

Stanford University's MS in Human Genetics and Genetic Counseling Class of 2023



Michelle Frees grew up in the Bay Area and graduated from UC Davis in 2019 with a bachelor's degree in Genetics & Genomics and a minor in Psychology. As an undergraduate, she conducted research on zebrafish to investigate the role of a meiosis-specific cohesin protein. Her work helped uncover a novel sexually dimorphic reproductive phenotype, the results of which she documented as a co-author in a PLOS Genetics publication. To develop her counseling skills and support those in need of an empathetic listening ear, she trained and volunteered as a crisis counselor with Crisis Text Line. After graduation, Michelle increased her exposure to the field of Genetic Counseling by working as a GCA in the Department of Pediatrics at the UC Davis Medical Center where she primarily supported patient care in the Metabolic and Lysosomal Storage Disorder clinics. In her free time, Michelle enjoys experimenting with new baking recipes, spending time outdoors, and honing her salsa dancing skills.



Justin Gomez-Stafford is from New Haven, Connecticut, and earned his BS Biology bachelor's degree with a minor in genetic counseling at Eastern Connecticut State University. During his undergraduate journey, Justin did two years of independent research where he worked with the model legume plant *Medicago truncatula* and completed mRNA expression analysis and phenotypic characterization with novel mutants. In order to further his knowledge of genetic counseling, Justin was a cardiovascular genetic counseling intern at Yale New Haven Health. Here he gained exposure to new patient consult and results disclosures, while also assisting in clinical documentation and patient correspondence. Justin was also a member and captain of the ECSU Varsity Men's Track and Field team, as well as the vice-president of the Pre-Health Society. As a member of other organizations, Justin worked to increase the healthcare related opportunities to aid in current students' preparation for further education and their pursuit of healthcare related fields. Throughout his undergraduate journey, Justin rose awareness in regard to social justice issues within the various communities he was a part of and actively got the community involved through events and apparel. Justin's hobbies include painting, cooking, exercise, and comic books.



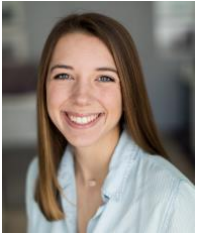
Caitlin Harrington is from Jamestown, RI and graduated in 2019 from the University of Notre Dame with a bachelor's degree in Biology. At Notre Dame, she conducted research on mosquitoes, utilizing the CRISPR/Cas9 system to knock out genes in the visual system. Her work helped progress a project aimed at understanding mosquito host-seeking behavior. Upon graduation, Caitlin joined the Repurposing Team of the Broad Institute Cancer Program. The team conducts research on FDA approved non-oncology drugs with the goal of identifying and studying compounds which selectively kill cancer cells. While at the Broad, Caitlin was exposed to the field of genetic counseling and enhanced her counseling skills through volunteer work at 7 Cups of Tea Online Counseling and Horizons for Homeless Children. In her free time, she enjoys spending time outdoors, running and skiing, as well as experimenting with vegetarian cooking.



Taylor (Shorten) Jacobs is a Boston transplant originally from Louisville, KY, and graduated from Boston College in 2013 where she majored in Psychology. Since then, she has founded and run a non-profit, Sharing America's Marrow, which aims to dispel misconceptions about bone marrow donation and add potential donors to the registry. Taylor also was the Program Supervisor at a residential treatment facility for teenage girls in state custody suffering from the lasting impacts of trauma and abuse. While there, she re-designed and implemented a treatment program meant to deinstitutionalize their experience. Most recently, Taylor has acted as a counselor for foreign exchange students. She is excited now to specialize her counseling in the field of genetics and work with talented colleagues and faculty at Stanford. She specifically hopes to study current barriers to access for under-resourced populations. Taylor is a certified yoga instructor, amateur potter, and spends as much time as possible outdoors with her dog, Banjo.



Cheng-Wei (CJ) Jan is originally from Taipei, Taiwan. He graduated from UCLA in 2019 with a bachelor's degree in Molecular, Cell & Developmental Biology. As an undergraduate, CJ served as a researcher studying microfluidic devices and volunteered with the Fellowship for International Service & Health to promote sustainable development within domestic and international communities. CJ gained genetic counseling experience by shadowing genetic counselors at UCLA Health's Cancer Genetics department. In addition, CJ has volunteered as a crisis counselor at IMALIVE - a suicide prevention textline. After graduating, CJ has spent the past 2 years at Invitae as part of the Clinical Lab Operations team where he worked as the sample processing lead of the Non-Invasive Prenatal Screening (NIPS) product and helped to expand the company's global operation efforts, furthering his passion and excitement for genetic healthcare. In his free time, CJ enjoys exercising, trying new food (preferably cooked by someone else), following professional sports and watching reruns of TV shows that were popular in the 2000s.



McKenna (Kenna) Kumnick is from Danville, CA, and graduated with honors in 2021 from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and minor in Biology. In her time at Cal Poly, Kenna was involved in psychology research investigating the impact of emotional regulation strategies on distress levels and memory. Outside of research, Kenna gained counseling experience through a position as Health and Wellbeing chair. In this role she hosted anxiety support group meetings, compiled mental health resources, and served as an empathetic listener for anyone in need. In order to gain exposure to genetic counseling, Kenna held a summer internship with UCSF's Cancer Genetics program, in which she shadowed multiple cases a week and input patient pedigrees on Progeny. In her free time, Kenna enjoys hiking, surfing, and reading.



Bryce Murray is a San Diego local who spent his early years growing up in Long Beach, CA. Bryce graduated in 2020 from Point Loma Nazarene University with a bachelor's degree in Biology and a minor in Therapeutic Psychological. While studying as an undergraduate, Bryce participated in research studies at both PLNU and UC San Diego, investigating links between glycoproteins, proteoglycans and their possible application as biological markers for bladder cancer. He also spent much of his time as a senior level counselor for incoming freshmen, leading multiple group counseling sessions along with one-on-one growth plan therapy work. After graduating, he spent a year working with Biosettia Inc as a research assistant. This job offered him large amounts of exposure to practices involving gene sequencing and recognition, enzymatic digestion, ligation, cloning and purposeful mutation of COVID-19 antibody and COVID-19 spike protein DNA. In his free time, Bryce enjoys finding scenic overlooks, participating in athletics, backpacking through national parks, action movies, stand-up comedy, barbecuing and conversing with friends.



Diego Quintero is from Potter Valley, CA and graduated in 2021 from UC San Diego with a bachelor's degree in Bioengineering/Bioinformatics and a minor in Mathematics. In community college, Diego first gained research experience through the Bruneau Lab at UCSF studying embryonic heart development in mouse models. After transferring to UCSD, he continued to do research in variant detection in Atriplex Lentiformis, breast cancer precision medicine, coronavirus biology, and optimization of novel sequencing methods. Diego loves to teach/mentor and has served as a Transfer Engineering Academic Mentor at UCSD, a College Assistance Migrant Program mentor aimed at helping first-generation children of migrant parents, and a scientific mentor to high school students through UCSF's Quantitative Biosciences Institute internship program. Diego's interest in Genetic Counseling stems from his desire to apply his genomics and teaching experiences with patients directly and is particularly interested in increasing awareness of this field and the services it provides in communities impacted by language or access barriers. In his free time, he loves to try new food, hang out with his dog, and dance Ballet Folklorico (traditional Mexican Folk dance).



Kendall Schmidt is from the Bay Area and graduated from Clemson University in 2020 with a bachelor's degree in Genetics and minor in Crop & Soil Environmental Science. While an undergraduate, Kendall gained research experience with carbohydrate accumulation in sorghum, mapping quantitative trait loci in maize, and gene expression and methylation changes in tomato ripening. She also conducted a thesis developing CRISPR Cas12a constructs to further research on glycosylase DNA repair. In addition to research, Kendall volunteered with Crisis Text Line and in palliative care to support the emotional needs of hospice patients. To gain insight into genetic counseling, she shadowed at a variety of settings and interned at the UCSF Cancer Genetics and Prevention Program. After graduating, she worked at Frontier Medicines in cancer drug development and disease biology research. In her free time, Kendall enjoys hiking, camping, and improv acting.



Michaela Taylor is from Upper Marlboro, MD. She graduated from University of Maryland, College Park in 2018 with a dual degree in Biology and Psychology. As an undergraduate she worked with organizations such as Sister to Sister, where she served as a peer mentor, Do Good Challenge, where she completed a project that fundraised and educated her peers on human trafficking, and Humanity First, where she helped develop an educational curriculum that she taught to students in Haiti. Michaela was also involved in research that examined the color discrimination thresholds of the Cichlid fish *Metriacrima benetos*, which she published in *The Journal of Experimental Biology*. After graduating, Michaela went on to become a Post Baccalaureate CRTA Fellow at the National Institutes of Health. She studied the interactions of T-Cells and Glucocorticoids through the use of mouse models, cell culture, flow cytometry, CRISPR, and several other techniques. She moved from the NIH to work as a genetic counseling assistant in Inova's Cancer Genetics Program. Michaela has volunteered at Crisis Textline and as a hospice volunteer. In her free time Michaela enjoys spending time with friends and family, Netflix, video games, reading, listening to podcasts, and finding new adventures with the help of GroupOn.



Astrid Torres Zapata is from Castaños Coahuila, Mexico. She received her bachelor's degree in Medicine in 2017 from the Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon, Faculty of Medicine. As an undergraduate, she completed her clinical clerkship at Hospital Universitario Jose Eleuterio Gonzalez, where she gathered patient care experience in internal medicine, psychiatry, obstetrics, pediatrics, among other departments. During her preparation, she worked at the Faculty's Poison Control Center hotline providing information and guidance to health care professionals and the general public regarding poisoning exposures and toxicological emergencies. She also participated in toxicology research, focusing on the clinical management and evolution of crotalic envenomations. After graduation, Astrid volunteered at Samaritan House San Mateo, a non-profit organization, as a medical interpreter. In her free time, she loves to spend time with her dogs, going to museums, visiting new places, hiking, and reading.



Lamrot Tulu was born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and immigrated to Sacramento, California. She graduated from California State University, Sacramento in Cell & Molecular Biology with a minor in Chemistry in 2020. She has worked as a peer monitor & tutor for a molecular biology class as well as TA in an advanced cell biology laboratory class. As an undergraduate, she discovered her love for genetics and was able to study the cause of Gene Amplification in the bacterium *Acinetobacter baylyi* in a genetics research lab on campus. To gain more experience, she shadowed a genetic counselor at the UC Davis MIND Institute and served as a crisis line advocate. After graduation, she volunteered at Imani Clinic, a student-run clinic where she discovered her passion for increasing equity and advocacy in underserved communities. In her free time, she likes hiking and trying new food with loved ones.



Brianna Mau Tucker is from the Northern California Bay Area. In 2014, she earned her bachelor's degree in Philosophy from California State University, Northridge where she also competed as a track and field athlete. As a career path changer coming from the legal field, she later studied in the UC Berkeley Extension Post-Baccalaureate Health Professions Program and explored the genetic counseling profession through volunteering with the Stanford Center for Inherited Cardiovascular Disease (SCICD). Brianna then worked as a clinical research coordinator with SCICD and the Undiagnosed Diseases Network, supporting clinical trials for patients with heart failure, inherited cardiomyopathies, and rare, undiagnosed diseases. In addition, she has engaged in community volunteer work including counseling for a suicide and crisis hotline and teaching English with the English Language Learners In-Home Program. Brianna enjoys making and trying new foods, staying active, improv acting, crafting, and studying Spanish.



Jemal (Jay) Vaunado II is originally from Detroit, Michigan. He earned his bachelor's degree in Neuroscience and Behavior at Columbia University in 2021. During his undergraduate studies, Jay was a leader of Columbia University's Varsity Track and Field Team and volunteered as a health educator in communities of color through Peer Health Exchange. In his time as a health educator, he served under-resourced high schools throughout New York City. During one of his summers, he aided in research at the University of Michigan which analyzed the relationship between the expression of certain genes and callus formation. Later, to gain a deeper understanding of genetic counseling, he participated in Iowa's Topics in Genetic Counseling Webinar Series which covered salient topics within the field. Additionally, he shadowed cases in family planning, prenatal, cancer and rare diseases genetic counseling through Columbia University's Experiential Practicum. In his free time Jay enjoys hiking, fighting games, exercise, and writing.