

Biochemistry Student Association Newsletter

Upcoming BSA Events

BSA will be hosting **trivia** on the last Friday of the month - don't forget to sign up!

BSA **Colloquium** has started! On **January 9th**, Anna Eitel and Kaitlyn Browning will present on their research. Students that have just passed their qualifying exams should present a 25-30 min talk on research plans and progress to date, and 5th year and above students should present a 1 hour talk on research progress. Come out and support your fellow Biochemists!

Coffee and Conversations with **Dr Cortez** will be on February 11th. The BSA will provide breakfast to eat over Zoom. [Come and chat](#) with our new interim chair!

Student of the Month

Congratulations to Esha Dalvie for being Biochemistry's Student of the Month!



What year are you in?

I'm a 5th year!

Whose lab do you work in?

I'm in the Osheroff Lab. We study type II topoisomerases and how they interact with drugs, natural products, and different substrates. My work focuses on the effects of DNA geometry on enzyme activity, particularly during decatenation of DNA.

What do you like best about the Biochemistry department?

I love the camaraderie! Everyone in the department is always willing to help anyone who needs it, and everyone is so friendly that it makes it easy to discuss our work even in passing in the hallway and swap ideas over a quick conversation. The fun chat and banter at our Whine and Cheese hours or trivia sessions show that we all get along great, even outside the lab.

What piece of advice would you give to other students?

Talk to your labmates and colleagues, especially when you find yourself at an unexpected bump in the road. A different or outside perspective can be helpful when trying to think your way around a problem.

What is your favorite place to go in Nashville?

I absolutely love Thistle Farms Café. It's got amazing food and tea and charming decor. I highly recommend it for breakfast or brunch. In addition, the proceeds go towards helping survivors of trafficking and abuse. My friends and I used to go there often pre-pandemic, and we can't wait until we're able to do so again!

Nominate a Biochemistry student that's doing cool science!
Email nicole.d.kendrick@vanderbilt.edu

Recent Student Publications

Ragheb MN, Merrikh C, **Browning K**, Merrikh H. Mfd regulates RNA polymerase association with hard-to-transcribe regions in vivo, especially those with structured RNAs. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A*. 2021 Jan 5

Adolph MB, **Mohamed TM**, Balakrishnan S, Xue C, Morati F, Modesti M, Greene EC, Chazin WJ, Cortez D. RADX controls RAD51 filament dynamics to regulate replication fork stability. *Mol Cell*. 2021 Jan 8

Student Invited Speaker Interest Form

The BSA would like to put effort this coming year into a student driven speaker series. We hope these speakers will be diverse and representative of the variety of research we have ongoing as a department. If there are any specific speakers you have in mind, or a topic you would like to hear about [please let us know!](#)

Mental Health Committee

Mental Wellness: Not sure where to go for mental wellness help at Vanderbilt? This [Graduate Student Concern flowchart](#) provided by the Vanderbilt Graduate School is a great resource that outlines the wide range of wellness options for graduate trainees.

Social Wellness: The heated outdoor tents on the arboretum side of Vanderbilt campus are open to all Vandy students, including graduate students, and allow for socially distant dining. Please keep in mind that the current Vanderbilt policy allows for small socially distant gatherings of up to 8 people.

Physical Wellness: According to the [Return to Campus Update from Jan. 20](#), the David Williams II Recreation and Wellness Center is tentatively scheduled to reopen in early February for students, albeit with limited hours. We will update when we get more info!

COVID-19 and Reopening News

Graduate students, make sure you use the [VandySafe App](#) for COVID-19 Self-Monitoring daily before coming to campus. VU is still in Phase 2+. For more information, check out Vanderbilt's [Return to Campus page](#).

Biochemistry Twitter

For updates on events and departmental news, follow the Biochemistry Department twitter [@VandyBiochem](#)

Questions? Concerns?

If you have anything that you would like to be addressed by the department, you can submit it anonymously [here](#). This survey is regularly monitored by the BSA.