**MISSION STATEMENT**

The goal of the CABM Diversity Committee (CDC) is to act as DEIA advocates. Following the lead of University Equity and Inclusion, the CDC seeks to turn ideals into action, making CABM a safe and supportive space.

**CALL TO ACTION**

The committee is still looking for CABM volunteers to help improve DEIA efforts. If you are interested, please contact diversity@cabm.rutgers.edu or reach out to a current committee member!

---

On March 7th, CABM’s Diversity Committee proudly hosted the inaugural Rutgers Conference for Rising Stars in Graduate Research with the generous support of our RBHS-IDEA Innovation Grant. This event, organized by Shawn Rumrill and Liisa Veerus, aimed to provide underrepresented graduate students with a first-hand experience of a research conference environment right here at Rutgers. The conference was designed to highlight a diverse array of research disciplines, spanning from STEM to social sciences.

The day was a resounding success, with over 100 participants and featuring two keynote speakers, five student talks, 38 student posters, and eight vendor tables. The student science was a highlight for many at the conference because of the diversity of research topics and the chance to network with peers from various graduate programs.

---

Rising Stars poster and talk awardees (left to right): Eleanor J. Agosta, Sree Varshini Murali, Prateeksha Rout, Eduardo A. Troian, Steven Knezevic, Joshua Rochotte

---

Graduate students, attendees and presenters alike, chatting over science.
2024 Inaugural Rutgers Conference for Rising Stars in Graduate Research

CABM’s own Martin Blaser was a keynote speakers for the day. He educated attendees on the art of scientific presentations, emphasizing concepts such as the elements of a quality PowerPoint slide and effective use of figures. Dr. Blaser was delighted by the enthusiasm of the attendees, remarking that “as a teacher, there is nothing better than a student eager to learn.”

Adam Ligeralde from Cytiva was the second keynote. He delivered an impactful presentation on networking, stressing the importance of building connections early in one’s career. He likened networking to an investment in social capital, encouraging attendees to start “earning interest” now for future opportunities. He was also excited by the level of engagement from attendees and observed a noticeable change after his talk, with increased open conversation and networking.

Special thanks to Analytik Jena, Avantor Sciences, Beckman Coulter, Corning, Cytiva, Eppen...

Adam Ligeralde, MS
Cytiva Chromatography Specialist and Public Speaking Coach

Ligeralde is a Chromatography Specialist at Cytiva, a Protein Purification Specialist for AKTA™ chromatography systems, and a Marketing and Public Speaking Coach. Ligeralde has >30 years of experience providing technical knowledge and expertise in the Life Sciences and optimizing productivity and efficiency from Lab-Bench Discovery stages to the BioProcess Scale. In 2023, Ligeralde was awarded the honor of Commercial Role Model from USCAN Cytiva Leadership and has trainings/certifications across the science and business fields. At our conference he presented: Your network is your net worth.
Teen Café is a program run by 4-H and Rutgers to support teen students in their curiosity of the sciences. This year the Café taught students about their microbiome in a presentation called “Should You Break Up with Your Diet? Follow Your Gut!” Students from age 13-17, in grades 8-12, joined in the science-filled Saturday at CABM with organizers Janice McDonnell, Liisa Veerus, Margot Shumaker, Natalie Losada, Raj Harsora, and Dareen Shah!

Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with one participant highlighting the “inviting community and energy” of the event. Several attendees also shared how important they felt having a low-stake venue to practice presenting and network was to giving them confidence at a larger scientific conference. It was indeed a collegial day filled with fruitful connections, inspiring research, and promising opportunities.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to making this conference a success. Let’s continue to foster a supportive environment where all students can thrive.

4-H Teen Café meets the microbiome at CABM

Teen Café is a program run by 4-H and Rutgers to support teen students in their curiosity of the sciences. This year the Café taught students about their microbiome in a presentation called “Should You Break Up with Your Diet? Follow Your Gut!” Students from age 13-17, in grades 8-12, joined in the science-filled Saturday at CABM with organizers Janice McDonnell, Liisa Veerus, Margot Shumaker, Natalie Losada, Raj Harsora, and Dareen Shah!

Post Café, students were asked about the experience through an anonymous survey. Students agreed or strongly agreed that they felt comfortable sharing their opinions and that they had fun at the Teen Café. Additionally, 81% of students said they thought the science talk was very good or excellent.

Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with one participant highlighting the “inviting community and energy” of the event. Several attendees also shared how important they felt having a low-stake venue to practice presenting and network was to giving them confidence at a larger scientific conference. It was indeed a collegial day filled with fruitful connections, inspiring research, and promising opportunities.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to making this conference a success. Let’s continue to foster a supportive environment where all students can thrive.

Liisa from CABM had sightful thoughts to share with us at the newsletter: We have been working with Janice McDonnell for a long time to bring back Teen Café to post-pandemic Rutgers. I was beyond excited to welcome so many students to CABM, demonstrate all the fun science happening in the building, and answer their curiosity-driven questions from “What is everyone’s favourite lizard species?” to “What foods should we try and eat every day to support our microbiome?”.