

# TERRY JARIANNA TORRES-CRUZ

120 Buckhout Lab, University Park PA 16802 🏠  
(309)569-0242 📞  
tjt33@psu.edu / terryjari@gmail.com ✉️  
terrytorrescruz.com 🌐

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## EDUCATION

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**Ph.D. in Plant Pathology and Biogeochemistry** | The Pennsylvania State University

Expected 2023 | Advisor: Dr. David M. Geiser

**M.Sc. in Biology** | Western Illinois University

2015–2016 | Advisor: Dr. Andrea Porrás-Alfaro

**B.S. in Biotechnology Engineering** | Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica

2010–2015

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## PUBLICATIONS

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**1. Torres-Cruz TJ**, Cofer TM, Ré L, Johnson J, Vaughn A, Skvarla MJ, and Geiser DM. Insect visitation to *Xyris* sp. (Xyridaceae) in Guyana and insect interactions in a potential mimicry system between *X. surinamensis* and the fungus *Fusarium xyrophilum*. *In prep.*

**2. Torres-Cruz TJ**, Whitaker BK, Proctor RH, Broders K, Laraba I, Kim H-S, Brown DW, O'Donnell K, Estrada-Rodríguez TL, Lee Y-H, Cheong K, Wallace EC, McGee CT, Kang S, Geiser DM. 2022. FUSARIUM-ID v.3.0: An updated downloadable resource for *Fusarium* species identification. [Plant Disease](#) 106:1610-1616.

**3.** O'Donnell K, Whitaker BK, Laraba I, Proctor RH, Brown DW, Broders K, Kim H-S, McCormick SP, Busman M, Aoki T, **Torres-Cruz TJ**, and Geiser DM. 2022. DNA sequence-based identification of *Fusarium*: A work in progress. [Plant Disease](#) 106:1597-1609.

**4.** Geiser, DM *et al.* Phylogenomic Analysis of a 55.1-kb 19-Gene Dataset Resolves a Monophyletic *Fusarium* that Includes the *Fusarium solani* Species Complex. [Phytopathology](#) 11(7):1064–1079.

\*co-signer of [Letter to the editor](#)

**5. Torres-Cruz TJ**, Porrás-Alfaro A, Caimi NA, Nwabologu O, Strach EW, Read KJH, Young JM, Buecher DC, Northup DE. 2019. Are microclimate conditions in El Malpais National Monument caves in New Mexico, USA suitable for *Pseudogymnoascus* growth? [International Journal of Speleology](#) 48:191–202.

**6. Torres-Cruz TJ**, Hesse C, Kuske CR, Porrás-Alfaro A. 2018. Presence and distribution of heavy metal tolerant fungi in surface soils of a temperate pine forest. [Applied Soil Ecology](#) 131:66–74.

**7. Torres-Cruz TJ**, Howell AJ, Reibold RH, McHugh TA, Eickhoff MA, Reed SC. 2018. Species-specific nitrogenase activity in lichen-dominated biological soil crust from the Colorado Plateau, USA. [Plant and Soil](#) 429:113–125.

**8.** González-Chávez MC, **Torres-Cruz TJ**, Albarrán-Sánchez S, Porrás-Alfaro A, Carrillo-González R, Carrillo-López LM. 2018. Microscopic characterization of orchid mycorrhizal fungi: *Scleroderma* as a putative novel orchid mycorrhizal fungus of *Vanilla* in different crop systems. [Mycorrhiza](#) 28:147–157.

**9. Torres-Cruz TJ**, Almatruk M, Tobias T, Hesse C, Desirò A, Benucci GM, Kuske CR, Bonito G,

Stajich J, Dunlap C, Porras-Alfaro A. 2017. *Bifiguratus adelaidae* gen. nov, sp. nov., a new lineage of Mucoromycotina with endophytic and soil-dwelling strains. [Mycologia](#) 109(3):363–378.

10. Hesse C, **Torres-Cruz TJ**, Tobias TB, Al-Matruk M, Porras-Alfaro A, Kuske, CR. 2016. Ribosomal RNA gene detection and targeted culture of novel nitrogen-responsive fungal taxa from temperate pine forest soil. [Mycologia](#) 108(6):1082–1090.

11. Porras-Alfaro A, Ndinga Muniania C, Hamm PS, **Torres-Cruz TJ**, Kuske CR. 2017. Fungal diversity, community structure and their functional roles in desert soils. *In*: Steven, B (ed). The Biology of Arid and Initial Soils. [DeGruyter](#). Germany. \*Book chapter

12. Aguilar-Ulloa W, Arce-Acuña P, Galiano-Murillo F, **Torres-Cruz TJ**. 2016. Aislamiento de esporas y evaluación de métodos de inoculación en la producción de micorrizas en cultivos trampa. [Tecnología en Marcha](#). Edición Especial Biocontrol:5–14.

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## RESEARCH AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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### Graduate Research Assistant | January 2018 – present

The Pennsylvania State University | Supervisor: Dr. David M. Geiser

*Fusarium* systematics and phylogenetics, including field work in remote areas of Guyana describing a putative floral mimicry system by *Fusarium xyrophilum*.

### Teaching Assistant | Fall 2019 & 2021

The Pennsylvania State University | Supervisor: Dr. David M. Geiser

Teaching assistant for the class PPEM425: Biology of Fungi. Duties included grading of lab reports and exams, preparing materials and fungal cultures for laboratory sessions, and preparing questions for weekly quizzes.

### Laboratory and Field Technician | February – December 2017

US Geological Survey | Supervisor: Dr. Sasha C. Reed

Field work conducted in Puerto Rico, Moab (UT) and Los Alamos (NM); involving the collection of soils, biological soil crusts (BSC) and vegetation surveys, in projects related to biogeochemical effects of elevated temperatures in drylands and forests and BSC restoration.

### Graduate Research Assistant | January 2015 – December 2016

Western Illinois University | Supervisor: Dr. Andrea Porras-Alfaro

Isolation and molecular characterization of endophytic and soil-dwelling fungal species, including characterization of a novel taxon in the Mucoromycotina subphylum and analysis of 454 sequencing data to describe bacterial communities associated with the fungus.

### Biotechnology Engineering Assistant Coordinator | January – December 2014

Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica | Supervisor: Johnny Peraza, M.Sc.

Administrative assistant tasks related to the career of Biotechnology Engineering and optimization of protocols for the molecular biology laboratory course.

### **Undergraduate Research Assistant | July – December 2014**

Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica | Supervisor: Dr. Miguel Rojas

Administrative tasks for the implementation of the project: “Establishing Gamma Irradiation Capabilities at the Costa Rican Institute of Technology (ITCR) for the Use of Radiation Processing Technology”.

### **Undergraduate Teaching Assistant | July – December 2013**

Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica | Supervisor: Claudia Zúñiga, M.Sc.

Grading, class preparation, and update of resources for the class of General Biology.

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## **MENTORING EXPERIENCE**

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Training of undergraduate students in laboratory skills in the Geiser lab

- Nolan Buchanan (Spring 2022)
- Mikhyle Fehlman (Spring 2022)

Training of undergraduate students in field work during trip to Guyana (December 2021 – January 2022)

- Alexis Vaughn (University of Guyana)
- Lauren Ré (recently graduated undergrad)
- Jack Johnson (recently graduated undergrad)

Organization of Tropical Studies REU Program Field Research Mentor

- Zia Crytser (Summer 2022; University of Guam)
- Julianna Harden (Summer 2022; Howard University)
- Kianna Burtle (Summer 2021; Texas State University)
- Tania Estrada (Summer 2021; Humboldt State University)

Mentoring of visiting undergraduate student to Geiser lab at Penn State

- Daniela Chacón (Fall 2019; Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica)

Científico Latino Graduate School Mentorship Initiative (CL-GSMI)

- Isabel Torres (Spring 2019; University of Texas at El Paso)

Field and lab training of visiting undergraduate student to USGS Southwest Biological Science Center

- Mackenzie A. Eickhoff (March 2017; Colorado Mesa University)

Coordinator of undergraduate student training on culturing, molecular and aseptic techniques in Dr. Porrás-Alfaro's Lab at Western Illinois University.

- Brittany Doyle (Spring 2016)
- Eliese Potocek (Spring and summer 2016)
- Taylor Burgess (Spring 2016)

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## SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS

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### Scholarships

- Student Leader Scholarship. 2021. Penn State Student Affairs US\$1,350.
- Ardeth and Norman Frisbey International Graduate Student Award. 2020. Penn State Global Programs US\$2,400.
- Popp Endowment Award. 2020. Penn State PPEM US\$2,000.
- Jose de la Torre Scholarship. 2018. Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences US\$1,000.
- Fund for Excellence in Graduate Recruitment (FEGR). 2018. Penn State PPEM US\$3,000.
- Internship Incentive Fund (Award FI-005-14) (San José, Costa Rica). Funding for internship at Western Illinois University on the “Isolation and molecular characterization of extremophilic fungi” at Dr. Andrea Porras-Alfaro’s laboratory. Ministerio de Ciencia y Tecnología – Consejo Nacional para Investigaciones Científicas y Tecnológicas US\$2,500.

### Research Awards

- Indigo Ag Phytobiomes Fellowship. 2021. Penn State Microbiome Center ~**US\$30,000**.
- “Give a DAWG a bone” Award for microbiome sequencing. Penn State Microbiome Center **US\$5,000**.
- Lewis and Clark Fund for Exploration and Field Research. 2021. American Philosophical Society. **US\$5,000**.
- James F & Marilyn Tammen Memorial Endowment to support travel to Guyana. 2021. Penn State Department of Plant Pathology and Environmental Microbiology (PPEM) US\$1,300.
- Clark T Rogerson Research Award to support field trip to Guyana. 2019. Mycological Society of America US\$1,000.
- Larry J. Jordan Memorial Endowment to support field trip to Guyana. 2018. Penn State PPEM US\$1,600.
- Wilderness First Aid Training Grant. 2019. Penn State Global Safety Office US\$300.
- International Travel Fund (Award 08-14) (Cartago, Costa Rica). Travel to Western Illinois University during internship. Vicerrectoría de Vida Estudiantil y Servicios Académicos–Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica US\$700.

### Conference Travel Awards

- Leonard J. Francl Memorial Endowment to support participation at the Mycological Society of America. 2022. Penn State PPEM US\$500.
- James F & Marilyn Tammen Memorial Endowment to support participation at the 10<sup>th</sup> Latin American Mycology Congress. 2020. Penn State PPEM US\$800.
- Leonard J. Francl Memorial Endowment to support participation at the Mycological Society of America. 2020. Penn State PPEM US\$1,348.
- Black Research Fund Travel Award to attend the 51st Congress of the Southern African Society for Plant Pathology in Langebaan, South Africa on Jan 20-24, 2019. Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences US\$500.
- Leonard J. Francl Memorial Endowment to support participation in the 51<sup>st</sup> Congress of the Southern African Society for Plant Pathology in South Africa. 2018. Penn State PPEM US\$1,600.

- Herbert Cole Jr. Fund to support participation at the International Mycological Congress (IMC11) in San Juan, PR. 2018. Penn State PPEM US\$500.
- Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science Travel Scholarship to attend SACNAS 2018 in San Antonio, Texas.
- Louis Stokes Midwest Center of Excellence (LSMCE) Travel Award to the 2016 LSMCE annual meeting in Lisle, Illinois.
- Mentor Student Travel Award in the name of James M. Trappe. 2015. Mycological Society of America US\$500.
- Young Scientist Grant Travel Award. 2015. TerraGenome Research Coordination Network US\$800.
- Student Sustainability Fund Award to travel to the 2015 MSA annual meeting. Student Sustainability Research and Project Development Fund at Western Illinois University US\$500.
- Louis Stokes Midwest Center of Excellence (LSMCE) Travel Award to the 2015 LSMCE annual meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana.
- Women in Science Travel Award. 2015. Western Illinois University US\$200.
- Women in STEM Research and Scholarly Activities Scholarship. 2015. College of Arts and Sciences, Western Illinois University US\$800.

#### **Other Awards**

- Research Inspiring Student Excellence (RISE) Graduate Gold Award. 2016. Western Illinois University.
- Research Inspiring Student Excellence (RISE) Graduate Purple Award. 2016. Western Illinois University.
- 13<sup>th</sup> Biology Research Symposium third place graduate oral presentation. 2015. Department of Biological Sciences, Western Illinois University.

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## **INVITED ENGAGEMENTS**

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**Graduate School Panel.** Mycological Society of America – Student and Postdoc Section. Virtual panel. August 26, 2021.

**Mentorship Panel.** Mycological Society of America – Student and Postdoc Section. Virtual panel. July 22, 2021.

**Invited class presentation.** Introduction to molecular biology and tools for the identification and detection of microorganisms. Invited talk for the class EDA-642: Environmental Microbiology at Colegio de Postgraduados (Montecillo Campus, Mexico). Virtual invited presentations. November 2019, November 2020, and October 2021.

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## POSTERS AND ORAL PRESENTATIONS

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- Torres-Cruz TJ.** De Hongo a Flor: Formación de Seudoflores en Pastos de Ojos Amarillos por una Especie Nueva de *Fusarium* en Guyana. X Congreso Latinoamericano de Micología Chile 2020. Virtual invited presentation. December 12-15, 2020.
- Torres-Cruz TJ, Aime MC, and Geiser DM.** From fungus to flower: Pseudoflower formation on *Xyris* associated with a novel *Fusarium* sp. from Guyana, and its potential dispersal by insects. Annual Meeting of the Mycological Society of America. Poster presentation. Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 2019.
- Torres-Cruz TJ, Aime MC, and Geiser DM.** From fungus to flower: Pseudoflower formation on *Xyris* associated with a novel *Fusarium* sp. from Guyana, and its potential dispersal by insects. 34th Annual Graduate Exhibition. Poster presentation. University Park, Pennsylvania, March 2019.
- Torres-Cruz TJ, Aime MC, and Geiser DM.** From fungus to flower: Pseudoflower formation on *Xyris* associated with a novel *Fusarium* sp. from Guyana, and its potential dispersal by insects. 22nd Annual Environmental Chemistry and Microbiology Student Symposium. Poster presentation. University Park, Pennsylvania, March 2019.
- Torres-Cruz TJ, Wurdack K, and Geiser DM.** From fungus to flower: Pseudoflower formation on *Xyris* by a novel *Fusarium* species from Guyana and its dispersal by insects. 51st Congress of the Southern African Society for Plant Pathology. Poster presentation. Langebaan, South Africa, January 2019.
- Torres-Cruz TJ and Geiser DM.** From fungus to flower: Pseudoflower formation on *Xyris* by a novel *Fusarium* species from Guyana and its dispersal by insects. Society for the Advancement of Chicanos, Latinos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS 2018). Poster presentation. San Antonio, Texas, October 2018.
- Torres-Cruz TJ, González-Chávez MC, Carrillo-González R, Geiser DM, Porrás-Alfaro A.** High abundance of *Fusarium* species in *Vanilla* across natural and technified cropping systems in Mexico. International Mycological Congress (IMC11). Poster presentation. San Juan, Puerto Rico, July 2018.
- Geiser DM and **Torres-Cruz TJ.** Fungal Taxonomy: Naming Your Friends and Enemies. Taxonomy of Bacteria and Fungi seminar. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Plant Protection Quarantine (PPQ) and Agriculture Research Service (ARS). Invited presentation. Beltsville, Maryland, May 2018.
- Torres-Cruz TJ, Howell A, Reibold R, McHugh T, Reed S.** Species-specific nitrogenase activity in lichen-dominated biological soil crust from the Colorado Plateau. 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Environmental Chemistry and Microbial Student Symposium. Oral presentation. University Park, Pennsylvania, April 2018.
- Torres-Cruz TJ, Almatruk M, Tobias T, Hesse C, Desiro A, Benucci GM, Kuske CR, Bonito G, Stajich J, Dunlap C, Porrás-Alfaro A.** The hunt for one of the “Top 50 most-wanted Fungi”: Bridging the gap between fungal taxonomy and molecular ecology. Department of Plant Pathology and Environmental Microbiology Seminar. Oral presentation. University Park, Pennsylvania, March 2018.
- Torres-Cruz TJ, Howell A, Reibold R, McHugh T, Reed S.** Species-specific nitrogenase activity in lichen-dominated biological soil crust from the Colorado Plateau. 14th Biennial Conference of Science & Management on the Colorado Plateau & Southwest Region. Contributed talk.

Flagstaff, Arizona, September 2017.

- Torres-Cruz TJ**, Porrás-Alfaro A, Carrillo-Gonzalez R, Gonzalez-Chavez MC. Fungal colonization and *Fusarium* diversity across *Vanilla* cultivation systems. Annual Meeting of the Mycological Society of America. Poster presentation. Athens, Georgia, July 2017.
- Torres-Cruz TJ**, Almatruk M, Tobias T, Hesse C, Desiro A, Benucci GM, Kuske CR, Bonito G, Stajich J, Dunlap C, Porrás-Alfaro A. Discovery of a new fungal species. Louis Stokes Midwest Center of Excellence Conference. Poster presentation. Lisle, Illinois, October 2016.
- Torres-Cruz TJ**, Almatruk M, Tobias T, Hesse C, Desiro A, Benucci GM, Kuske CR, Bonito G, Stajich J, Dunlap C, Porrás-Alfaro A. Discovery of a novel taxon within Mucoromycotina. Annual Meeting of the Mycological Society of America. Contributed talk. Berkeley, California, August 2016.
- Torres-Cruz TJ**, Almatruk M, Tobias T, Hesse C, Desiro A, Kuske CR, Bonito G, Stajich J, Dunlap C, Porrás-Alfaro A. Novel early lineage in the Mucoromycotina. Annual Meeting of the Illinois State Academy of Science. Oral presentation. Edwardsville, Illinois, April 2016.
- Torres-Cruz TJ**, Almatruk M, Tobias T, Hesse C, Desiro A, Kuske CR, Bonito G, Stajich J, Dunlap C, Porrás-Alfaro A. Characterization of a novel early lineage in the Mucoromycotina. Oral presentation. 14<sup>th</sup> Biology Research Symposium. Department of Biological Sciences, Western Illinois University. Macomb, Illinois, April 2016.
- Torres-Cruz TJ**, Almatruk M, Tobias T, Hesse C, Desiro A, Kuske CR, Bonito G, Stajich J, Dunlap C, Porrás-Alfaro A. Characterization of a novel early lineage in the Mucoromycotina. Oral presentation. Annual Graduate Research Conference. College of Arts and Sciences. Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois, March 2016.
- Torres-Cruz TJ**, Hesse C, Kuske CR, Porrás-Alfaro A. Heavy metal tolerant fungal community analysis from temperate pine forest soil. Louis Stokes Midwest Center of Excellence Conference. Poster presentation. Indianapolis, Indiana, October 2015.
- Torres-Cruz TJ**, Hesse C, Kuske CR, Porrás-Alfaro A. Heavy metal tolerant fungal community analysis from temperate pine forest soil using Illumina sequencing. 7<sup>th</sup> Argonne Soil Metagenomics Meeting. Poster presentation. Lisle, Illinois, October 2015.
- Torres-Cruz TJ**, Ndinga C, Kuske CR, Porrás-Alfaro A. Modern Sequencing Techniques and their Applications in Environmental Microbiology. Upper Mississippi River Conference. Poster presentation. Davenport, Illinois, 2015.
- Torres-Cruz TJ**, Hesse C, Kuske CR, Porrás-Alfaro A. Heavy Metal Tolerant Fungi from Surface Soils of a Temperate Pine Forest. Annual Meeting of the Mycological Society of America. Poster presentation. Edmonton, Canada, July 2016.
- Torres-Cruz TJ**, Kuske CR, Porrás-Alfaro A. Isolation and Molecular Characterization of Heavy Metal Tolerant Fungi from Duke Forest Soil and its Potential Use in Mycoremediation. Annual Meeting of the Illinois State Academy of Science. Oral presentation. Macomb, Illinois, April 2015.
- Torres-Cruz TJ**, Kuske CR, Porrás-Alfaro A. Isolation and Molecular Characterization of Heavy Metal Tolerant Fungi from Duke Forest Soil. 13<sup>th</sup> Biology Research Symposium. Oral presentation. Department of Biological Sciences. Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois, March 2015. \*3<sup>rd</sup> place oral presentation
- Torres-Cruz TJ**, Kuske CR, Porrás-Alfaro A. Isolation and Molecular Characterization of Heavy Metal Tolerant Fungi. Poster presentation. Second Annual Graduate Research Conference. College of Arts and Sciences. Western Illinois University. Macomb, Illinois, March 2015.



**Torres-Cruz TJ**, Kuske CR, Porrás-Alfaro A. Isolation and Molecular Characterization of Heavy Metal Tolerant Fungi from Duke Forest Soil and its Potential Use in Mycoremediation. Oral presentation. Argonne Undergraduate Symposium. Argonne National Laboratory, Argonne, Illinois, November 2014.

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## SCIENTIFIC SERVICE ACTIVITIES

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- Reviewer for manuscripts submitted to scientific journals
  - Plant Disease (2021-2022)
  - Crop Protection (2020)
  - Plant and Soil (2019)
  - Journal of Plant Pathology (2019)
  
- Reviewer for the Pasa People of Color COVID Relief Fund. Pasa Sustainable Agriculture. Spring 2021
  
- Organized and presented a two-day virtual *Fusarium* workshop in Spanish at the Latin American Mycological Congress 2020. Generated learning materials in Spanish and interpreted live during the workshop's Q&A sessions over Zoom.
  
- Mycological Society of America Student Representative on Committees
  - MSA Nominations Committee (2021–2022)
  - MSA International Committee (2017–2020)
  - MSA Karling Lecture Committee (2016–2017)
  - MSA Nomenclature Committee (2015–2016)
  
- Mycological Society of America Student Section Executive Board
  - Past Chair (2018–2019)
  - Chair (2017–2018)
  - Vice-Chair (2016–2017)
  - Webmaster (2015–2016)
  
- Posters Judge
  - Posters Judge for International Agriculture class (INTAG100) at Penn State during Spring and Fall 2019-2021.
  - Graduate Posters Judge. Penn State Graduate School 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Graduate Exhibition, March 2018.
  - Undergraduate Posters Judge. Western Illinois University 14<sup>th</sup> Biology Research Symposium (2016).
  
- Service on student association Executive Boards:
  - **Penn State Plant Pathology Association** – President (2020–2021).
  - **Western Illinois University Biology Graduate Student Association** – Vice-President (2015–2016).



- **Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica Biotechnology Engineering Student Association** – Fiscal (2011-2013) and Secretary (2013-2014).
- Outreach activities
  - **Adopt-a-Classroom Program.** 2015. Western Illinois University – Volunteer conducting monthly science hands-on and outdoor activities with students in rural Illinois third grade classrooms.

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## LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY SERVICE ACTIVITIES

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- **Penn State International Student Orientation Leader** | 2018–2022 | Orientation Leader for 10+ orientations, including in person and virtual orientations.
- **Penn State VITA Volunteer** | 2019–2022 | Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA). Tax preparer (2019) and supervisor (2020–2022). University Park, PA.
- **Penn State’s Graduate School Alumni Society Board of Directors** | 2020–2021 | Graduate Student Representative from Global Programs.
- **Penn State Food and Housing Security Task Force** | 2020 | Graduate Student Representative.
- **Penn State Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA)** | 2018–2020 | College of Agricultural Sciences Delegate and Speaker of the Assembly (2019–2020) and At-large Delegate (2018–2019). Served on GPSA Community Outreach and Programming Committees.
- **Penn State SACNAS Chapter** | 2019–2020 | Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS). Events coordinator.
- **Penn State PPEM Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee** | 2019–2021 | Chair and co-founder.
- **Penn State PPEM Seminar Committee** | 2018–2020 | Student representative.
- **Healthy Penn State Ambassador** | 2019 | Health, Promotion, and Wellness.

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## ADDITIONAL TRAINING

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- Fusarium Laboratory Workshop June 23-28, 2019. Kansas State University
- Fungal Genomics Workshop September 9-13, 2019. University of California Riverside. Funded by ZygoLife project.

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## LANGUAGE SKILLS

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- Spanish – native speaker
- English – fluent