



Matthew Amato
Molecular Biophysics

My name is Matthew Amato, and I am a PhD candidate in the Molecular Biophysics program. I grew up in New Mexico and I love being outside, from backpacking and kayaking to everything else in between. Graduate school has taught me we do our best work when we are feeling our best. Just as cars need regular oil changes and maintenance to properly run, we need to schedule time to check in with ourselves. Graduate school can be overwhelming at times, so it is important to create a strong support system. I am always here to talk about navigating graduate school or just being a person in graduate school. I am hoping to chat with you!



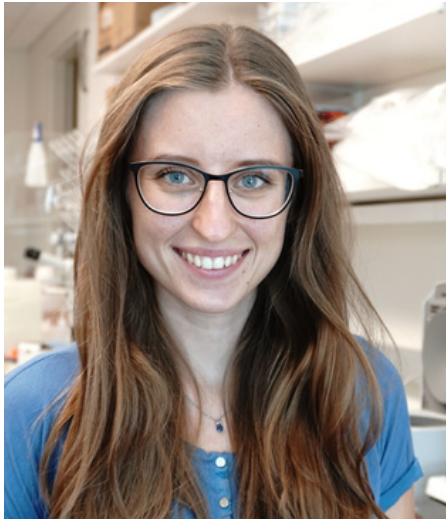
Stephan Daetwyler
Postdoc

Hi, my name is Stephan and I am a postdoctoral researcher in the Fiolka lab. Before coming to Dallas in September 2018, I did my PhD at the Max Planck Institute of Molecular Cell Biology and Genetics in Germany. Here at UT Southwestern, I work on building programming and applying new microscopes to study cancer cell dynamics with high resolution in situ. In my free time, I enjoy singing, dancing and watching movies. From my own experience, I know that life can sometimes be very stressful and challenging. In these moments, it is good to have someone to talk to. As peer advocate, I would be glad to meet with you and listen to you



Shilpa Dhar
Cancer Biology

Hi! My name is Shilpa and I'm from Chicago, IL. I went to Valparaiso University and majored in Chemistry and Biology. In my spare time, I enjoy yoga, reading, and exploring different restaurants and coffee shops in Dallas. I want to be a resource to others through peer mentorship as other students have been a great resource to me in adjusting to graduate school. I want to be able to provide support and encouragement to anyone who needs it. Whether it is academic struggles, career planning, or general life stressors, we can talk!



Weronkia Stachera
Genetics, Development & Disease

My name is Weronika, I am a 4th-year GDD student, and I volunteer to serve as a peer advocate. I am from Poland, and I came to the US 4 years ago. I was struggling with many different aspects of being an international person in a country thousands of kilometers (miles) from my friends and family. I had difficulties with all the new paperwork regarding visas, taxes, SSNs, etc. I am here as a resource to HELP you. Being a graduate student is a huge challenge and we don't need to face more difficulties. Grad life can also be very isolating especially when you are in a new country. But remember, you are not alone! I aim to bring the student community together to identify each other's problems and make the way through them. Let me be your advocate for any issue you might have. Let me help you feel more at home, here in UTSW.



Shayna Thomas-Jardin
Postdoc

Hello, my name is Shayna and I'm a 2nd year post-doc. I completed my PhD at The University of Texas at Dallas in 2020 and joined UTSW as a post-doc in early 2021. In my spare time, I enjoy gardening, baking, and watching anime. I have two children, born during my undergraduate and graduate studies, which has enhanced my skills of how to maintain a healthy work-life balance. As a mentor in the lab, both here at UTSW and during my PhD work, I know the "ins" and "outs" of lab dynamics, relationships, and how to keep a project moving forward. I'd love to use everything I've learned to help all students inside and outside the lab. Please reach out to discuss any topic, academic, lab, child-related, or just want to talk.



Courtney Tran
Clinical Psychology

Hi, Hello! My name is Courtney (she/her/they/them), and I am a 2nd year PhD student in the Clinical Psychology program. I was born and raised in the Dallas metroplex, so I consider myself a local to the city. I started graduate school during the pandemic, so I understand the challenges of navigating graduate school in an even more challenging landscape. Graduate student mental health is one of my passions, and I believe connection helps us stay well. Therefore, I hope to provide connection and support to you, my fellow peers. My self-care activities include playing PC video games (FPS, TCG, Dungeon Crawlers, RTS), lifting weights, rock climbing, going to therapy, and exploring Dallas. I especially love going to coffee shops, boba shops, art pop-ups and savory food restaurants.



Jesus Vega **Biophysics**

Hi, my name is Jesus Vega, I am a graduate student in the Biophysics Program. I was born and raised in Puerto Rico where I got a BS in Math from Universidad del Sagrado Corazon. Then, I moved to Dallas for my PhD. I love outdoor activities, specially hiking and road trips, and trying new food. Graduate school has been a journey full of challenges: like moving to a new place and learning to work in a different language. This journey has been full of ups and downs, which reaffirmed to me the importance of having friends and a community to support you. As a peer advocate, I hope to help others to find their community and to serve as source of advice and support for my fellow students.



Reshma T Vettil **Postdoc**

Hi, my name is Reshma, and I am a postdoctoral researcher at Sabari lab. Before joining UTSW in January 2020, I did my PhD from National centre for biological sciences in India. For my research, I am a computational biologist, and we study how biomolecular condensates organize gene regulation. In my spare time, I enjoy writing, sketching, and exploring places and different restaurants. I always love to have conversations and meet new people. During my graduation years, I realized that having someone whom you can reach out and talk to is a privilege and this is the reason why I wanted to join the Peer Advocate program. I would love to be that someone whom you can talk to.



Mahak Virley **Neuroscience**

Hi everyone! My name is Mahak, and I am a fourth-year graduate student in the Neuroscience program. I was born in India and immigrated to the States when I was 3 years old. I grew up in Houston and eventually Los Angeles. I went to undergrad at Mount Saint Mary's University in LA, which was a private, all-women Liberal arts college. There, I studied mathematics and biology. Being a peer advocate means a lot to me because, during my undergraduate year, I experienced loss, financial difficulties, and family/relationship struggles. I pulled through because of my friend's support and weekly therapy sessions. I hope to provide you all with a listening ear, a compassionate heart, and an unbreakable spirit! In my free time, I really enjoy hiking, sitting by the ocean, reading fiction works, and trying new music. In Dallas, I am always on the search for cool hiking spots, trying new places to eat, and spending time with my cats!



Jane Warshaw
Genetics, Development & Disease

Hi! My name is Jane and I'm from central New Jersey. I graduated from the University of Notre Dame and majored in biology and Spanish. I moved to Dallas in 2020 to start my PhD. In my spare time, I enjoy going to yoga and spin classes, reading, and finding the best cup of coffee in Dallas. Being a PhD student can be both rewarding and challenging. Connecting with and supporting your peers is critical to managing stress. I hope I can provide my peers with encouragement in their academic, personal, and professional lives. Please feel free to reach out!