

# Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center Training Navigator Newsletter

## November 2024 Newsletter Volume 10

Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer  
Center National Cancer Institute  
(NCI) Training Navigator Program  
Administrative Supplement

Have a question about a  
cancer education or career  
opportunity at UNMC?

Email Misty Pocwierz-Gaines  
at [misty.pocwierz@unmc.edu](mailto:misty.pocwierz@unmc.edu)



Misty Pocwierz-Gaines, MA,  
Lead Training Navigator,  
UNMC

## Where are they now?

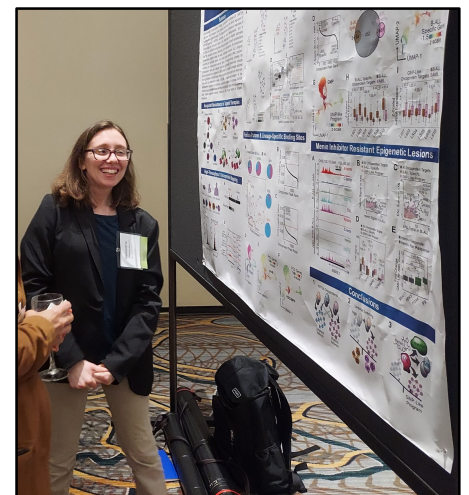


It is no secret that we are proud of our scholars, and here are updates on recent PhD graduates!

Dr. Katie Muilenburg is now an iCURE scholar in Dr. Xin Wang's laboratory at NCI. Dr. Maria (Jay) Revilleza (NCI Program Director) met Dr. Muilenburg at a recent iCURE event and shared the pictures shown on the left with us.



After her May 2024 graduation, Dr. Alex Eiken (shown in the picture on the right) accepted a postdoctoral fellow position in Drs. Tim Triche Jr. and Derek Janssens' laboratory at the Van Andel Institute. She was asked to represent her laboratory at the Oct. 2024 Cancer Biology Training Consortium meeting.



Dr. Alex Eiken with her poster

# Scholar Spotlight: Makenzie Vorderbruggen



Makenzie Vorderbruggen is a fourth-year doctoral student in the laboratory of Dr. Adam Karpf in the Eppley Institute. Her research is focused on characterizing the activity of NB compounds, which are small molecule inhibitors that target the FOXM1 transcription factor. FOXM1 and its network are frequently dysregulated in high-grade serous ovarian carcinoma (HGSOC) and thus FOXM1 is a viable therapeutic target. More recently, she has been using an unbiased

proteomics approach to better understand the mechanism of action of NB compounds and employing that information to design combination treatments to further improve their efficacy against HGSOC models. In addition to submitting an NIH F31 application, in 2024 she has authored one first-author publication and been the co-first author on another. When asked how she became a prolific author she said that she “just took advantage of the opportunities I was presented with. For example, CRGP 910 requires students to write a literature review, and I discussed that with my advisor in advance and we agreed on a topic that I could try to publish.” After graduating with her PhD, Makenzie would like to complete a postdoc position and then work in a research and development position in industry.

# Scholar Spotlight: Tim Reznicek

Tim Reznicek is a third-year PhD student training in Dr. Jordan Rowley’s laboratory. His research focuses on the impact of aberrant transcription on chromatin organization. He describes this as asking “What organizational patterns exist around genes that are on and genes that are off? Based on those patterns, can we predict chromatin organization from gene expression and vice versa?” Tim is another prolific author and has been a co-author on four manuscripts as a graduate student. Tim has also recently been awarded an NCI Diversity supplement to his mentor’s R01.



Dr. Rowley and Tim wrote the supplement as a team. When asked about his approach to the writing, Tim stated that he “used the UNMC fellowship that I wrote and got funded as my base. I then tweaked a few things suggested by the reviewers of my internal fellowship to create a better proposal.” His advice to other students interested in submitting a supplement is “Firstly, have a great PI and get them everything they need for the application. Secondly, figure out the centerpiece of your proposal and make sure to highlight it as much as possible. Spend time on working it into your specific aims, conclusions, etc.”

# Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/ Hispanics and Native Americans (SACNAS) Chapter at UNMC

UNMC is looking to establish a [Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics & Native Americans in Science](#) (SACNAS) chapter to support students who are from



underrepresented backgrounds in STEM. SACNAS provides mentoring, networking and opportunities to grow. If you are interested in being a part of SACNAS, please contact Misty for the link to the interest survey or email [Michelle Aguilar-Gaspar](#).

## Upper Midwest Emerging Scholars Exchange



The Upper Midwest Emerging Scholars Exchange is a new, collaborative effort to support the career development of early-stage faculty in the region. The goal is to create opportunities for faculty to receive invitations to speak at peer Midwest cancer centers. Not only will faculty have a chance to hone their oral presentation skills and bolster their CVs in preparation for

promotion, but they will also have an opportunity to develop relationships with potential research collaborators, mentors, and sponsors. Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center (FPBCC) members and associate members within the first five (or, in some cases, up to seven) years of their faculty position are eligible for this program.

For the 2024-2025 pilot year, partnering institutions will host one speaker, and one speaker from each partnering institution will be selected to travel and speak at a partnering institution in the spring of 2025. In the future, we intend to exchange two scholars per academic year. Visit the [FPBCC website](#) for more information and to apply. Email Misty Pocwierz-Gaines, [misty.Pocwierz@unmc.edu](mailto:misty.Pocwierz@unmc.edu) if you have questions.

# Mentoring Up: Taking Ownership of Your Graduate Education



Being a successful graduate student requires a graduate student to take a large amount of ownership in their education. This is a new experience for many students. Mentoring up is a concept that empowers graduate students to be active participants in their education. This approach allows the mentee and mentor to equally share in the responsibility of guiding the

student's educational journey. Mentoring up can create mentor-mentee relationships that allow students to find a healthy work/life balance while achieving their professional and academic goals. Join Misty Pocwierz-Gaines on December 4<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 pm in DRC I 1006 to learn tips that will allow students to take ownership of their professional development. Email Misty, [misty.Pocwierz@unmc.edu](mailto:misty.Pocwierz@unmc.edu) to register or ask questions. Lunch will be provided to all attendees.

## NIH Biosketch

The NIH requires that each person that serves as senior/key personnel or other significant contributor on a grant submit an NIH-compliant biosketch at the time of submission. New NIH requirements for the biosketch have been pushed to May of 2025. Therefore, the biosketch

workshop to assist scholars with creating and updating their biosketch has been postponed until **March 5, 2025**, at 12:00-1:00 pm in DRC I 1004. Lunch will be provided. Email Misty Pocwierz-Gaines, [misty.pocwierz@unmc.edu](mailto:misty.pocwierz@unmc.edu), to register. If you attend the event but still want assistance with biosketch preparation, email Misty to schedule a one-on-one session.

OMB No. 0925-0001 and 0925-0002 (Rev. 10/2021 Approved Through 01/31/2026)

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**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**  
Provide the following information for the Senior/key personnel and other significant contributors.  
Follow this format for each person. DO NOT EXCEED FIVE PAGES.

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NAME:|

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eRA COMMONS USER NAME (credential, e.g., agency login):

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POSITION TITLE:

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EDUCATION/TRAINING (Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education, such as nursing, include postdoctoral training and residency training if applicable. Add/delete rows as necessary.)

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE (if applicable)	Start Date MM/YYYY	Completion Date MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY

**Fred and Pamela Buffett  
Cancer Center**



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# Program Evaluation

To ensure that the Training Navigator program is meeting the needs of scholars, we are completing a thorough evaluation. The first portion of the evaluation will be a mixed methods case study on the experiences of doctoral students in the first year of funding. If you participated as a doctoral student during the 2023-2024 academic year and are willing to provide feedback through either an interview or a focus group, please complete this brief [scheduling survey](#) before December 2. Contact Misty Pocwierz-Gaines with any questions.

## Important Dates

Dec 3	What's Your Superpower? Personal Branding- <a href="#">Registration</a>
Dec 4	Mentoring up: Taking Ownership of Your Graduate Education
Dec 5	Get Published - <a href="#">Registration</a>
Dec 9	NCI F30/F31 Submission Deadline
Dec 12	Work Smart: Managing Your Calendar <a href="#">Registration</a>
Dec 20	Fall Commencement
Feb 1	Upper Midwest Scholar Exchange application closes
March 5	NIH Biosketch Workshop

