

# Watson School 2017 Ph.D.s



**Brittany N. Cazakoff**



**University of Saskatchewan**  
Edward and Martha Gerry Fellow  
NSERC Scholar

*I made it! There were a few snags, but the reward for moving forward—the incredible opportunity to work in a place so passionate about discovery—vastly outweighed the setbacks. I've grown immeasurably as a scientist, learning to perform rigorous experimentation. I also had the pleasure to talk with researchers from around the world and explore fields well beyond my own imagining. I would like to thank everyone who made this such a fantastic journey.*

**M. Joaquina Delás Vives**



**Universidad Politécnica de Valencia**  
Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds Fellow  
"la Caixa" Fellow

*When I first heard about CSHL, it was described as a "monastery of science." The Lab has lived up to that and more. Everyone who comes here shares that deep scientific excitement which convinced me to join the Watson School of Biological Sciences in the first place. I am very aware how special this place is, not only because of the ambitious research projects we get to attempt as graduate students, but also because of the thought-provoking discussions it encourages.*

**Abram Handy-Santana**



**University of California, Santa Cruz**  
William Randolph Hearst Foundation Scholar

*When I first came to New York, I was immediately accosted by the hurricanes, snowstorms, and frigid weather I never would have encountered had I stayed in sunny California. And yet, I've never regretted coming here. CSHL is a peculiar village of science where collaboration is encouraged, and it was an enthusiasm for such an environment that led me to join the laboratory of David Tuveson. There, with friends at my side, I gained the passion and tenacity required to do great science.*


**Justus M. Kebschull**



**University of Cambridge**  
Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds Fellow  
David and Fanny Luke Fellow

*I had the good fortune to work in Tony Zador's lab on the groundbreaking (and somewhat crazy) idea of using DNA sequencing to map brain connectivity. I could not have wished for a better project or mentor. Through the Watson School program, I forged countless friendships, and even had the opportunity to co-found the first CSHL Boat Club, which I am sure will carry on putting students into rowboats for years to come. All that remains to be said now is "Thank you. I won't forget."*

**Matthew Sungmin Koh**



**University of California, Berkeley**  
George A. and Marjorie H. Anderson Fellow

*There is something exciting and different about the way that CSHL's community views the world. It's here that you learn there is no scientific problem that cannot be solved with the right mix of tenacity and cleverness. Working in a stimulating environment with so many brilliant people has caused a small amount of that magic—that confident outlook, both humbling and empowering at the same time—to rub off on me. I will carry it with me forever.*

**Maria Nattestad**



**University of the Pacific**  
Genentech Foundation Fellow  
John and Amy Phelan Student

*I started my time at CSHL with a focus on cancer genomics and ended with a passion for creating methods for data exploration. I am grateful for the flexibility and support the Watson School has given me to develop my interests wherever they lead. CSHL has been my home, my small town, my tight-knit little community of brilliant people. As I step out into the world, I'll be taking with me a bit of the wisdom and memories this place has to offer.*

**Annabel Romero Hernandez**



**Instituto Politécnico Nacional**  
Gonzalo Río Arronte Fellow  
Genentech Foundation Fellow  
Starr Centennial Scholar

*I did my thesis research in Hiro Furukawa's laboratory, where I had the opportunity to study—at the molecular level—a class of receptors that are fundamental for learning and memory. With this project, I was able to answer previously unanswered questions—the essence of being a scientist. Even as my journey at the Watson School ends here, I'm taking with me all the knowledge and good memories that will help me to succeed in the new scientific adventures to come.*

**Charles J. Underwood**



**University of Oxford**  
William R. Miller Fellow

*I joined Rob Martienssen's lab to study epigenetics—"inheritance above the DNA sequence"—in plants. I reveled at the chance to develop and test my own ideas, and gradually became an independent scientist. Thanks to the flexibility of the Watson School program, I was able to collaborate and even "follow my nose" for exciting findings. As a result, I discovered two approaches to speed up crop breeding and hope to continue bettering the plant/biotech industry.*