LGSA Mission Statement
The Lerner Graduate Student Association is dedicated to providing a link between graduate students, LRI faculty and staff, and the surrounding Cleveland area. Our main goal is to represent all LRI graduate students and advocate for their unique needs and concerns in order to maximize academic and professional development.

Message from the LGSA President – Olivia Stephens

The goal of the Lerner Graduate Student Association (LGSA) is to foster a sense of community amongst graduate students. We aim to provide support and resources for graduate students, as well as recognize their achievements and contributions to the LRI research community. Our hope is to create a more collegial atmosphere that will unite the over 150 graduate students of the LRI. Personally, my goal for the LGSA this year is to increase student engagement from all programs and departments.
## Lerner Graduate Student Association 2017—2018 Members

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<th>Position</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
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LGSA Board Bios

Olivia Stephens, President
I graduated from the University of Michigan and joined the Molecular Medicine program in 2014. I am working in the Erzurum lab studying the regulation of hypoxia responses by beta-adrenergic receptors. In my spare time I enjoy running and making pottery.

Alicia Traughber, Vice President of Internal Communications
I am a native of Tennessee. I completed my undergraduate work at Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama and completed post-baccalaureate training in the VT-PREP program in Blacksburg, Virginia. I was accepted into the Molecular Medicine Program in 2013 and am currently a Ph.D. candidate in Dr. Jonathan Smith’s Lab found in the coolest department in Lerner, the Cellular and Molecular Medicine Department. The fancy title that I have on the LGSA board is VP of Internal communications. My job is to make sure that the LGSA board meets regularly so events can be planned to help all graduate students house in Lerner. Outside of being a grad student, I like to tutor, volunteer, and sing.

Tyler Alban, Vice President of Professional Development
I’m from the Northeast Ohio and I attended Baldwin Wallace University for my undergraduate. After graduating I worked in industry for a short time before deciding to pursue my PhD. I’m currently a 4th year PhD candidate in the Molecular Medicine program at the Cleveland Clinic and I’m currently serving as the vice president of career development on the Lerner Graduate Student Association. This is my 3rd year serving on the graduate student association and each year it’s exciting for me to try to bring in new speakers and programs to help graduate other students in their career search. For example some of our talks in the past have focused on CV and Resume building as well as creating an effective Linkedin page.

I’m always open to new ideas for speakers and workshops that can benefit students in their career search, so please reach out to me if you have any suggestions!
Maksim Sinyuk, Professional Development Committee Member

I have lived in Cleveland for most of my life since my family immigrated to the US when I was a child. I graduated from Cleveland State University and shortly began working as a Research Technician here at the LRI. During that time I realized that I wanted to pursue a PhD. I subsequently re-enrolled at CSU in their Regulatory Biology PhD Program and began to work with Justin Lathia where I study cell-cell communication in ovarian cancer. I am currently a 5th year student and this is my 1st year with the Lerner Graduate Student Association. I am on the professional development committee and I am very excited about the kinds of events that we are planning to help every student at the LRI become the strongest candidate for their chosen career. I look forward to an exciting new year with new challenges and opportunities for both the LGSA and all my fellow graduate students.

Sara Akhavanfard, Professional Development Committee Member

I am a 3rd year Molecular Medicine PhD candidate at Dr. Charis Eng laboratory. I graduated from medical school, but my deep interest in translational research, prevention and early diagnostics lead me to pursue another graduate degree in molecular medicine and cancer genomics. I joined Dr. Eng’s laboratory on April 2016 and my work focuses on germline cancer predisposition genes in early onset cancers. This is my first year joining LGSA and I’m part of the professional development group. We are excited to set up and bring new speakers and topics matched your interest in this year. I love hiking, nature photography, and cooking. If you find a Ping Pong table, let me know, I’m always ready to play :)

Jessica Sacks, Vice President of Student Affairs

I am currently a 5th year student in the Molecular Medicine PhD program, completing my thesis research in John Kirwan’s laboratory in the Department of Pathobiology. I’m originally from a beach city in the North County of San Diego, and earned my Bachelor’s degree in Kinesiology from the University of Southern California. I then worked in the pharmaceutical and medical device industries as a sales rep for several years, where I became fascinated by the research that went into developing the products I sold. After completing a Master’s in Exercise Physiology at San Diego State University, I decided to leave sunny SoCal for some more exciting weather to pursue my PhD in obesity and metabolic research here in Cleveland. As the VP of Student Affairs for the Lerner Graduate Student Association, I am proud to serve as a liaison between the students and faculty, and advocate on behalf of the student body. Some of my goals include organizing several academic development seminars throughout the year, providing health and wellness resources to graduate students, creating opportunities for students to get involved in faculty committees, and publicly recognizing and awarding student achievements. Outside of science, I am a sports fanatic, happy hour enthusiast, and fitness junkie. If any of these activities appeal to you as well, let’s hang out.
Jeff Atkinson, Student Representative (Kent State)
Jeff is a 5th year student in the Neurosciences PhD program at Kent State. His research in Dr. Conni Bergmann's lab is focused on spatiotemporal accumulation of antigen-specific B cells in various models of central nervous system inflammation. While Jeff is currently working diligently to finish his dissertation, he is devoted to representing Kent State students at the LRI as the School Representative on the LGSA board. In his sparse free time, Jeff enjoys long runs in the woods and grabbing drinks at Platform with his dog.

Eric Dyne, Student Representative (Kent State)
I am the representative to Kent State University (KSU) in Kent, Ohio, where I completed my undergraduate degree. All four years of undergraduate education, I conducted research with Dr. Colleen Novak, Ph.D., focusing on the obesity and energy expenditure. My focuses involved comparative anatomy of intrinsically obese and lean animal model as well as various aspects of neural control over energy expenditure. The summer of 2014, I assisted Darlene Lobel, M.D. with a biomedical engineering research project at the Cleveland Clinic focusing on a novel brain-machine interface concept during the week and during the weekend I traveled to Kent, Ohio to work in Dr. Novak’s laboratory. Currently, I am a third year doctoral candidate in the Laboratory of Dr. Lynn Bekris, Ph.D., in the Genomic Medicine Institute where I focus the role of triggering receptor expressed on myeloid cells 2 (TREM2) variants on Alzheimer’s pathology. My goals with the Lerner Graduate Student Association are to communicate ideas to the group as well act as a connection between KSU and the Lerner Research Institute (LRI). My current task is assisting several graduate students at Kent State University who are interested in conducting research at the LRI through the LRI/KSU collaborative program. When I am not in the lab, I enjoy books that were made into movies, renting apartments I cannot afford, playing the piano, and immunohistochemistry.

Brian Balog, Student Representative (University of Akron)
I graduated from Baldwin-Wallace University with a bachelor’s degree in Biology. After graduating, I became a lab manager at the Lerner Research Institute. Four years ago, I joined the Lerner Research Institutes and University of Akron joint Integrated Bioscience (IB) program. I am currently a Ph.D. candidate in Dr. Margot Damaser’s laboratory. I serve on the Lerner Graduate Student Association as the Akron representative and I hope to spread the news about the great opportunities the IB program has to offer.

Additional Student Representatives not pictured:
Hala Osman (Cleveland State)
Sajina Shakya (Cleveland State)
Shawna Battle, Vice President of Community Outreach

Hi Everyone! My name is Shawna Battle and I was raised in Maryland. After high school graduation, I moved to Atlanta, Georgia to complete my undergraduate degree at Clark Atlanta University. I then did a post-bac for a year at the University of Alabama at Birmingham before joining the Molecular Medicine Ph.D. program. Currently, I am a fourth year in the Cellular and Molecular Medicine Department, working in the laboratory of Dr. Stanley Hazen. I have been in the Lerner Graduate Student Association for two years now. I have tremendously enjoyed getting to know other graduate students from various schools. I currently serve as the VP for Community Outreach and I am very passionate about giving back. I hope that our outreach activities will help to build a community within the graduate students at Lerner, while also helping others in need. This will be a chance to foster friendships, collaborations and a support system. I look forward to meeting everyone and I hope to have much graduate student participation at upcoming community outreach events!

Jasmine Gajeton, Vice President of Public Relations

I am originally from the Bay Area in California and went to college at UCLA. Shortly after graduating, I came straight to Cleveland to join the Molecular Medicine PhD Program. I am in my fourth year as a Ph.D. Candidate currently working in Olga Stenina’s Lab at the Lerner Research Institute at the Cleveland Clinic.

This is my third year with the Lerner Graduate Student Association and I am so excited to see the growth in this group throughout the years. This year, I am heading the new position dealing with external communications with the group as the VP of Public Relations. My goals for the year are to help establish a newsletter to highlight all of the accomplishments by our graduate population at the LRI, to organize content for our website for easy access to various resources offered to graduate students, and to increase awareness of our group to the Lerner community as a whole. I love trying new food places - If you know a place, let me know.

Gaëlle Müller-Greven, Public Relations Committee Member (Website)

When I was four years old my family moved from Paris, France to Cleveland, OH, where I grew up through high school. I earned my B.S. from McGill in one of the coolest cities – Montreal, PQ. I am a 5th year PhD candidate through Kent State University currently working with Dr. Candece Gladson in the Cancer Biology department at the Lerner Research Institute of the Cleveland Clinic. This is my first year with the Lerner Graduate Student Association. With the lead from Jasmine Gajeton, we are providing outside communications for the LGSA by managing the layout and maintenance of the LGSAs internal and external websites. The goal for the year is to have a website full of great resources for graduate students available.

I enjoy camping and astronomy – don’t forget to look up at the evening sky, you may see the International Space Station (ISS)!
Graduate Student Townhall – VP of Student Affairs, Jessica Sacks

On October 27th, the Graduate Student Association hosted our first semester Town Hall forum! This event was organized for all students in the LRI to kick off the 2017-2018 school year and provide updates about the graduate student experience. We had an excellent turnout of over 50 students in attendance that came to enjoy catered fall-themed appetizers and beverages while having the opportunity to connect and network with fellow peers. We also held a vote for our official LRI graduate student slogan to be printed on T-shirts for future volunteer and social events. The winning slogan was “Defend the Land, Defend the Thesis” and we look forward to repping our grad school pride around Cleveland! Lastly, we announced a new initiative to celebrate significant student accomplishments by presenting prizes to any student that has recently published a first author manuscript, won conference awards, earned pre-doctoral fellowship funding, or successfully defended their thesis. If you have recently earned any of these incredible scientific achievements, please submit your information here to claim recognition for these honors and awards. Thank you again to those that were able to attend the Town Hall forum, and we look forward to a successful academic year and our upcoming grad student events in the Spring!

LGSA Volunteers at the Greater Cleveland Food Bank – VP of Community Outreach, Shawna Battle

The Lerner Graduate Student Association volunteered at the Cleveland Food Bank! The group of volunteers that night collectively sorted over 7,000 pounds of meat! This was our very first LGSA volunteering event! All who participated received a very special T-shirt with our clever slogan “Defend the land, defend the thesis” cleverly thought of by our VP of Student Affairs, Jessica Sacks.
Leveraging Your Network Using LinkedIn
– VP of Professional Development, Tyler Alban

Recently the professional development committee of the LGSA hosted an event to help both graduate students and post-doctoral fellows develop their LinkedIn accounts to more effectively network. At this event Robin Hedges, the associate director of career development from Case Western Reserve University was invited to present on methods used to make your LinkedIn profile more effective. This presentation was a great follow up to our previous professional development seminar on CV/Resume building and we plan to have future events similar to these in order to enhance trainees career development here at the Cleveland Clinic.
A message from the VP of Public Relations

Thank you all for taking the time to read LGSA’s very first newsletter! The vision for this newsletter for the future will be to showcase the many accomplishments of our graduate students, to highlight news and past/present events, and to promote the resources that our students can take advantage of here at the LRI and in the community.

I am recruiting students to be a part of my Newsletter Committee, so please email me gajetoj@ccf.org if you are interested!

Dr. Christine Moravec is the Director of Research Education and Training for LRI, overseeing programming for both graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. Dr. Moravec feels right at home in this position, since she was both a graduate student and a postdoctoral fellow here at the LRI, and knows what both positions feel like and what the challenges are!

Dr. Moravec holds a PhD from Cleveland State University and completed her thesis project here at the LRI, in the department which is now Molecular Cardiology. She completed her postdoctoral fellowship in the same department, but in a different lab and research area.

Dr. Moravec’s vision for the LGSA is to have an organization which supports recruitment and career development and celebrates the personal success of each of our graduate students. Since we have graduate students in the LRI from our four major academic affiliates (Case, CSU, KSU and Akron), as well as a few other programs from around the country and even international affiliates, Dr. Moravec envisions the LGSA as an opportunity for more interaction among graduate students from different programs, enriching everyone’s lives and experiences. She would like to thank those graduate students who have so far stepped to the front and taken on leadership roles in the organization, as well as encouraging others to become involved.

Sarah Kostiha Smith is the Program Manager for Graduate Students in the Research Education and Training Center and serves as an advisor to the Lerner Graduate Student Association (LGSA). Sarah is a double graduate from Ohio University in Athens. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the Scripps College of Communication, and a Master of Education degree in college student personnel as well as a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree.

Sarah strives to ensure the graduate training experience is an atmosphere in which students gain both academic and career-oriented education during their tenure at Lerner. She does this by offering opportunities for students to learn about themselves and their options in the world of biomedical research in a comprehensive way.

Sarah’s vision and goal as an advisor of LGSA is to inspire, challenge and prepare all trainees to find opportunities that reflect their own values and lead lives of meaning and connection.
LGSA Website
For additional information about LGSA or other resources for graduate students, please visit our newly renovated website! Please pardon our dust as we update it throughout the year!
http://intranet.lerner.ccf.org/education/lgsa/

Awards and Honors Submission Form
The Lerner Graduate Student Association wants to recognize all of the hard work that our graduate students accomplish and recognize any of the awards and honors that you receive. Please use this form to submit whether you have had any accomplishments that LGSA should be aware of! This can be anything from a travel award or grant to a manuscript publication! We will publish these in our quarterly newsletters to celebrate your accomplishments!
https://goo.gl/forms/CS8xoNinwBbldyTF3

LGSA Google Calendar of Events
Cleveland, Ohio | Add our calendar to stay up to date on any upcoming events and workshops with the Lerner Graduate Student Association!
https://calendar.google.com/calendar/embed?src=rcvqlb78arvtroa43kog7ivj2o%40group.calendar.google.com&ctz=America/Chicago

LinkedIn & Facebook
Connect with other Lerner Graduate Students, Post Docs, and Alumni on our LinkedIn Page!
Use the following QR Code or find us here: https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13534210
We also have our Facebook Group here: https://www.facebook.com/groups/LRIgradstudents/