



UPR Comprehensive Cancer Center Scientific Congress: Advances in Cancer Care, Research, and Health Policies.

Congratulations to our 4th year G-RISE, Sheila M. Valle-Cortés, on her poster presentation at the 1st UPR Comprehensive Cancer Center Scientific Congress: Advances in Cancer Care, Research, and Health Policies, which was held on May 5 & 6, 2023, at the Puerto Rico Convention Center.

Under the guidance of Dr. Pedro Santiago, Sheila presented her poster titled "The Expression of Phospho-RB S249, N-Cadherin, E-Cadherin, and B-Catenin as a prostate proteomic score for the risk classification of prostate cancer tumors."

Sheila's dedication and hard work are evident in her outstanding poster presentation. Her research is valuable in advancing our understanding of the disease. Well done!

18TH PHSU-PRI ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

The 18th PHSU-PRI Annual Scientific Conference/2nd RCMC Symposium on Health Disparities was held at the Complejo Ferial de Puerto Rico Juan H. Cintrón García in Ponce, PR on May 6, 2023. Its main goal is to highlight ongoing research activities at Ponce Health Sciences University and its affiliated hospitals while raising awareness about Health Disparities in our community. This was a full-day event with poster sessions in Basic Sciences, Behavioral Sciences, Clinical Studies, Clinical Cases and Public Health and oral sessions in Basic Sciences, Behavioral Sciences, Clinical Studies, and Public Health. Scientific plenaries and panel discussions in areas such as Gender Minorities, Health Disparities in Elderly Communities and Prostate Cancer were also hosted. Additionally, this was an opportunity to network, and establish collaborations with others within our network.

Our G-RISE Program was strongly represented by current trainees as well as former ones. At the end of the activity, prizes were awarded to the top three presenters in each category. Winners from the biomedical sciences include third year G-RISE trainee Yobet Pérez, who received first place in oral presentation, as well as Yadiel Rivera (2nd year) who was awarded second prize in oral presentation and Joel Orengo (1st year) who was awarded third prize in poster presentation.

Following is the list of oral and poster presentations given by our G-RISE trainees:

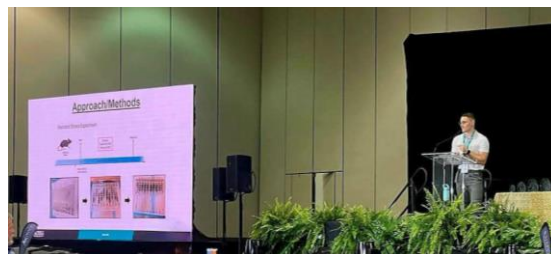
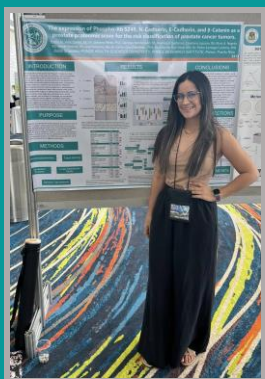
ORAL PRESENTATIONS

- Yobet Pérez:** "Influence of fear conditioning prior to cocaine self-administration on cocaine seeking in adult rats"
- Nelly Arroyo:** "The functional role of promoter germline variants in breast cancer susceptibility genes"
- Yadiel Rivera:** "Characterization of myeloid-derived suppressor cells in response to restraint stress in preclinical models of ovarian cancer"
- Elvin Hernández:** "Role of chronic stress in IL-4-induced macrophage polarization in ovarian cancer"

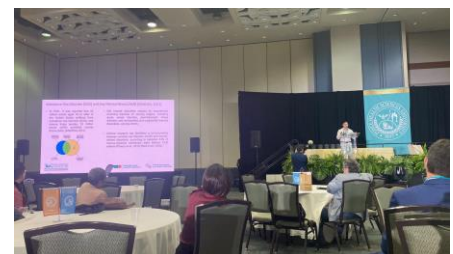
POSTER PRESENTATIONS

- Sheila Valle:** "The expression of Phospho-Rb S249, N-Cadherin, E-Cadherin, and β -Catenin as a prostate proteomic score for the risk classification of prostate cancer tumors"
- Joel Orengo:** "Mitotic kinases as potential targets for early metastasis suppression in triple-negative breast cancer in non-hispanic black women"
- Paola Flores:** "Circulatory T follicular helper cell & memory B cell frequencies in a convalescent DENV immune cohort"
- Luis A. Rivera:** "Antagonization of PPAR γ inhibits beneficial effects of exercise on endometriosis"
- Jonathan López:** "The use of a multi-strain probiotic and high dietary vitamin D to ameliorate acute TNBS-induced colitis in mice"
- Luinet Meléndez:** "Characterizing the role of behavioral stress in the prefrontal cortex activity of breast tumor-bearing mice"

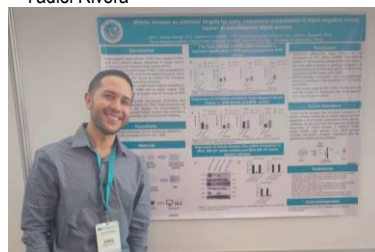
Congratulations to all our G-RISE trainees for their excellent presentations at the conference and to Yobet, Yadiel and Joel for their outstanding work! Well done, everyone!



Yadiel Rivera



Yobet Pérez



Joel Orengo



Awards Ceremony



Yobet Pérez & Sepúlveda's lab members



OUTREACH

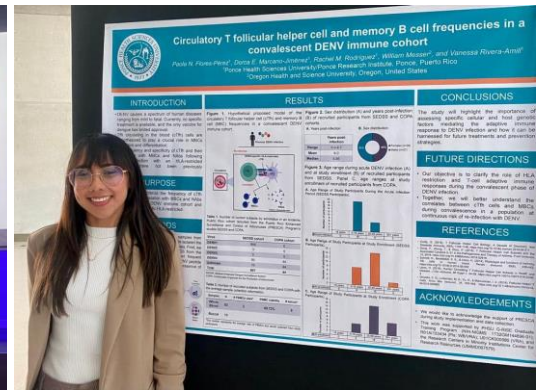
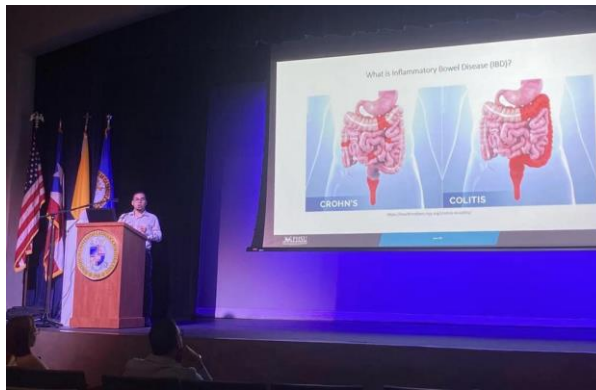
Encouraging young students and supporting high school research is one of the things that our trainees enjoy most. On May 24, Paola Flores (2nd year G-RISE trainee), volunteered to act as judge in the presentation of scientific research proposals at the Thomas Armstrong Toro Specialized School of Science and Mathematics. The task consisted of evaluating students' proposals, asking them questions about their projects, and ranking these.

Good job, Paola!



THE PUERTO RICO SOCIETY OF MICROBIOLOGISTS 66TH ANNUAL MEETING 2023

The 66th annual meeting of the Puerto Rico Society of Microbiologists (PRSM) took place on June 8-9, 2023, at PUCPR in Ponce. During the event, Jonathan López, a 4th year G-RISE trainee under the guidance of Dr. Caroline Appleyard, delivered an outstanding oral presentation titled "The use of probiotic and vitamin D to ameliorate acute TNBS-induced colitis in mice." Furthermore, Paola Flores, a 2nd year G-RISE trainee mentored by Dr. Vanessa Rivera-Amill, showcased her research through her poster presentation titled "Circulatory T follicular helper cell and memory B cell frequencies in a convalescent DENV immune cohort". Both received a conference fellowship. We are delighted to congratulate them on their excellent presentations at the conference. Keep up the excellent work, and may you continue to inspire others in their research endeavors. Well done!



EXTERNAL TRAINING UPDATES AND FEEDBACK

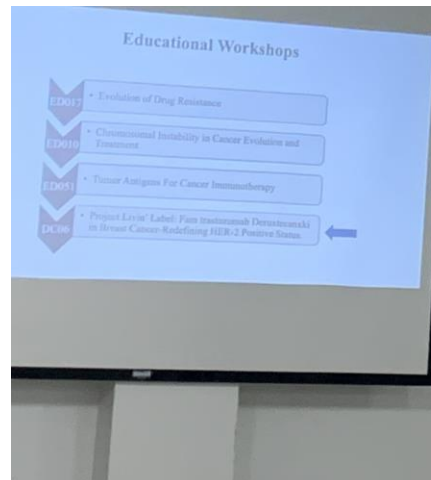
As part of our G-RISE Program's funding opportunities, our trainees have the chance to receive support for External Training, which aids them in acquiring new techniques and advancing their thesis projects. During the session held on May 26, G-RISE trainees Yobet Pérez (3rd year), Yadiel Rivera (2nd year), Elvin Hernández (2nd year), Joel Orengo (1st year), and Luinet Meléndez (1st year) shared updates and feedback with their peers regarding their recent experiences attending workshops and trainings at The Jackson Lab and the AACR Meeting 2023. Congratulations to everyone on delivering excellent presentations!

GRADUATION 2023



Dr. Lubriel Sambolin

Our former G-RISE trainee, Lubriel Sambolin, earned his PhD degree in June 2022 and is currently a Postdoctoral Associate at The Jackson Laboratory in Maine, USA. While we acknowledge that Lubriel could not attend his graduation ceremony in person (on June 7, 2023), we celebrate his accomplishments and extend our warmest wishes for his ongoing success in future endeavors!



(L-R) Elvin Hernández, Joel Orengo & Luinet Meléndez



“Foundational Training in the Laboratory Mouse, and Introduction to Surgery” workshop

A big thank you to The Jackson Lab. for the "Foundational Training in the Laboratory Mouse and Introduction to Surgery" workshop given on May 25! Some of our G-RISE trainees, graduate students, faculty & staff members attended this activity where they learned about biomethods (routine handling, restraint, IP, and subcutaneous injections), anatomy of euthanized mice, organ/tissue collection of euthanized mice and surgical procedures including vasectomy, castration, and adrenalectomy. They all found the workshop to be very informative!



G-RISE LAB WORKSHOP-SAMPLE PREPARATION WORKFLOW

By: Grissell Tirado, PhD (G-RISE Lab Supervisor)

On Friday May 12, the G-RISE Lab held the workshop, “Let’s Talk Sample Prep: Methods to Optimize and Fine Tune Your Workflows for Single Cell Applications” by Elle James from Miltenyi Biotec. The workshop consisted of a discussion session which provided the RISE mentees the opportunity to gain knowledge about approaches for effective sample preparation workflows and applications in research. She discussed various techniques and reagents available for isolation of viable single cells for culture, enhanced methods for sample preservation and discussed the importance of sample cleanup for downstream applications. In addition, she discussed the advantages of using a magnetic-bead filtration system for cell separation and selection. The attendees had the opportunity to see the gentleMACS Tissue Dissociator while she explained the advantages of automated tissue dissociation in applications such as tumor microenvironment and studies of blood immune cells. Other topics discussed included: solutions for tissue storage and specialized cell-culture media. During the presentation, trainees had the opportunity to ask questions about these techniques and reagents and to inquire as to their applicability for their own research projects.



CLASS OF 2023!

Congratulations to our former RISE trainees, Alexandra Aquino, and Orlando Torres, on their graduation! Alexandra will be working as a postdoc at PHSU with Dr. Saavedra, studying how the co-inactivation of mitotic kinases, TTK and Nek2, suppresses metastasis and restores the response to Palbociclib in patients with triple-negative breast cancer. Meanwhile, Orlando will be conducting postdoctoral research in Dr. Cristian Bravo's laboratory of fear and pleasure at the UPR Medical Sciences Campus.



Our faculty and staff are very proud of you! We wish you great success in your future endeavors. Bravo!



SUMMER PROGRAM IN NEUROSCIENCE, ETHICS, AND SURVIVAL (SPINES)

We are glad to announce that our 3rd year G-RISE trainee, Nashaly Irizarry, has been accepted into the prestigious Summer Program in Neuroscience, Ethics, and Survival (SPINES). This esteemed program, taking place from June 11 to July 5, 2023, is a 3-week course held at the Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL) in Falmouth, Massachusetts. It is specifically designed for graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and early career faculty, aiming to enhance their research careers in neuroscience.

Nashaly has already had the opportunity to present her research project in a NeuroBlitz session, where she shared her insights and findings with fellow participants.

Congratulations, Nashaly, well deserved!

More information about this program can be accessed through the following link:

https://www.mbl.edu/_/js/summer-program-neuroscience



G-RISE 11TH PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE RETREAT 2023

Our RISE Program held its 11th Annual Philosophy of Science Retreat on May 31-June 2, 2023, at Copamarina Beach Resort & Spa in Guánica, PR. We selected *Promoting Wellness for Graduate Student Success*. Our retreat goals were to: Promote Holistic Wellness; Provide trainees with valuable information related to wellness resources; Explore healthier life tools that will help trainees succeed in their academic, personal, and professional life; Help trainees self-reflect about their current practices for Wellness; Encourage trainees to identify additional resources to ensure their well-being; Share our faculties own personal approaches for Wellness.

The agenda included the following talks: *The Basics of Wellness* by our G-RISE Program Director, Dr. Caroline Appleyard; *Managing your Wellness with a Mental Health Professional* by Clinical Psychologist, Dr. Bárbara Barros; *LiberArte (Painting Workshop)* by artist Frankie Rodríguez; *Beach Walk & That's a Stretch! (Chikung)* sessions by Clinical Psychologist and holistic Dr. Legna Vargas; *Nutrition Self Care* by nutritionist, Juliette Elmusa & *Group presentations (Identifying resources for Wellness in your community)* by G-RISE trainees.

The group also gathered for Interactive Activities and games with the aim of teambuilding. On the final day, trainees were teamed up for the *Group presentations (Identifying resources for Wellness in your community)* with the objective of sharing resources from their different communities.

We received very good feedback as we were able to hold our retreat in person again!



Like us on Facebook

PHSU RISE Graduate Training Program