

COURSE DIRECTOR/FACULTY TEACHING BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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NAME: Cecilia Kessler, MGC, CGC

INSTITUTION POSITION TITLE: Data Scientist Assistant 1

GRADUATE PROGRAM POSITION TITLE: Course Director

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

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE (if applicable)	Completion Date MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY
University of Pittsburgh (Pittsburgh, PA)	BS	04/2019	Biology
Vanderbilt University School of Medicine (Nashville, TN)	MGC	05/2024	Genetic Counseling
University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine (Remote)	Master's Certificate	Expected: 07/2025	Advanced Research Training for Genetic Counselors (ART-GC)

A. Course Title(s) Research I

B. Please provide a brief statement of expertise and/or skill set that you offer for students taking the course(s) you are responsible for teaching (Standard A2.5.2).

As a board-certified, licensed genetic counselor with a focus in ophthalmic genetics, I bring a versatile skill set to the courses I support. My background spans clinical practice and advanced research training, equipping me to guide students in developing both the technical and professional skills essential to our field.

In my current role as a Data Scientist Assistant and Genetic Counselor at Vanderbilt Eye Institute, I work at the intersection of clinical genetics and research, mentoring graduate and medical students on IRB-approved studies related to inherited retinal diseases. My teaching experience includes multiple guest lectures in the Vanderbilt Master of Genetic Counseling Program on topics such as professional development, as well as clinical supervision in the Pre-Practicum course and simulation-based clinical feedback.

My content expertise lies in genetic eye diseases, variant interpretation, and clinical research. I currently serve on the ClinGen ABCA4 Variant Curation Expert Panel and actively contribute to national and international professional societies, including the National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC) and the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO). These roles keep me current with evolving best practices and ensure I bring a dynamic and informed perspective to my teaching.

My teaching approach is rooted in early experiences in clinical support and supervision, which emphasized the importance of empathy and mentorship. As I continue to grow as an educator, I intend to pursue additional training in instructional design specific to genetic counseling education, with the goal of enhancing learner engagement and promoting inclusivity. With a strong network of mentors, I am committed to seeking feedback and continuously

improving my teaching practices.

I am dedicated to preparing students for both the technical demands and the ethical and collaborative challenges of genetic counseling, particularly in research. My goal is to contribute meaningfully to the development of our profession and support the success of future genetic counselors.

C. Positions, certification, and honors (include dates):

I. Positions and employment

- 2024 – Present: Data Scientist Assistant 1, Genetic Counselor, Vanderbilt Eye Institute, Nashville, TN
- 2023 – 2024: Research Analyst, Genome Medical, Remote
- 2022 – 2023: Research Assistant, Genome Medical, Remote
- 2020 – 2022: Clinical Support Supervisor, Huntsman Cancer Institute, Salt Lake City, UT
- 2019 – 2020: Genetic Counseling Assistant, Huntsman Cancer Institute, Salt Lake City, UT
- 2018 – 2019: Interviewer, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey, Pittsburgh, PA

II. Certification (please include specific field)

- 2024 – Present: Genetic Counselor Certification, American Board of Genetic Counseling
- 2024 – Present: Genetic Counseling State Licensure, Tennessee Board of Medical Examiners

III. Honors

- 2025: Award, Fellowship in Genomics Outcomes Research (FIGOR) Scholar
- 2024: Award, Advanced Research Training in Genetic Counseling (ART-GC) Scholar

D. Please list your Teaching/Mentorship/Clinical Supervision/Leadership Activities. (within the last 5 years):

Graduate School Courses

Guest Lectures:

GC7015 - Professional Issues II | Vanderbilt University Master of Genetic Counseling Program

- Board Exam Preparation: April 2025

GC7010 - Professional Issues I | Vanderbilt University Master of Genetic Counseling Program

- Alumni Panel, Navigating Professional Conferences: September 2024

GC7510 - Genetic Counseling Pre-Practicum | Vanderbilt University Master of Genetic Counseling Program

- Collecting Family History and Pedigrees: September 2024

Clinical Supervision:

GC7510 - Genetic Counseling Pre-Practicum | Vanderbilt University Master of Genetic Counseling Program

- Center for Experiential Learning and Assessment (CELA), Student Supervision, December 2024

Research Mentorship

Medical and Graduate Student Research Advisor:

IRB# 250244 - *Benefits of an Interdisciplinary Inherited Retinal Disease Clinic*

- 2025 – Present

IRB# 250344 - *Ranking Risk Factors for Receiving a Definitive Genetic Testing Result in Patients with Clinically Diagnosed Inherited Retinal Disease*

- 2025 – Present

Continuing Medical Education

Professional Presentations:

Guest co-presenter | 2025 VEI Ophthalmology Pearls Allied Health Professional Program | April 2024

- *Personalized Care for Patients with Inherited Retinal Diseases*

Other:

University of Pennsylvania - *Genes, Choices, and Ethics: Navigating the Moral Dilemmas in Genetic Counseling*

- 2025 | 10 Category 1 contact hours

Geisinger Health System – *Qualitative Research Bootcamp*

- 2025 | 12 Category 1 contact hours

E. Professional Activities (Within the last 5 years):

- I. 2025 – Present: Member, ABCA4 Variant Curation Expert Panel, ClinGen
- II. 2025 – Present: Abstract Workgroup Volunteer, National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC)
- III. 2025 – Present: Member, International Society for Genetic Eye Diseases and Retinoblastoma (ISGEDR)
- IV. 2024 – Present: Member, National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC)
- V. 2024 – Present: Member, The Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO)

F. Research, funded grants and/or scholastic endeavors including accepted abstracts and other publications: (Please only include accomplishments from the last 5 years):

I. Abstracts

Cecilia Kessler, Milam Brantley, Let's Get Digital: Navigating Clinical Genetic Tracking Systems and Databases in Ocular Genetics; Accepted for Presentation at the 1st 2025 Genetic Counselors – Broadening Research, Insights, and Discussion of Genetic Eye Diseases (GC-BRIDGED) Conference, October 2, 2025, Pittsburgh, PA.

Cecilia Kessler, Caitlin Harrington, Andi Hila, Beth Denne, Colleen Caleshu, High completion rate and positive patient feedback suggest a digital education tool for hereditary cancer risk is both helpful and usable; (Poster CAN100). Presented at the 42nd NSGC Annual Conference, October 19, 2023, Chicago, IL

Caitlin Harrington, **Cecilia Kessler**, Andi Hila, Colleen Caleshu, High rates of completion and short amount of time needed to complete hereditary cancer digital tools suggest they are usable and acceptable to older adults; (Poster CAN105). Presented at the 42nd NSGC Annual Conference, October 19, 2023, Chicago, IL

II. Other Publications

Chavez-Yenter D, Goodman MS, Chen Y, Chu X, Bradshaw RL, Lorenz Chambers R, Chan PA, Daly BM, Flynn M, Gammon A, Hess R, **Kessler C**,...Kimberly Kaphingst. (2022) Association of Disparities in Family History and Family Cancer History in the Electronic Health Record With Sex, Race, Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity, and Language Preference in 2 Large US Health Care Systems. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2022;5(10):e2234574.

Liebermann, E., Taber, P., Vega, A. S., Daly, B. M., Goodman, M. S., Bradshaw, R., Chan, P. A., Chavez-Yenter, D., Hess, R., **Kessler, C.**, Kohlmann, W., Low, S., Monahan, R., Kawamoto, K., Del Fiol, G., Buys, S. S., Sigireddi, M., Ginsburg, O., & Kaphingst, K. A. (2022). Barriers to family history collection among Spanish-speaking primary care patients: a BRIDGE qualitative study. *PEC innovation*, 1, 100087.

Bradshaw, R. L., Kawamoto, K., Kaphingst, K. A., Kohlmann, W. K., Hess, R., Flynn, M. C., Nanjo, C. J., Warner, P. B., Shi, J., Morgan, K., Kimball, K., Ranade-Kharkar, P., Ginsburg, O., Goodman, M., Chambers, R., Mann, D., Narus, S. P., Gonzalez, J., Loomis, S., Chan, P., ... **Kessler, C.**, Del Fiol, G. (2022). GARDE: a standards-based clinical decision support platform for identifying population health management cohorts. *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association : JAMIA*, 29(5), 928–936.

Chavez-Yenter, D., Kimball, K. E., Kohlmann, W., Lorenz Chambers, R., Bradshaw, R. L., Espinel, W. F., Flynn, M., Gammon, A., Goldberg, E., Hagerty, K. J., Hess, R., **Kessler, C.**, Monahan, R., Temares, D., Tobik, K., Mann, D. M., Kawamoto, K., Del Fiol, G., Buys, S. S., Ginsburg, O., ... Kaphingst, K. A. (2021). Patient Interactions With an Automated Conversational Agent Delivering Pretest Genetics Education: Descriptive Study. *Journal of medical Internet research*, 23(11), e29447.

Kaphingst, K. A., Kohlmann, W., Chambers, R. L., Goodman, M. S., Bradshaw, R., Chan, P. A., Chavez-Yenter, D., Colonna, S. V., Espinel, W. F., Everett, J. N., Gammon, A., Goldberg, E. R., Gonzalez, J., Hagerty, K. J., Hess, R., Kehoe, K., **Kessler, C.**, ... Ginsburg, O. (2021). Comparing models of delivery for cancer genetics services among patients receiving primary care who meet criteria for genetic evaluation in two healthcare systems: Bridge Randomized Controlled trial. *BMC Health Services Research*, 21(1), 542.