**Paola J. Fonseca Romero**

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**EDUCATION**

**Ph.D. Microbiology & Immunology May 2026**

University of Utah **|** GPA: 3.6

**M.S. Clinical Investigation** **May 2026**

University of Utah | GPA: 4.0

**Bachelor of Science (B.S.) Microbiology |**  **May 2021**

Universidad Ana G Mendez | GPA: 3.89

**RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

**Graduate Research Assistant – Leung Lab Aug. 2020 – Present**

**Microbiology and Immunology | Department of Pathology | University of Utah Salt Lake City, UT**

Projects: Development of a Clinical Prediction rule (CPR) to distinguish viral from bacterial etiologies in children with diarrhea infections and develop a CPR to predict a child's nutritional status from 90 days that are admitted to the hospital to give appropriate treatment.

* Primary researcher on two major projects. Conducted self-driven research and fostered and maintained relationships with collaborators of both scientists and physicians.
* Experienced in flow cytometry, Multiplex PCR, and qPCR.
* Developed skills in biostatistics and data analysis using R.
* Mentored summer interns to become independent thinkers and workers.
* Successfully got accepted to a Master in Clinical Investigation.

**T32- Predoctoral Training Fellowship** | *University of Utah Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI) T32 Spheres of Translation Across the Research Spectrum (STARS) Program* | March 2023 – March 2025

* National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences of the National Institutes of Health -$27,144 annually for two years.

**Scientific Contributions**

**Graduate Rotations Sep-May 2021** **BioScience Graduate Program |University of Utah Salt Lake City, UT**

Had Rotations with different Department such as Pharmacological, Biochemistry, and Pathology

* Preformed Immunohistochemistry in tumor and lung samples.
* Learn to use fluorescent microscopy to observe and analyze cellular processes.
* Conducted surgery in mice to collect blood and lung; as well as process these tissues.
* Operated centrifuge, sample preparation, and flow cytometer.
* Contributed to instrument optimization and experimentation.
* Conducted experiment with C57BL/6 mice exposing them to ozone particles in different concentrations.
* Use software such as R, Imagage J, and Prism to analyze data.
* Performed cell staining intracellular and extracellular to perform flow cytometry, as well as cell count and sorting.

**Undergraduate Research Assistance Aug. 2020 – May.2020 PR-LSAMP Universidad Ana G. Mendez | Dr. Juan Gonzalez Carolina, PR**

Project: Study of Properties of Solutions and Thin Polymeric Sheets for Biomedical Applications

* Experience in using statistical software and performing surface characterization.
* Wrote a successfully funded undergrad fellowship grant proposal.
* Gain experience in Langmuir-Blodgett (LB) for depositing monolayer and optimizing the parameters.
* Successfully presented at the Annual PR-LSAMP conference.

**Undergraduate Research Assistant Aug. 2019 – Jan. 2020**

**Universidad Ana G. Mendez | Dr. Karlo Malavé Carolina, PR**

Project: Insolation of Vibro Species from Water and Sand in Recreational Beached of Puerto Rico

* Grew microbiology cultures for applications in library preparation and analytical sensitivity experiments.
* Isolated and identify Vibrio species using standard media and performed a biochemical test to confirm identity.
* Learn sample collection from sand and water from different locations and transport of the sample to the laboratory.
* Analyze the results of the microbiological test and calculated the prevalence, density, and distribution of Vibro in beach samples.

**Undergraduate Research Assistant May. 2019 – Aug.2019**

**Genomic Summer Research for Minorities(GSRM)| Department of Infectious Diseases) | Salt Lake City**

**Dr. Anne Blashke, MD, Ph.D.**

Project: Diagnostic Utility of Multiplex PCR-based assay on the pleural fluid of children with parapneumonic empyema.

* Preformed Multiplex PCR-based assay on pleural fluid samples and learn how to handle and process them.
* Performed appropriate data analysis and disseminated the results of the study to the community.
* Attended weekly meetings at Primary Childrens Hospital and gain insight into the latest developments and challenges in infectious disease in children.
* Shadowed clinicians in the pediatric care unit and Intensive care unit to observe management and diagnosis in children.

**SCHOLARSHIPS / AWARDS**

**Travel Scholarship to serve as a liaison in SACNAS** |2022 | Office of Health Equity Diversity and Inclusion |University of Utah

**Honor roll and Community Engagement Medal** |2021 | Program of Scholarship and Internships, Universidad Ana G Mendez

**Fellowship Undergraduate Research Program of Puerto Rico (PR-LSAMP)** | 2020 | Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation

**Reproductive Justice Leadership Program |** 2020 | AMSA Reproductive Health Scholars Program

**National Puerto Rican Day Parade Scholarship (NPRDP)** | 2020 | New York

**Travel Awardee for Emerging Research National Conference in STEM** | 2019 | Universidad Ana G. Mendez

**Travel Scholarhsip for SACNAS** | 2019 | Universidad Ana G. Mendez

**First Place Medal in the Knowledge Competition** | 2019 | Universidad Ana G. Mendez

**Certificate of Honor** |2019 |Universidad Ana G.Mendez

**Certificate of Recognition of Outstanding Performance in the academic year** |2018 | Universidad Ana G. Mendez

**Certificate of Honor roll** | 2018| Universidad Ana G. Mendez

**Permanent Scholarship Fund with Pfizer Pharmaceutical Company** | 2017-2021 | Universidad Ana G. Mendez

**CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION**

**Oral Presentation:**

Oral: *Study of Properties of Solutions and Thin Polymeric Sheets for Biomedical Applications*

**May 2020 |** PR-LSAMP 39th Puerto Rico Interdisciplinary Scientific Meeting and the 54rd Junior Technical Meeting at University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez campus

Oral: *Diagnostic utility of multiplex PCR-based assay on the pleural fluid of children with parapneumonic empyema*

**Aug. 2019 |** Summer Symposium at the University of Utah

**Poster Presentations:**

Poster: *Diagnostic utility of multiplex PCR-based assay on the pleural fluid of children with parapneumonic empyema*

**Mar. 2020 |** NHGRI Research Training and Career Development Penn Museum, Philadelphia

**Feb. 2020 |** Emerging Research National Conference in STEM (ERN) Washington D.C

**Nov. 2019 |** Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS) Anaheim, CA.

**Oct. 2019 |** Puerto Rico Society of Microbiology Seventh Student Research Symposium- Passing the Torch of Ethics and Research to the Next Generation at Interamerican University of Cupey, PR

**Oct. 2019 |** Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanic and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS), Honolulu, Hawai’i

**Internships and Workshops**

* **Med to Grad Leadership Boot Camp**| MSCI at the University of Utah|2023
* **Bio Talent Training in OncoImmuno Therapy|** Amgen at the University of Puerto Rico **|** 2020-2021
* **Reproductive Leadership Program |** AMSA Reproductive Health Scholar Program| 2020
* **Coding Bootcamp: Analyze COVID-19 Data using R |** University of Tennesse at Chattanooga**|**2020
* **Clinical Genetics and Bioinformatics Summer Program |** KECK Graduate Institue (KGI), Clearemont**|**2020
* **Summer School on Innovative Approaches in Science|** John Hopkins University**|** 2020
* **How to apply Molecular Biology in Agriculture Microbiology|** Ponce Health Sciences University**|** 2020
* **Genomic Summer Research for Minorities (GSRM) |** University of Utah**|** 2019

**Conferences**

3i Initiative Symposium|2023

CTSI Translational Reaserch Trainee Symposium| 2022

Microbial Pathogenesis Symposium | 2022

The SACNAS National Diversity in STEM (NDiSTEM) Conference | 2022

NIH conference online where I introduce the speakers | 2020

Graduate School and Professional Mini-Expo | 2020

Summer School on Innovative Approaches in Science | 2020

The SACNAS National Diversity in STEM Virtual Conference | 2020

Society for Developmental Biology 79th Annual Meeting Advancing the field | 2020

The Allied Genetics Conference (TAGC) | 2020

The SACNAS National Diversity in STEM Conference | 2019

Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students | 2019

Forward Research & Innovation Summit | 2018

**WORK EXPERIENCE**

**Manager** | Cha Cha boutique **Aug.2020 – June.2021** **Luquillo,PR**

* Manage daily operations of the boutique, including sales, inventory management, and customer service.
* Analyzed sales data to identify trends and opportunities for growth, and made strategic decisions to increase profitability.
* Created and excluded marketing campaigns where I model weekly arrivals to add to social media.
* Manage financial performance including budgeting and reporting financial targets that were met or exceeded.

**Mentor and Tutor**| Minority Science and Engineering Improvement Program (MSEIP) **Jan. 2020 – May 2021**Universidad Ana G. Mendez | Technology and Science Department **Carolina, PR**

* Develop effective teaching strategies and methods to improve students' understanding and performance in their advanced calculus courses.
* Designed and implemented seminars based on students' interests related to future opportunities and mental health.
* Created weekly surveys, questionnaires, and canvas reminders to store future evidence for grant renewal.
* Collaborated with the program coordinator and director to create and implement activities and personal development plans for students.

**Laboratory Assistant in Preparations Laboratory Jan -May 2019**

Universidad Ana G, Mendez | Carolina,PR

* Prepared materials for different laboratory courses such as solutions and petri dishes.
* Conducted inventory, handling of chemicals and maintenance of equipment.

**Peer Tutor** | **HIS-STEM Nov. 2018 – May 2019**

Tutor in Immunology and Physics | Universidad Ana G. Mendez **Carolina, PR**

| Technology and Science department

* Provided support to students in understanding key components of the class.
* Provided designed review sessions and provided feedback on homework assignments.

**Peer-Led Team Learning program | Peer Tutor in Chemistry and Anatomy Feb. 2017 – Sep.2018**

Universidad Ana. G Mendez |Technology and Science Departmet  **Carolina, PR**

* Designed review sessions to encourage peer learning, enhance study techniques, and develop critical thinking

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Leadership**

* **Recruitment Chair** for the University of Utah SACNAS chapter|2023-2025
* **Chapter Founder and President** MEDLIFE Chapter | Universidad Ana G. Mendez chapter | 2020– 2021
* **President** Hispanic-Serving Institution HIS-STEM program | June 2019 – June 2021
* **Vice-President** of American Student Association (UAGMS-AMSA Chapter) | 2020-2021
* **Chair** of Student Retreat Committee | 2019

**Community Engagement & Outreach**

* VacuTour COVID-19, Ricky Martin Foundation | 2021
  + Provided support in organizing events, handed out questionnaires, and provided information to the community in questions regarding the vaccine.
* Research Volunteer night monitoring the Nature Reserve | Oct.-Jan 2021
* Ricky Martin Foundation | Emergency Bag Delivery for the south of Puerto Rico | 2020
* Ricky Martin Foundation | Donation of clothes | 2020
* UAGM’s AMSA Chapter | Initiative to recollect and distribute first aid items to the community affected by earthquakes | 2019
* UAGM Microbiology Chapter | Delivered hygiene and food to a nursing home| 2019
* UAGM’s Microbiology Chapter | Orphanaphe gift giving and teaching about STEM | 2019
* Para La Naturaleza | Planting Native Tress| 2019
* Usher | UAGM in welcoming activity | 2018
* UAGM’s Microbiology chapter Initiative food collection | Hurrican Maria affected | 2017
* Para La Naturaleza | Golf Fundraiser Tornament | 2016

**Teaching**

* Teaching Assistant for Microbiology course| 2020

**Certifications & Education**

* Principles of Surgery Workshop Training Guide| Office of Comparative Medicine|2022
* BSL-2 and Bloodborne Pathogens| 2021
* Platt Lab Assertiveness Training| 2020
* Thermo Fisher Cell Culture Basics Virtual Lab | 2020
* Biomedical Research Investigator and Key Personnel**|** CITI program | 2020
* Biosafety training for faculty and other researchers**|** CITI program | 2019
* Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative **|** UAGM- Carolina Campus | 2018

**PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

Association for Clinical and Translational Science

Puerto Rico Society for Microbiology

American Society for Microbiology

Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science

Engineers Without Borders

**REFERENCES**

**Daniel Leung, MD**

Associate Professor

Department of Internal Medicine

University of Utah School of Medicine

daniel.leung@utah.edu

**Anne Blaschke, MD, PhD**

Professor, Pediatrics and Pediatric Infectious Diseases

Division of Infectious Diseases

University of Utah School of Medicine

Anne.blaschke@hsc.utah.edu

**Nydia Rodriguez-Bonano, PhD**

Research Professor  
Applied Microbiology Program  
School of Sciences and Technology

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**Gloria Slattum M.S ,PhD**

Program director of Genomic Summer Research for Minorities

Department of Pediatrics

University of Utah

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