

2022 CAPAC Summer Student Testimonials

CAPAC Program: 10-weeks



Ángel Enrique Román-Acevedo

Institution: San Juan Bautista School of Medicine, Caguas, PR

Mentor: Pablo E. Vivas-Mejía, PhD
UPR Comprehensive Cancer Center, San Juan, PR

Summer Project: CASC10 Expression in Paraffin Samples from Puerto Rican Women with Ovarian Cancer

Testimonial: ***“This program was a really great experience. Not only did it give me the opportunity to experience new aspects of the field of science, but it also allowed me to develop professional relationships that I know will help me in any future endeavor that I may have.”***

Institution: UPR Medical Sciences Campus, School of Medicine, San Juan, PR

Mentor: Carlos A. Torres-Ramos, Ph.D.
University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences Campus, San Juan, PR

Summer Project: Mitochondrial dynamics after a genotoxic insult to liver cancer cells

Testimonial: ***“Great experience, would recommend to other colleagues.”***



Cristina Paola Gerena-Maldonado



Elyette Marie Lugo-
Quiñones

Institution: Central University of the Caribbean, School of Medicine, Bayamón, PR
Mentor: Nawal Boukli, Ph.D.
Caribbean Central University, Bayamón, PR
Summer Project: Modulation of endoplasmic reticulum stress in HIV-1 gp120 glioma cells
Testimonial: ***“CAPAC helped me begin to accomplish one of my career goals, try and close the gap of knowledge for cancer therapeutic approaches.”***

Institution: UPR Medical Sciences Campus, Graduate School of Public Health, San Juan, PR
Mentor: Abiel Roche-Lima, MSc, PhD
UPR Medical Sciences Campus, San Juan, PR
Summer Project: Machine Learning Approaches to Study Death Incidence by Race in Colorectal Cancer Patients after Treatments
Testimonial: ***“Overall was a really good experience.”***



Frances Marie Aponte-
Caraballo



Gabriela Cruz

Institution: University of South Florida, College of Public Health, Tampa, Florida, US
Mentor: José L. Torres Russe, M.D., MPH
UPR Comprehensive Cancer Center Hospital, San Juan, PR
Summer Project: Barriers and Facilitators of High-Resolution Anoscopy among People Living with HIV (PLWH): A cross-sectional study in Puerto Rico

Testimonial: ***“This was a great opportunity to gain hands on experience with cancer related research using rich data and working with experts in the field of cancer research.”***

Institution: Central University of the Caribbean, School of Medicine, Bayamón, PR
Mentor: Suranganie Dharmawardhane Flanagan, Ph.D.

UPR Medical Sciences Campus, School of Medicine, San Juan, PR

Summer Project: Expression of p-PAK in Pancreatic Ductal Adenocarcinoma (PDAC) among Puerto Rican cancer patients

Testimonial: *“Gratifying experience!”*



Jerry Cruz-Rodríguez



Jessica Velázquez

Institution: University of Texas Health Science Center, School of Public Health, Houston, Texas, US

Mentor: Karen J. Ortiz-Ortiz, MA, MPH, DrPH
UPR Comprehensive Cancer Center, San Juan, PR

Summer Project: High-intensity end-of-life care among young and middle-aged Hispanic adults with cancer in Puerto Rico.

Testimonial: *“The CAPAC program was a great experience for me. It gave me the opportunity to perform cancer research that involves Puerto Ricans while being in Puerto Rico. I believe my time in the program will have a positive impact on my future.”*

Institution: San Juan Bautista School of Medicine, Caguas, PR

Mentor: Marcia Cruz-Correa, MD, PhD, AGAF, FASGE

Co-Mentor: Ingrid Montes, BS, PhD
UPR Comprehensive Cancer Center, San Juan, PR

Summer Project: Interrogating the Molecular Profile of Breast Cancer Tumors in Hispanics Living in Puerto Rico (PRH)

Testimonial: *“The CAPAC Program is definitely a great opportunity to positively impact the Puerto Rican community. It allowed me to grow professionally as well as personally.”*



Norianne Alexandra
Martinez-Viota



Pamela María Morales-Cortes

Institution: UPR Medical Sciences Campus, School of Pharmacy, San Juan, PR

Mentor: Eliud Hernández-O’Farrill, PhD
UPR Medical Sciences Campus, School of Pharmacy, San Juan, PR

Summer Project: Design and Synthesis of 3,6-Dibromocarbazole Derivatives as AntiCancer Agents

Testimonial: *“I feel very grateful to have been part of the CAPAC Research Training*

Program 2022. In 10 weeks I was able to develop a broad skill set that is already useful in my journey as a future pharmacist and researcher. Additionally, it made me aware of the enormous effort that scientists throughout Puerto Rico are performing to promote cancer prevention and the elimination of health disparities in Latino/Hispanic populations.”

Institution: University of Illinois, School of Public Health, Chicago, Illinois, US

Mentor: Marievelisse Soto-Salgado, DrPH, MS
UPR Comprehensive Cancer Center, San Juan, PR & UPR Medical Sciences Campus, Graduate School of Public Health, San Juan, PR

Summer Project: Evaluation of multiple recruitment strategies for CAMPO clinical trials aimed at preventing HPV-related cancers for persons living with HIV in Puerto Rico



Paola Torres

Testimonial: *“The CAPAC program gave me the opportunity to apply public health research in a different setting and learn about cancer disparities in Puerto Rico. It was an enriching experience and a great opportunity to network with new and experienced public health researchers in Puerto Rico and other states.”*

Institution: University of Illinois, School of Public Health, Chicago, Illinois, US

Mentor: Josué Pérez-Santiago, Ph.D.

UPR Comprehensive Cancer Center, San Juan, PR

Summer Project: Inflammatory markers in the saliva predict TGFβ-1 expression in people with and without HIV in Puerto Rico



Tanner Lee Shull

Testimonial: *“CAPAC provided me an interdisciplinary research experience where I could both work in the lab and the community to better understand cancer disparities in Puerto Rico.”*

Institution: New Mexico State University, Department of Public Health Sciences, Las Cruces, New Mexico, US

Mentor: Elba V. Caraballo PhD, MSc
UPR Comprehensive Cancer Center, San Juan, PR

Summer Project: Evaluation of plasma cytokines/chemokines as potential biomarkers for colorectal cancer detection



Yilda Gabriela Macías

Testimonial: *“The research experience provided by the CAPAC program and my team was excellent. I had the opportunity to see a project from start to finish – from the generation of data in the lab to the analysis and interpretation of results.”*



Daniel Enrique Del Toro-Pedrosa, BS

Institution: Central University of the Caribbean, School of Medicine, Bayamón, PR

Mentor: Abel Baerga Ortiz, Ph.D.
UPR Medical Sciences Campus, San Juan, PR

Summer Project: Chemical analysis of outer membrane vesicles from E. coli strains that promote colorectal cancer

Testimonial: *“This program allowed me to stay in Puerto Rico and perform high-caliber research during my first year of medical school. I would definitely recommend it to other medical students!”*

Institution: UPR Medical Sciences Campus,
School of Medicine, San Juan, PR

Mentor: Filipa Godoy-Vitorino, Ph.D.
UPR Medical Sciences Campus, School of
Medicine, San Juan, PR

Co-Mentor: Josefina Romaguera, MD, MPH
UPR Medical Sciences Campus, School of
Medicine, San Juan, PR

Summer Project: Dysbiosis of the
cervicovaginal microbiota of Obese Puerto
Rican women.



*Karina Marie González-
Padilla, BS*



*Kristina Rochele
Brandveen, BA, MPH*

Institution: University of Colorado, Anschutz
Medical Campus, Colorado School of Public
Health, Aurora, Colorado, USA

Mentor: Pablo A. Méndez Lázaro, Ph.D.
UPR Medical Sciences Campus, Graduate
School of Public Health, San Juan, PR

Summer Project: Association between social
determinants of health and environmental
hazards suffered by OBGYN cancer patients during Hurricane Maria in
PR: the importance of environmental justice

Institution: Ponce Health Sciences University,
School of Medicine, Ponce, PR

Mentor: Dr. Josefina Romaguera, MD, MPH
UPR Medical Sciences Campus, School of
Medicine, San Juan, PR

Summer Project: Frequency of Human
Papillomavirus High-Risk Genotypes in a CIN2/3
– Patient Cohort of Hispanic Women Living in
Puerto Rico

Testimonial: *“Fue una experiencia
gratificante. Aprendí el valor de la investigación y como mejora la
calidad de vida de nuestra sociedad.”*



*Mariana Frontera-
Hernandez, BS*

CAPAC Program Participation: 15-weeks



Fabiola Alexandra
Rivera-Gastón

Institution: Ponce Health Sciences University,
Public Health Program, Ponce, PR

Mentor: Sharee A. Umpierre, MD
UPR Medical Sciences Campus, School of
Medicine, San Juan, PR

Summer Project: Treatment interruptions and
mortality among Puerto Rican women with
gynecologic cancers in Puerto Rico after
Hurricanes Irma and Maria: a retrospective
cohort study

Testimonial: *“Amazing experience and people. Would repeat it!”*

Institution: University of California, School of
Public Health, Los Angeles, California, US

Mentor: Ana Patricia Ortiz, Ph.D., MPH
UPR Comprehensive Cancer Center, San Juan,
PR & UPR Medical Sciences Campus, Graduate
School of Public Health, San Juan, PR

Summer Project: Resilience among
Gynecologic Cancer Patients in Puerto Rico
before and after Hurricanes Irma and Maria

Testimonial: *“CAPAC was a great experience
for me. I was able to gain confidence as a researcher and in my
ability to pursue a PhD. I have also become more willing to go into
cancer research due to learning the various roles different
disciplines can take in cancer research. We all have unique
contributions. Lastly, CAPAC allowed outsiders to understand
disparities occurring in the lives of Puerto Ricans and learn about
the rich culture and people”*



Gabriella Isabella
Villegas

Institution: UPR Medical Sciences Campus, School of Pharmacy, San
Juan, PR

Mentor: Magaly Martinez-Ferrer, PhD
UPR Comprehensive Cancer Center, San Juan, PR & UPR Medical
Sciences Campus, School of Pharmacy, San Juan, PR

Summer Project: Viability of Prostate Cancer Cells Treated with Rac1



Ileanexis Mari Madera-Cuevas

and Cdc42 inhibitors

Testimonial: ***“CAPAC Program was excellent opportunity to develop my skills in molecular science and cancer research and provide me the tools to trust me, my work and my English skills.”***

Institution: Colorado

State University, School of Public Health, School of Social Work, Fort Collins, Colorado, US

Mentor: Melissa Marzán Rodríguez, DrPH, MPH, CPH

Ponce Health Sciences University, Public Health Program, Ponce, PR

Summer Project: Development and implementation of recruitment strategies to reach sexual minorities

Testimonial: ***“This experience made me realize I really enjoy research and community outreach! As well solidified my love of working within the Latinx community and cancer health disparities. Made great friendships, met a wonderful mentor and left encouraged to pursue a PhD in the future.”***



Juliana Arelis Borrego-Villanueva



Katherine Ann Hill

Institution: Yale University, School of Medicine, New Haven, Connecticut, US

Mentor: Vivian Colón-López, Ph.D., MPH
UPR Comprehensive Cancer Center, San Juan, PR & UPR Medical Sciences Campus, Graduate School of Public Health, San Juan, PR

Summer Project: Influenza vaccination and cervical, breast, and colorectal cancer screening in a sample of women in Puerto Rico

Testimonial: ***“I had an amazing experience with my CAPAC research mentor. She was extremely knowledgeable and passionate and helped me hone my confidence and skills as a researcher.”***

Institution: UPR Medical Sciences Campus, Graduate School of Public Health, San Juan, PR
Mentor: Stephanie M. Dorta Estremera, Ph.D
UPR Comprehensive Cancer Center, San Juan, PR & UPR Medical Sciences Campus, School of Medicine, San Juan, PR

Summer Project: Plasmablasts and antibody profiles in a preclinical model of HPV+ oropharyngeal cancer



Lenamarí Oyola-Velazquez

Testimonial: *“Mi participación en CAPAC fue de mucho aprendizaje y crecimiento personal. Además de participar directamente en la investigación, pude hacer networking con otros profesionales en el campo y beneficiarme de su ayuda y mentoría. Sin duda fue una experiencia muy valiosa como estudiante graduada.”*



Victoria Licia Pérez

Institution: University of Texas Health Center, Dallas, Texas, US

Mentor: María del Mar González-Pons, Ph.D.
UPR Comprehensive Cancer Center, San Juan, PR

Summer Project: Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Early-Onset Colorectal Cancer Incidence: a 20-year Population-Based Analysis

Testimonial: *“Ten weeks of cancer research allowed for trainees to receive adequate experience to understand what cancer research entails, systems in place, collaboration, etc. If you are interested in cancer or health disparities, this program will help you gain experience.”*

CAPAC Program’s Peer-to-Peer Mentor

Institution: UPR Medical Sciences Campus, Graduate School of Public Health, San Juan, PR
Mentor: Marievelisse Soto-Salgado, DrPH, MS
UPR Comprehensive Cancer Center, San Juan, PR & UPR Medical Sciences Campus, Graduate School of Public Health, San Juan, PR

Summer Project: Cervical and anal cancer prevention strategies among women living



Testimonial: “I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in the CAPAC Research Training Program in 2021 as a trainee and in 2022 as a trainee and a peer-to-peer mentor. Participating in CAPAC this last summer allowed me to be mentored by Dr. Marievelisse Soto and Dr. Ana Patricia Ortiz. Under their mentorship I was able to develop my professional potential and leadership abilities. I feel that these experiences have allowed me to develop into the professional I am today. It has also expanded my interests in terms of demographic scope as well as areas of research to work on and delve into”.

Emergencias

Sala de Emergencias Oncológicas
(24 horas, 7 días de la semana)

Para citas e información sobre los servicios del Hospital
(787) 936-1477
o escriba a citas@cccupr.org (<mailto:citas@cccupr.org>)

Para citas del Centro de Radioterapia
(787) 772-8300 Ext. 8301, 8302
o escriba a refereridosradioterapia@cccupr.org
(<mailto:refereridosradioterapia@cccupr.org>)

Mapa

Enlaces

Calendario de Actividades(</calendario-de-actividades>)

Sobre el Cáncer(<https://www.cancer.gov/espanol/cancer>)

Empleos(<https://www.cccupr.org/category/empleos/>)

Contáctenos(<https://www.cccupr.org/contactenos/>)

Aviso Legal(<https://www.cccupr.org/contactenos/aviso-legal/>)

Cualquier ciudadano puede informar sobre irregularidades en el uso de fondos públicos o que puedan representar el delito de fraude o actos de corrupción pública. Envíe un correo electrónico a informa@oig.pr.gov o presente su queja a través de **www.oig.pr.gov/informa** (**<http://www.oig.pr.gov/informa>**). También puede comunicarse con la línea confidencial de la Oficina del Inspector General (OIG) al 787-679-7979. El denunciante está protegido por ley contra represalias por presentar una queja.