Stanford University's MS in Human Genetics and Genetic Counseling
Class of 2019

Brita Christenson is from Minnesota and graduated from the University of Northwestern—St. Paul in 2016 with her bachelor's degree in Biochemistry. As an undergraduate, she served as a resident assistant, a teaching assistant for genetics and the World Languages Department, and a volunteer tutor at Gigi's playhouse, a Down syndrome achievement center. She gained experience in genetic counseling by shadowing lab and cancer genetic counselors and presenting on the genetic counseling profession in a college honors symposium. She also received an REU grant for biochemistry research at Texas A&M and worked on genetics research projects at UNW. Most recently, Brita has been working with as a wellness coach for patients with diabetes through Savvysherpa, a healthcare research company.

Kristina Cotter is from Massachusetts and received her bachelor's degree in Biology from Boston College in 2011 and her PhD in Cellular and Molecular Physiology from Tufts University in 2016. As an undergraduate, she volunteered at the Boston College Campus School for students with disabilities and started the Boston College chapter of Project Sunshine, an organization that runs recreational and educational events in pediatric hospitals. During her PhD, Kristina researched mechanisms to reduce breast cancer metastasis and published several papers in the breast cancer space. As a graduate student, Kristina also had the opportunity to participate in the Graduate Student Council and met with several genetic counselors in the Boston area. Most recently, Kristina was a life science consultant in San Francisco.
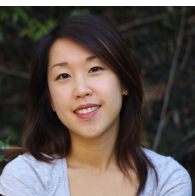

Natalie Deuitch is from North Carolina and received her bachelor's degree in Biology and Food Studies from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2015. As an undergraduate she worked in basic cancer research, studied traditional medicine in India, and completed an honors thesis on biological and sociocultural implications of celiac disease. After graduation, Natalie worked in autoinflammatory genetics research at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD, where she gained both lab and clinical experience and shadowed a variety of genetic counselors. Natalie also volunteered with a local Hospice organization, working primarily with pediatric patients.

Laura Hayward is from Stanford, California and is excited to come back home! She graduated with a bachelor's degree in Human Biology from Claremont McKenna College in May 2016. As an undergraduate, she served as a Residential Assistant, co-captain of the soccer team, and a horrible ballroom dancer. As a junior she interned at UCSF's cancer genetics and prevention program, where she fell in love with the field of genetic counseling. Since then she has completed her senior thesis, identifying functional single nucleotide polymorphisms associated with breast cancer. Laura is currently living and working in San Francisco as a Support Engineer at a startup.

Josh Keyes is from Colorado and graduated from the University of Colorado, Boulder in 2015 with his bachelor's degrees in Neuroscience and Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology. He provided resident companionship for the Memory Care assisted living community at Frasier Meadows, worked as a lab assistant for the undergraduate Principles of Genetics and Phage Genomics labs, was a tutor for various courses including genetics and biochemistry, and was a teaching assistant for Intro to MCDB, Principles of Genetics, and Bacteriophage Genomics. Josh gained exposure to genetic counseling by working as an intern for a cancer genetic counselor at Parker Adventist Hospital.

Helen Kim is from southern California and completed her bachelor's degree in Molecular Biology at Claremont McKenna College in 2012. She is eager and excited to start her training in Genetic Counseling after a career in research, spanning topics of chromatin remodeling enzymes, structurally guided rational HIV-1 vaccine design, and structure-function mechanism of human microRNA-mediated gene silencing machinery. Helen has served as a peer coach in graduate school, a supervised visitation provider for families undergoing separations, and as a student therapist for children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. In her recent position at Illumina, she attended the Understand Your Genome symposium and assisted early adopters navigate their clinical WGS results through workshop sessions. Helen is fluent in Korean.

Kim Kinnear is from Wisconsin and graduated from the University of Wisconsin - Madison in 2011 with degrees in Psychology and English. As an undergraduate, she worked as a respite worker and tutor for children with autism. She was also a volunteer as a research assistant in a schizophrenia lab and as a patient visitor at the children's hospital. Kim is currently working as a counselor at a residential treatment center, treating individuals with OCD, anxiety, depression, and eating disorders.

Rachel Mangels is from southern California and graduated with her bachelor's degree in Biology from Washington University in St. Louis in 2009 and a Ph.D in Molecular Biology from the University of Southern California in 2016. Rachel's doctorate research focused on sexual selection's effect on the genetic and phenotypic variation of reproductive traits. As a graduate student, she was a teaching assistant for multiple undergraduate Biology courses for both science and non-science majors. Most recently, Rachel worked with adults with disabilities at ROSIES Foundation and shadowed genetic counselors in the cancer and cardiovascular departments at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center.

Andrew Shaw is from San Diego, California and received his bachelor's degree in Biochemistry from California State University, Long Beach. Prior to joining Stanford's GC program, Andrew volunteered in the Cancer Genetics program at St. Joseph Hospital while also working at Ambry Genetics as a clinical assistant leading the development of Ambry's tumor testing services. While at Stanford, Andrew's thesis project involved working with The California Department of Public Health surveying families of children with sickle cell trait. Additionally, Andrew participated in Stanford's Ignite Program through the Graduate School of Business and held the role of president of the Stanford Genetic Counseling Student Interest Group**.**

Erika Snure is from Des Moines, Washington and graduated from the University of Washington in 2016 with a bachelor's degree in Biology. She gained exposure to genetic counseling through shadowing pediatric, cancer, and neurogenetics clinics, and met with other genetic counselors in laboratory and commercial roles. Erika focused her volunteer experiences on helping fellow students as a peer health educator and worked with children and families as an inpatient child life volunteer at Seattle Children's Hospital. Most recently, Erika worked as a genetic counseling assistant in the University of Washington Medical Genetics Clinic for over two years.

Kate Vlessis is from Bend, Oregon and completed her bachelor's degree in Integrative Biology from the University of California, Berkeley in 2015. Following her studies, Kate lived and worked for a year in Wellington, New Zealand within a Behavioral Neurogenetics laboratory at the University of Victoria, Wellington. Returning to the U.S., she began working as a medical oncology scribe and volunteering in community outreach and education at Planned Parenthood. Kate also gained experience shadowing genetic counselors at Invitae in San Francisco and at OHSU.