

BIANCA T. LEONARD

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EDUCATION

University of Pittsburgh, Dietrich School of Arts and Science
Prospective B.S. in Neuroscience (Premedicine)
Prospective minors in Spanish, Chemistry

Class of 2018

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES

Independent Study, Department of Neuroscience

Academic Years 2015-2017

- 4 credits (1 per semester at 5-10 hours/week/credit)
- Continued work in both Gorantla and Steketee labs (skills and type of research previously mentioned)
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University of Pittsburgh Honors College Health Sciences Fellowship

Summer 2016

- Learned to write/submit a proposal and received a grant from the university
- 30-35 hours/week of research in Dr. Michael Steketee's lab in conducting wet lab experiments, learning about and working with immunohistochemistry, cell and extracellular matrix culturing, handling model organisms, and collecting/analyzing data on ImageJ and Graphpad Prism software
- 5-10 hours/week of guided instruction on research techniques, potential career goals, mentorship, weekly study of scientific literature, and presentation of work to colleagues
- Wrote a final scientific paper on the cumulative work of the summer

First Experience in Research

Spring 2015

- Course with weekly meeting on how to be an effective researcher, read weekly papers and discussed the literature, learned how to give the "Elevator Pitch"
- 6 hours/week of research in Dr. Vijay Gorantla's lab in analyzing images in Metamorph, compiling data in Excel, and practicing wet lab techniques

PRESENTATIONS

Center for Adaptive Optics Fall Retreat, Oral Presentation

2017

Contiguous mapping of retinal pigment epithelium (RPE) cell morphometry across the horizontal meridian of the living human eye. October 2017. Lake Arrowhead, CA.

ARVO, Poster Presentation

2017

Extracellular vesicles purified from porcine vitreous positively regulate retinal ganglion cell axon survival and growth. May 2017. Baltimore, MD.

Honors College Health Sciences Oral Presentation

2016

Advancing whole eye transplant technology by increasing neuronal survival after injury. August 2016. Pittsburgh, PA.

First Experiences in Research Symposium Oral Presentation **2015**
Retinal Ganglion Cell Survivability in a Neurotherapeutic Window of FK-506. May 2015. Pittsburgh, PA

AWARDS/HONORS

University of Pittsburgh Student Honors Convocation Honoree **2017**

University of Pittsburgh Honors College Health Sciences Fellowship **2016**

National Honors Society **2014**

- Received high school diploma with High Honors
- Outstanding Young Citizens Award (2013 & 2014)
- Foreign Language Award of Class of 2014
- Westinghouse Honors Science Institute Alumni (2013)

PUBLICATIONS

Van der Merwe, Y., Faust, A. E., Conner, I., Gu, X., Feturi, F., Zhao, W., **Leonard, B.**, Roy, S., Gorantla, V. S., Venkataramanan, R., Washington, K. M., Wagner, W. R., and Steketee, M. B. (2017). An Elastomeric Polymer Matrix, PEUU-Tac, Delivers Bioactive Tacrolimus Transdurally to the CNS in Rat. *EBioMedicine*, 26, 47-59.

[PDF](#)

LANGUAGES

English: Fluent
Spanish: Fluent
French: Proficient

WORK/VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Research Lab Assistant **May 2017-Present**

- Rossi Lab, Department of Ophthalmology, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
- Learned very basic MATLAB to modify custom programs for data analysis
- Taught the basic principles of adaptive optics in the living human eye
- Experience with cutting edge technology in eye-tracking devices
- Further development in research skills by greater responsibility in project development

Secretary of the Board at Coffee Arabica Foundation for Education **2011-Present**

- Elected Secretary in March 2016, lead communicator among CAFE members, take quarterly meeting notes, run social media platforms and PR committee

- Visit schools/students sponsored by CAFE in Honduras, take school supplies annually
- Organize monthly sales at the university through the University of Pittsburgh Spanish Club (2014-2017)

Spanish-English Interpreter: Birmingham Clinic SALUD **March 2017 – Present**

- Took vital signs, translated intake forms, shadowed doctors, translated between doctor and patient, provided additional aid to staff and patients including explanations of government resources for underserved populations

Executive Officer of WeRISE Pittsburgh Chapter **2016-December 2017**

- Work with other chapters to understand/study race and serving other communities effectively as someone who does not pertain to them

Server at The Duquesne Club **September 2016-April 2017**

Server/Host at Mercurio's **March–July 2016**

Branch Manager at College Works Painting **March– August 2015**

Server/Host at South Park Clubhouse **April–August 2014**

INTERESTS

Community Development in Rural Honduras

Engagement in the Arts

Medicine and Underserved Populations in Pittsburgh