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**APS Awards \$131,100 to Its 2015 STEP-UP Undergraduate Research Fellows**  
*23 Fellows in the 2015 Cohort*

Bethesda, Md. (May 20, 2015)—The American Physiological Society (APS) is pleased to announce its 2015 Short-Term Education Program for Underrepresented Persons (STEP-UP) Fellows. Fellowship winners spend the summer in the laboratory of an established scientist and APS member or other biomedical researcher. The STEP-UP program recruits undergraduate students nationwide from disadvantaged backgrounds and from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups and students with disabilities to work with researchers in the [National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases](#) (NIDDK) mission areas of diabetes, endocrinology and metabolic disease; digestive diseases and nutrition; and kidney, urologic and hematologic diseases.

**2015 STEP-UP Fellows:**  
(Research hosts are listed under each Fellow's name)

**Asebot Abebe** – *University of Maryland, Baltimore*  
**Udayan Guha, MD, PhD** – *National Cancer Institute*

**RussL Altabtabaee** – *Arizona State University*  
**Layla Al-Nakkash, PhD** – *Midwestern University at Glendale, Arizona*

**Chasy Amado** – *University of Guam*  
**Chris S. Lobban, PhD** – *University of Guam*

**Benchara Boualam** – *University of Maryland, College Park*  
**Lijie Grace Zhang, PhD** – *The George Washington University*

**Marcus Byrd** – *Georgetown University*  
**Carolyn M. Ecelbarger, PhD** – *Georgetown University*

**Rosemary Carter** – *Rochester Institute of Technology*  
**Daniel M. Merfeld, PhD and Torin K. Clark, PhD** – *Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary*

**Patrice Dixon** – *Trinity Washington University*  
**Carolyn M. Ecelbarger, PhD** – *Georgetown University*

**Edgar Domenech** – *Northeastern University*  
**Richard Noel, PhD** – *Ponce Health Sciences University*

**Dave Enriquez** – *University of California, Riverside*  
**Margarita C. Curras-Collazo** – *University of California, Riverside*

**Julian Gaitán** – *University of Virginia*  
**Allison Meni, PhD** – *The George Washington University*

**Fatema Jahra** – *St. John's University*  
**Marcos F. Vidal Melo, MD, PhD** – *Massachusetts General Hospital*

**Ananna Kazi** – *Binghamton University*  
**Frederick Kaskel, MD, PhD** – *Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University*

**Emily Leboffe** – *Susquehanna University*  
**Tooraj Mirshahi, PhD** – *Sigfried and Janet Weis Center for Research at the Geisinger Clinic*

**Kayla Lee** – *Saint Leo University*  
**Erin Keen-Rhinehart, PhD** – *Susquehanna University*

**Debby Lee** – *University of California, Merced*  
**Rudy M. Ortiz, PhD** – *University of California, Merced*

**Meaghan Menth** – *Seattle Pacific University*  
**Wendy Thomas, PhD** – *University of Washington*

**Tessa Muss** – *Harvard College*  
**Lijie Grace Zhang, PhD** – *The George Washington University*

**Diana Nguyen** – *Clemson University, South Carolina*  
**Eric Lazartigues, PhD** – *Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center New Orleans*

**Tomide Owolabi** – *University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign*  
**Michael De Lisio, PhD** – *University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign*

**Ashlee Seldomridge** – *West Virginia University*  
**Paul D. Chantler, PhD** – *West Virginia University*

**Erica Steele** – *Rochester Institute of Technology*  
**Tracy Anthony, PhD** – *Rutgers University of New Jersey*

**Lean Teodoro** – Northern Marianas College  
**Patricia Coleman** – Northern Marianas College

**Meilinn Tram** –University of New Mexico  
**Andrew Wolfe, PhD** – Johns Hopkins University

Fellows are selected based on academic merit, a personal statement, resume/CV and references. Each Fellow receives a \$4,500 stipend during the 8–12-week fellowship and an additional \$1,200 in travel funds to present his or her research at the NIDDK STEP-UP Summer Research Symposium, August 2–6, 2015, in Bethesda at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Research hosts receive \$500 for student lab supplies.

STEP-UP Fellows participate in hands-on research and learn to develop a hypothesis, design and troubleshoot experiments, collect and analyze data, and write and present results. In addition, Fellows have the opportunity to:

- network with other APS undergraduate Fellows interested in biomedical research,
- explore the nature of research and the scientific process,
- investigate career options and what it takes to find career success,
- pose their career questions to members of the APS Porter Physiology Development and Minority Affairs Committee and Advisory Board, and
- learn about common ethical issues in figure and text preparation.

*The STEP-UP program is supported by a grant from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK; 1 R25 DK95492-01).*

To set up an interview with one of the Fellows or a research host or to find out more about APS and its educational and award program initiatives, [visit the APS website](#) or contact [Brooke Bruthers](#), APS Senior Program Manager, Diversity Programs (301-634-7226), or [Melinda Lowy](#), APS Senior Program Manager, Higher Education Programs (301-634-7787), or [visit the APS STEP-UP website](#).

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**About the APS Education Department:** *The APS supports a variety of educational activities, including programs and fellowships to encourage the development of young scientists at the*

*undergraduate and graduate levels, with a particular focus on women and underrepresented minorities. APS also supports refresher courses and teaching awards promoting continued excellence in education at the professional level. In May 2004, APS won the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring (PAESMEM).*

**About the APS:** *Physiology is the study of how molecules, cells, tissues and organs function in health and disease. Established in 1887, the American Physiological Society (APS) was the first U.S. society in the biomedical sciences field. The Society represents more than 11,000 members and publishes 14 peer-reviewed journals with a worldwide readership.*