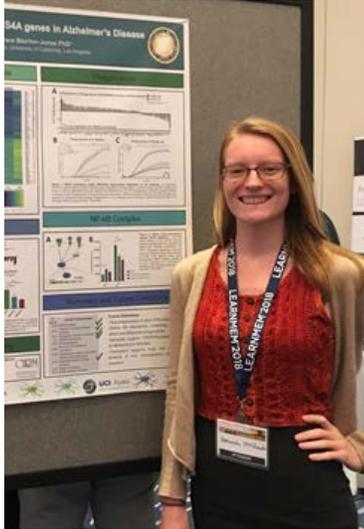


Student Profile

Amanda McQuade – Cellular and Molecular Biosciences Gateway PhD Program



Your Time at UCI

What made you decide to pursue a graduate degree?

Since I was young I have always liked mysteries and following the clues to find the answers. In graduate school get to use this skill to study one of the most interesting problems: what causes human disease? As a graduate student I get to focus deeply on planning and executing experiments that allow me to uncover new information about the mysteries of human disease and brain function which drives me to keep following the clues towards better treatments.

Why did you choose to come to UCI?

I chose to come to UCI not only because of the excellent quality of research and broad resources of this institution, but also because of the highly collaborative environment which encourages young scientists to collaborate and share their ideas. The Graduate Professional Success in Biomedical Sciences was also a strong draw because not many graduate programs are able to focus this much energy on professional development opportunities.

If you are conducting research, how would you explain your research and its significance to your grandparent?

My current research focuses on studying how the immune system may be involved in causing Alzheimer's disease. I want to understand how the immune system modulates disease in order to set up the groundwork for targeted therapies in the future which may give patients hope.

What are your hobbies/passions outside of research?

Research is my passion! But other than this, I love to dance all kinds of dance and I garden as well.

Reflections

What are you most proud of accomplishing (so far) in your graduate program?

I am the most proud of developing a new protocol to create human microglia from stem cells.

What is your most memorable moment/experience at UCI to date?

My most memorable experience was the first experiment I did suggesting that the gene I am studying really does effect Alzheimer's disease progression and realizing I get to be the first one to figure out how!

What advice do you have for a new graduate student in your program?

I would advise new graduate students to talk about their research with as many people as possible in order to help the community at large have a better understanding of how cool and important their science is- you're the expert now!

Career

What do you see yourself doing in five or ten years?

I have not yet decided whether or not I will pursue academic or industry science, but in 5 years, I intend to have completed a post-doctoral research program and hopefully be starting my own laboratory.

How do you hope to make a difference?

I hope to make a difference by providing the basic research that helps scientists understand more about brain function and neurodegeneration in order to help create targeted therapies which will be able to modulate disease progression. I am also passionate about educating the next generation of scientists of all ages through sharing my research and cool facts about science!