

May 2019



VAIGS Career Day 2019

Left to right: Eric Cordeiro Spinetti, VAIGS Student; Bailey Tibben, VAIGS Student; Marquicia Pierce, Ph.D., MBA, Founder, Ruby Leaf; Vanessa Fogg, Ph.D., Freelance Medical Writer; Helga Toriello, Ph.D., FACMG, Professor, MSU; Alison Bernstein Ph.D., Assistant Professor, MSU; Ryan Bixenman, Ph.D., Director, PhD Career Services, MSU; Sitta Sittampalam, Ph.D., Senior Advisor to the Director of NCATS; Leslie Wyman, VAIGS Student; Lauren McGee, VAIGS Student; Laura McCabe, Ph.D., Professor, MSU (not pictured Rachel Niemer, Ph.D., Director of Strategic Initiatives, U-M)

Save the Date

- [Origins of Cancer 2018](#)
July 20 @ 7 am
- **Fall 2019 Class begins**
August 12
- **Convocation**
August 19 @ 1:30
- [Grand Challenges in Parkinson's Disease](#)
September 26-27

April celebrated Stress Management Week

You may find these ideas helpful as well:

- Explore stress management activities – what are your favorites?
- Participate in a wellness scavenger hunt –such as ask someone you respect how they manage their stress
- Take a walk around the block
- Learn about techniques from the class – The Science of Well-Being at Stanford
- Attend a mindfulness presentation
- Tell or write a note to someone telling them what you appreciate about them

Congratulations

Erin Williams' graduation took place on May 6th

2019 Cohort

Attached is a list of the students starting this Fall. It is exciting to see 10 students coming our way from a wide variety of locations!

First-year VAIGS students select advisors

The Graduate School's first-year students have selected their thesis advisers:

Student	Thesis adviser
Alix Booms	Dr. Gerry Coetzee
Shelby Compton	Dr. Russell Jones
Dylan Dues	Dr. Darren Moore
Joe Floramo	Dr. Tao Yang
Rae House	Dr. Matt Steensma
Ariana Kupai	Dr. Scott Rothbart

Interesting Book

A student suggested the book below. I think it is worth looking into for some and useful ideas.

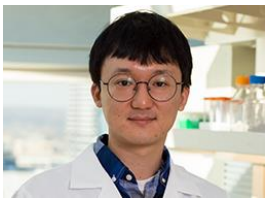
Mindfulness: An Eight-Week Plan for Finding Peace in a Frantic World by [Mark Williams](#) (Author), [Danny Penman](#) (Author),

A Conversation with Wooyoung Choi – Lu Lab

How would you describe your area of study to your family?

Structural biology can be perfectly described by the quote, “seeing is believing.” It provides a blueprint of the architecture of proteins and molecules in cells and deep insight into their function based on observation.

Visualizing is very important to deduce the function of a specific object. For example, boats and submarines both have the same basic components — engines, deck and control center — yet some can be submerged under the sea and others cannot. By comparing the pictures and blueprints of boats and submarines, the structural basis of these different functions can easily be deduced.



What is your primary motivation for persevering through graduate school?

My fundamental motivation is the curiosity of the unknown. There are so many things that we do not yet clearly understand and sometimes they need to be explained, like why a particular drug can have the intended effect in certain types of cells, but have unintended side effects in different cells.

What do you want to do with your degree?

I would like to keep learning and contribute to the field of structural biology to ensure the field continues to move forward.

Did you take time off before starting your Ph.D. degree or come directly from an undergraduate or master’s degree program?

After earning my master’s degree from Tsinghua University, China, I served in the Korean Army for two years as many Korean men do, and did some world traveling for a year. This experience provided me with insights that changed my outlook on life.

How has your previous coursework contributed to your breadth of knowledge?

My previous coursework helped me think broadly and see the big picture. This may help me when I open my own lab to find scientifically interesting research targets. This training helps me to think not only “what” but also “why” on specific scientific projects.

Did your past experiences in life or education help prepare you for graduate school or did you have to develop different strategies to succeed?

My past education and training have provided me with an understanding of what science is and helped me prepare for graduate school through my solid research background. Research is quite an interesting field. Researchers are always pressed by the term “novelty,” which means they should walk alone in the dark. Thus, previous education may help them to find the lantern or light source to get them on the right track.

What accomplishment (academic or other) are you most proud of?

I am most proud of my recently solved atomic protein structure. It identifies a unique molecular mechanism that had not been proposed yet. I am proud that this idea will make an impact on the protein structure field in the near future.

Is there anything else you would like us to know about your doctoral education experience?

I am Korean and studied in China, I am multilingual and a big fan of classical music. I am always open to new adventures and exploring. Life is short, YOLO!