Puerto Rican scientist among five new L'Oreal women in science fellows [1]
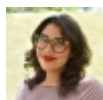
Submitted by Kimberly Ann Massa Núñez [2] on 18 November 2020 - 11:15am

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From L'Oréal

NEW YORK, NY (November 16, 2020) – Today, L'Oréal USA announced the recipients of its 2020 For Women in Science (FWIS) Fellowship. The annual program awards five female postdoctoral scientists grants of $60,000 each to advance their research. Now in its 17th year, the For Women in Science program has recognized 85 postdoctoral female scientists and contributed over $4 million to the advancement of critical research in fields as diverse as neurobiology, metabolic diseases, physics and material science, integrative biology, and biomedical engineering.

The For Women in Science program is rooted in L'Oréal's core belief that the world needs science and science needs women, because women in science have the power to change the world. The program provides funding and support during a critical time in female scientists' careers. Although the number of women in science is increasing, there remains a "leaky pipeline," with significant career drop-off happening during the years between postdoc and tenure track. In addition to grant funding, FWIS Fellows receive mentorship, media training, career coaching and recognition.

"L'Oréal USA's 2020 For Women in Science Fellows represent a depth of expertise across the scientific spectrum, and we are inspired by the world-changing work they are doing," **said**

Danielle Azoulay, Vice President of Corporate Social Responsibility & Sustainability, L'Oréal USA. "At a time in which we are constantly reminded of the importance of science, it is all the more critical to be supporting the representation of women in STEM."

The 2020 For Women in Science fellows are being honored for their important research across a wide range of fields, from Integrative Biology to Material Science & Engineering:

· **Nancy Padilla-Coreano**, [3] whose research in Systems Neurobiology at The Salk Institute of Biological Studies – San Diego, explores how the brain encodes social dominance. Understanding how the healthy brain encodes social information, and how circuits control social behavior, can aid the development of potential therapies for social deficits.

Cara Brook, whose research in Integrative Biology at the University of California-Berkeley, focuses on understanding wild bats to illuminate pathways involved in mammalian disease and aging. Currently, Cara's emphasis is on the Coronavirus (Covid-19) and seeking development of therapeutics to combat these processes in the human population.

·   **Wendy Brown**, whose research in Biomedical Engineering at the University of California – Irvine, focuses on growing cartilage from cells in anatomical shapes and sizes for surgical implantation. Her research seeks to help millions of people around the world with facial damage due to cancer, burns, congenital defects, or other physical trauma.

·   **Kayla Nguyen,** whose research in the field of Physics and Material Science and Engineering at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, is dedicated to taking pictures of the smallest building block in the universe—the atom—using a tool called the electron microscope. Taking increasingly detailed, higher resolution images of atoms promises to improve drug delivery systems, quicken computer processing, and make fuel cell cars more accessible, to name a few examples.

·   **Silvania da Silva Teixeira**, whose research in metabolic diseases at the University of Colorado, focuses on the treatment of late-stage Type 2 Diabetes (T2D) by stimulating insulin secretion with a daily pill instead of managing insulin levels with daily injections. The proposed research can positively affect the quality of life of millions of Americans.

"The L'Oréal USA For Women in Science fellowship has been incredible in supporting my transition to independence in my work, which is focused on brain cancer, its treatment, and increasing the survival rate. It has given me the confidence to take professional risks and supported the jumpstart of my new lab, which is opening early next year," said **Aparna Bhaduri, Postdoctoral Scholar at the University of California, San Francisco's Department of Neurology, and 2019 FWIS Fellow.** "It is my hope that the 2020 For Women in Science fellows will help guide each other and serve as leaders and role models in their fields until female scientists are so prevalent that we equalize opportunity at all levels of achievement."

The L'Oréal USA For Women in Science program is the U.S. component of the L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science International Awards, a global program created in 1998 that recognizes and rewards women scientists around the world. Through the international program and the nearly 50 national and regional programs—which includes the For Women in Science

program—more than 3,400 female scientists from 116 countries have received fellowships to pursue promising research projects.

The 2020 For Women in Science fellowship candidates were evaluated based on their intellectual merit, research potential, scientific excellence and their commitment to supporting women and girls in science. The L'Oréal USA fellowship program includes a requirement to ensure recipients are committed to serving as role models for younger generations. Applications were reviewed by experienced scientists in the candidates' respective fields through a partnership with the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), which manages the application process.

The 2020 L'Oréal USA For Women in Science Fellows (full bios):

Cara Brook, University of California-Berkeley

Cara Brook is a postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Integrative Biology at the University of California-Berkeley. Her research is focused on understanding wild bats to illuminate pathways involved in mammalian disease and aging. Bats are natural reservoirs for the most harmful viral diseases, including coronavirus and Ebola filovirus. They are also remarkably long-lived, demonstrating lifespans 3.5x longer than those of equivalently sized placental mammals. It is thought that the evolution of mammalian flight, a physiologically demanding activity unique to bats, promotes viral tolerance and cellular longevity. Cara's research in Madagascar combines approaches from field ecology, virology, genomics, and quantitative epidemiology. The goal is to understand the mechanisms by which bats resist the harmful effects of viruses as well as the damaging effects of aging, to inform development of therapeutics to combat these processes in the human population.

Wendy Brown, University of California – Irvine

Wendy Brown is a postdoctoral researcher studying the field of Biomedical Engineering at the University of California – Irvine. Her research focuses on engineering cartilage for facial reconstruction. Nasal cartilage pathologies (such as congenital defects) and trauma have devastating health effects for civilians and military personnel. Large, mechanically robust grafts are required for reconstructive rhinoplasty and are frequently harvested from a patient's own nasal septum. However, this is often not possible because the nose is damaged and unable to withstand additional tissue removal. Wendy is working on growing cartilage from cells in anatomical shapes and sizes for surgical implantation. Her research seeks to help millions of people around the world with facial damage due to cancer, burns, congenital defects, or other physical trauma.

Kayla Nguyen, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Kayla Nguyen is a postdoctoral researcher studying the field of Physics and Material Science and Engineering at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Her research focuses on spinning

imagery at atomic resolution using 4-dimensional Lorentz Stem. Kayla takes pictures of the smallest building block in the universe—the atom—using a tool called the electron microscope. She is working to develop a technique where she can take pictures of the smallest magnetic field – a single electron spin with a conventional electron microscope. Taking increasingly detailed, higher resolution images of signals from scattered electrons promises to improve drug delivery systems, quicken computer processing, and make fuel cell cars more accessible, to name a few examples.

Nancy Padilla-Coreano, The Salk Institute of Biological Studies (San Diego, CA)

Nancy Padilla-Coreano is a postdoctoral researcher studying the field of Systems Neurobiology at The Salk Institute of Biological Studies in San Diego. Her research focuses on the understanding of how the brain encodes social dominance. Our lack of basic knowledge on how the brain encodes social behaviors makes it challenging to treat social deficits that are common to psychiatric disorders. In many species, social rank dictates many aspects of behavior, such as access to resources and resilience to stress. Individuals with higher social rank typically win more often during social conflicts and show more agonistic behaviors; collectivity referred to as dominance behaviors. Cross-species evidence suggests that the medial prefrontal cortex (mPFC) plays a role in social dominance. However, exactly how the mPFC encodes social rank and which mPFC circuits drive dominance behaviors is unknown. Nancy has found that mPFC neurons that project to the hypothalamus are important for encoding and controlling social dominance. The objective: many psychiatric disorders, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, disrupt the ability to process social information, which can be debilitating. Understanding how the healthy brain encodes social information and how circuits control social behavior can aid the development of potential therapies for social deficits.

Silvania da Silva Teixeira, University of Colorado

Silvania da Silva Teixeira is a postdoctoral researcher studying metabolic diseases at the University of Colorado. Her research focuses on the treatment of late-stage Type 2 Diabetes (T2D). Given there are about 30 million people in the U.S. with Type 2 Diabetes (T2D), characterized by insulin resistance, hyperglycemia, and gradual deterioration of ß-cell function, Silvania incorporates endogenous hormones into the study of diabetes to identify a better treatment for T2D. The goal of her research is to stimulate insulin secretion with a daily pill instead of managing insulin levels with daily injections. The proposed research can positively affect the quality of life of millions of Americans.

About L'Oréal USA

L'Oréal USA is the largest subsidiary of the L'Oréal Group, the world's leading beauty company. L'Oréal USA manages a portfolio of more than 35 iconic beauty brands, including Carol's Daughter, CeraVe, Essie, Garnier, Giorgio Armani Beauty, IT Cosmetics, Kiehl's, Maybelline New York, NYX Professional Makeup, Lancôme, La Roche-Posay, L'Oréal Paris, Ralph Lauren

Fragrances, SkinCeuticals, Urban Decay and Yves Saint Laurent Beauté. Generating more than $7 billion in sales annually, L'Oréal USA is committed to growth through sustainable innovation, driven by the company's L'Oréal for the Future ambition for sustainable development across the Group's value chain. The company is headquartered in New York City, employs more than 11,000 people, and operates administrative, research, manufacturing and distribution facilities across 16 states, including Arkansas, California, Florida, Kentucky, New Jersey, Ohio and Texas. For more information, visit www.lorealusa.com [4] or follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram @LorealUSA.

About For Women In Science
The L'Oréal USA For Women in Science (FWIS) fellowship program awards five women postdoctoral scientists annually with grants of $60,000 each for their contributions in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) fields and commitment to serving as role models for younger generations. Since 2003, L'Oréal USA's FWIS program has supported 80 outstanding female postdoctoral scientists from across the country, awarding them $4 million in grants. L'Oréal USA partners with the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) to manage the program's application and peer-review process. The program is the U.S. component of the L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science International Awards, a global philanthropy created in 1998 that has recognized and rewarded over 3,400 women scientists from more than 116 countries.

About AAAS
The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) is the world's largest multidisciplinary has the largest paid circulation of any peer-reviewed general science journal in the world. The nonprofit AAAS is open to all and fulfills its mission to "advance science and serve society" through initiatives in science policy, international programs, science education, public engagement, and more. For additional information about AAAS, see *Science*. AAAS was founded in 1848 and includes more than 250 affiliated societies and academies of science, serving 10 million individuals. *Science Robotics*; and *Science Immunology*; *Science Advances*a digital, open-access journal, *Science Signaling;* ; *Science Translational Medicine*, as well as *Science* scientific society and publisher of the journal www.aaas.org [5].

Tags:

- #NancyPadilla #LorealFellow #Borinqueña #CerebroBoricua [6]

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