

Fall 2022

## Dean's Report- Fall 2022

Marina K. Holz

*New York Medical College*

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**GSBMS DEAN'S REPORT****Fall 2022****NEW YORK MEDICAL COLLEGE**

A MEMBER OF THE TOURO COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

**Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences**

Dear students, faculty, alumni and friends:

Welcome to the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBMS) at New York Medical College (NYMC). We start the new 2022-2023 academic year with a celebration of our new name, which reflects our mission of graduate training and research in many disciplines of biomedical sciences. We extend a warm welcome to new students and new faculty members—we are looking forward to getting to know you. In this issue of the Dean's Report, we recap the May 2022 GSBMS Commencement, Hooding and Awards Ceremony, and highlight changes to the Accelerated Interdisciplinary Biomedical Sciences Master's Program (AMP) Curriculum. We are pleased to introduce the first five-year Strategic Plan for GSBMS and are grateful to the faculty and staff who worked to develop and formalize it. Please read the profiles of our featured faculty, student and alumni, as they share a little about themselves and their journey at NYMC. Have a productive and successful fall semester and enjoy the fall holidays.



Sincerely,

Marina K. Holz, Ph.D.  
 Dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences  
 Interim Chair of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology  
 Professor of Cell Biology and Anatomy

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## GSBMS and SOM Establish Conditional Admittance Agreement

The GSBMS and the School of Medicine (SOM) have entered into an agreement to guarantee conditional admittance for students in the Accelerated Interdisciplinary Biomedical Sciences Master's Program (AMP) of the GSBMS, or students who have completed this program, and who seek admission to the NYMC SOM, if they meet certain academic performance benchmarks. [Read more about the agreement.](#)



## GSBMS Officially Renamed to Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences

After nearly 60 years, the Graduate School of Basic Medical Sciences will now be known as the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, undergoing a name change that properly reflects the variety of disciplines within the school. The Board of Trustees approved the name change that the school adopted for the start of the 2022-2023 academic school year. [Read the full article.](#)

## GSBMS Celebrates Renaming and Welcomes New Students

A bright, sunny summer day ushered in the first official class of the newly renamed GSBMS on August 11 with a celebration luncheon. NYMC leadership and faculty were on hand to greet the incoming class of M.S. and Ph.D. students including members of the clinical sciences laboratory, dental linker program and accelerated master's program

cohorts. [Read the full article and view the photo gallery.](#)



## Celebrating the Class of 2022



### ***GSBMS Commencement Ceremonies***

The GSBMS celebrated the achievements of its graduating students in person for the first time in two years on Tuesday, May 24, starting with the GSBMS Awards and Hooding Ceremony. The ceremony was held in the Nevins Auditorium, MEC, where students were joined by faculty and guests as we honored the achievements of our outstanding graduates. Speakers included valedictorians Brendan Marshall, M.S. '22, and Sina Dadafarin, M.D./Ph.D. '22, followed by faculty speaker Marietta Lee,

Ph.D., professor of biochemistry and molecular biology.

The following awards were presented:

- The Martha Lucas Pate, Ph.D. Award – Catherine D'Addario, Ph.D. '22
- The GSBMS Graduate Faculty Council Award (M.D/Ph.D. Degree) – Sina Dadafarin, M.D./Ph.D. '22
- The Bart O'Connell Excellence in Cancer Research Award – Sina Dadafarin, M.D./Ph.D. '22
- Graduate Faculty Council Award, M.S. Literature Review – Brenden Marshall, M.S. '22
- Graduate Faculty Council Award, M.S. Thesis – Danielle Quaranto, M.S.'22
- The GSBMS Community Service Award – Jessica Adams, M.S.'22

Dean Holz made concluding remarks including the recognition of several long-serving, faculty members who retired this year including Francis Belloni, Ph.D., professor emeritus of physiology, Ernest Lee, Ph.D., NYMC alumni chair in biochemistry and molecular biology, Susan Olson, Ph.D., professor of biochemistry and

molecular biology, and Joseph Wu, Ph.D., professor of biochemistry and molecular biology, thanking them for their “significant impact on the education, research, mentorship and service here at the Graduate School”. The ceremonial hooding of Ph.D. students and recognition of the GSBMS graduates of the Class of 2022 followed, with each graduate given a special gift from the Graduate School.



The official Commencement for the GSBMS and SHSP took place under the tent behind Sunshine Cottage that afternoon, with Catherine D’Addario, Ph.D. ‘22, giving the Student Address. The Commencement speaker was Sherlita Amler, Ph.D., commissioner of health in Westchester County Department of Health, adjunct professor of public health, clinical associate professor of pediatrics and senior fellow in the Center for Disaster Medicine at NYMC. Dean Holz presented the candidates for the degrees Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy of the GSBMS Class of 2022 and Edward C. Halperin, M.D., M.A., chancellor and chief executive officer, shared his remarks and then conferred the degrees upon the Class of 2022.



[View the GSBMS and SHSP Commencement Ceremony Video](#)

[View the GSBMS Awards Photo Gallery](#)

[View the GSBMS/SHSP Commencement Photo Gallery](#)

## GSBMS Orientation Days

Throughout the summer, the GSBMS Office of the Dean organized several events and orientations sessions for incoming classes of several programs – Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), AMP, Clinical Laboratory Sciences (CLS), Dental Linker (DLP), and two-year Master of Science (M.S.) to both inform and welcome incoming students. Faculty and representatives from various administrative departments met with

students during three separate days of orientation sessions to provide important information on everything from internet access to library resources. Returning students made everyone feel welcome by participating in planned luncheons and meet and greet sessions, which gave the new students the opportunity to mingle with their classmates and ask questions of the more seasoned, returning students. The GSBMS Office of the Dean would like to thank all faculty and staff from participating academic and administrative departments and our generous students for their contributions to this year's highly successful orientation sessions.



## Introducing the 2022-2023 Executive Council of the Graduate Student Association

The [Graduate Student Association \(GSA\)](#) held its annual elections, continuing an important and long-held tradition of GSBMS student advocacy and representation in college affairs and committees. The GSA also organizes and coordinates the Graduate Student Research Forum (GSRF), an important, annual event showcasing and supporting

student research while providing members of the college and the broader scientific community the opportunity to learn about the research work done by the students in the GSBMS. This year will mark the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the GSRF.

This year's council members include:

President, **Sabrina Martinez**, center, Basic Medical Sciences (M.S.) Class of 2022; Vice President, **Christopher Lu**, far right, Basic Medical Sciences (M.S.) Class of 2024; Chair of the Graduate Student Research Forum, **Peter Sheu**, second from left, Basic Medical Sciences (M.S.) Class of 2022; Vice Chair of the Graduate Student Research Forum (GSRF), **MD Ai Azim**, second from right, Integrated Ph.D. (Ph.D.) Class of 2027; Chair of Community Building, **Neha Ali**, third from right, Cell Biology (M.S.) Class of 2024; Treasurer, **Alka Munshi**, far left, Basic Medical Sciences (M.S.) Class of 2023; Secretary, **Danait Yemane**, third from left, Basic Medical Sciences (M.S.) Class of 2023.

The Faculty Advisor for the GSA is Carl I. Thompson, Ph.D., professor of physiology and the Faculty Advisor for the GSRF is John T. Pinto, Ph.D., professor of biochemistry and of medicine.

“As the President of the GSA, I plan to continue the goals of creating a rich and inviting community for graduate students. In addition, I hope to bring students together to create new events on top of our older events and to give more leadership and community-building opportunities for students to be involved while studying here at NYMC,” Sabrina Martinez, M.S. '23. I am excited to take on the responsibilities as president of the GSA and to collaborate not only with the new E-board but with the first-year students entering their first year here at NYMC.”

Follow the GSA on Instagram [@NYMC\\_GSA](#).

## New Accelerated Interdisciplinary Biomedical Sciences Master's Program (AMP) Curriculum

### *Organ systems designed learning*

Since its inception, the AMP curriculum has provided its students with a combination of courses from both the GSBMS and the SOM. This year, the medical school has completely redesigned its curriculum transforming it from discipline-based to an integrated format, integrating the basic sciences with organ systems-based learning. The AMP curriculum has adapted to this new format, with AMP students learning side-by-side with medical students within portions of the medical school classes, while also taking Physiology and Strategies for Effective Scientific Writing in the GSBMS. According to AMP Program Director, **Brian B. Ratliff, Ph.D.**, associate professor of physiology and of medicine, “The changing of the AMP curriculum offers AMP students a deeper immersion into the first-year curriculum of the M.D. program at NYMC. This deeper assimilation into the M1 curriculum provides the AMP student the opportunity to not only showcase their potential to flourish in a medical school environment but to also build a strong foundation for attending medical school in the coming years.” [View the new Accelerate Master's Program curriculum.](#)



## GSBMS Five-Year Strategic Plan

### *Designing the future of the GSBMS*

After months of meetings, discussions, recommendations and feedback, the new GSBMS five-year Strategic Plan has been approved and finalized. The GSBMS looks forward to implementing the new plans and strategies developed by the team whose goal is to strengthen the programs, grow of our faculty, and expand the research and



the continued excellence of the education provided to all GSBMS students. Thanks to all taskforce members and a special thanks for the leadership of Tetyana Cheairs, M.D., M.S.P.H., assistant dean for Ph.D. programs and assistant professor of pathology, in this important endeavor.

GSBMS Strategic Planning Taskforce Members: Tetyana Cheairs, M.D., M.S.P.H., Kenneth M. Lerea, Ph.D., assistant dean for M.S. programs and professor of cell biology and anatomy, Dana G. Mordue, Ph.D., vice chancellor for Middle States Accreditation and assistant professor of

microbiology and immunology, Victor G. Garcia, Ph.D. assistant professor of pharmacology, Sachin Gupte, Ph.D., program director and professor of pharmacology, Marcello Rota, Ph.D. research assistant professor of physiology, Joseph Wu, Ph.D., professor of biochemistry and molecular biology, Patric K. Stanton, Ph.D., professor of cell biology and anatomy, Carl I. Thompson, Ph.D. program director and professor of physiology, Carol A. Carbonaro, Ph.D. program director of the Clinical Laboratory Sciences program and professor of pathology, Catherine A. Yankou, M.P.H., GSBMS recruiter and advisor, and Tara E. Seymour, M.S. '19, Ph.D. Class of 2023.

## Living History

### ***Edward J. Messina, Ph.D. '73, Professor Emeritus of Physiology, Researcher and "The Why Child"***

His father had it right, calling him "The Why Child". From his early childhood, **Edward J. Messina, Ph.D. '73**, professor emeritus of physiology and founder of the GSA, was full of curiosity, always asking question after question about everything around him. His mother called him "The Double Hit" as he pushed the limits of their patience with his desire to understand how things worked.

Growing up in Brooklyn, New York, he was an observant child, learning from his environment and the interesting people in his large, extended family. His grandfather was a renowned chef, his mother, a housewife, and he watched as his father developed his career starting as an upholsterer, to becoming a successful designer of his own furniture, even designing the machinery used in making that furniture. In early childhood he developed a love of horses, observing the horse drawn carts on the street. He befriended "Tony" the horse pulling the cart that collected newspapers and metal for the war effort and even at six years old recognized that the horse pulling the Borden Milk cart had intelligence, independently stopping at the appropriate homes on his street as it made its way through the neighborhood. He also loved riding the ponies at Coney





Island during visits there with his father and dreamed of one day owning a horse of his own. [Read the full article on Dr. Messina.](#)

## FACULTY FEATURE



### **Julie S. Di Martino, Ph.D., assistant professor of cell biology and anatomy**

**Julie S. Di Martino, Ph.D.**, newly appointed assistant professor of cell biology and anatomy, originates from the southwest region of France from Villeneuve Sur Lot. Dr. Di Martino received her college education at the University of Bordeaux, where she earned a bachelor's degree in cell biology, a Master of Science in Genetics, and a Ph.D. in cell biology and pathophysiology.

In 2009, Dr. Di Martino joined the laboratory of Christophe Cullin, Ph.D., Professor of Genetics, University of Bordeaux, France, as an undergraduate trainee. She discovered the fascinating world of working with Yeast. Dr. Cullin mentored her and facilitated the discovery of her passion for the unknown and gave her the strength to pursue an academic career. [Read the full article on Dr. Di Martino.](#)

## STUDENT FEATURE

### **Jacob Hehir, M.D./Ph.D. Candidate**

After growing up in Southern California, M.D./Ph.D. candidate **Jacob Hehir**, M.D./Ph.D. candidate, went to school at the University of Chicago where he studied neurobiology and music. It was there that he had his first lab experience and gained a love for science. Jacob was accepted into the SOM at NYMC in 2018 and spent his first summer working at the Westchester Medical Center Balance Center under Katrina Stidham, M.D. He presented his summer research with classmate Nadera Rhaman, M.D. '22 at the Medical Student Research Forum (MSRF) in February 2020 and won the inaugural Arthur Karmen, M.D. Award. He loved having the opportunity to run clinical research projects and afterward wanted to grow more as a scientist. With support from his partner, family, peers and mentor, he applied to the M.D./Ph.D. program during his second year. "I am so grateful to have been accepted, as this program has given me some of the best and most important experiences in my life. Throughout this program, I have grown as a student, as a researcher, and as a person. I have had the privilege to study under Jonathan A. N. Fisher, Ph.D., assistant professor of physiology, who has been an incredible source of knowledge, motivation, and wisdom both on and off the bench." Current research is centered on testing the effects of low-



intensity focused ultrasound (FUS) on the activity of cortical neurons. The goal is to characterize the neuromodulatory effects of targeted FUS on parts of the mouse Auditory Cortex and contribute towards this technology becoming a therapeutic for conditions such as tinnitus and treatment-resistant epilepsy. He presented this work at the [2022 NYC Neuromodulation Conference](#) and will also be presenting at the Society for Neuroscience (SfN) [Neuroscience 2022](#) meeting this November. Jacob notes, “One of my favorite parts of studying at NYMC has been the people I meet. When I leave the lab, I can always count on playing pick-up basketball, volleyball, and even disc golf with students at the Touro College of Dental Medicine at NYMC, SOM, and the School of Health Sciences and Practice Department of Physical Therapy. Whether I’m running experiments, playing sports, or even singing in a band made up of students from the music club, those I have met here at NYMC have become incredible friends,” said Mr. Hehir.

## GSBMS FACTS AND FIGURES

**184** STUDENTS  
(As of Spring 2022)

### Academic Programs:

- M.S. Interdisciplinary Biomedical Sciences (General 2-year and Accelerated)
- M.S. and Ph.D. in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
- M.S. and Ph.D. in Cell Biology
- M.S. and Ph.D. in Microbiology and Immunology
- M.S. and Ph.D. in Pathology
- M.S. and Ph.D. in Pharmacology
- M.S. and Ph.D. in Physiology
- Biomedical Science and Management (BSM) Master’s in six disciplines
- M.S. in Clinical Laboratory Sciences
- Dual degree program — M.D./Ph.D. with the NYMC School of Medicine

**\$1,255**  
TUITION PER CREDIT



CAMPUS SIZE **54** ACRES



**~ 126,000**  
square feet



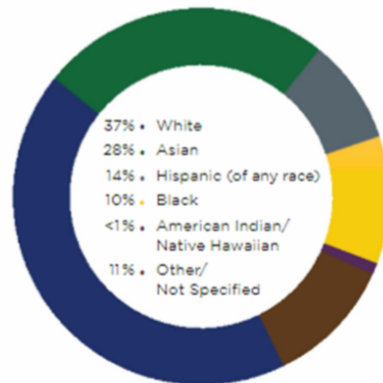
**100** FACULTY MEMBERS

**67% FEMALE**  
**33% MALE**

### GSBMS Diversity Numbers:

- 24% of GSBMS students self-reported as part of a group currently underrepresented in the sciences

GSBMS students self-reported as members of the following groups:



Visit the GSBMS online



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