared for developing one of my project objectives and to execute more proficiently and effectively PBPK-PD models for dose predictions in patients. With the training received, designing a PBPK-PD model is extensive work. This opens the opportunity for one well-detailed publication that gives all the details of the development, execution, and validation of the model, or several publications of the step-by-step process which leads to the complete model design. This work will also be complementary to studying the drug-drug interactions of dose and medication regimes and how these are affected by gene variants in our cohort of Caribbean Hispanic patients.*

