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**MOLECULAR MEDICINE AND TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE GRADUATE PROGRAM  
STUDENT PROFILES**

**Molecular Medicine and Translational Science Graduate Program**  
**Student Profiles**



**Salomat Abdulkhuseynova, MD**

**Fourth Year PhD Candidate, 2025-2026**

**Year Matriculated:** 2021

**Email:** sabdulkh@wakehealth.edu

**Education:** Pirogov Russian National Research Medical University,  
2017 Medical Residency, N.N.Blokhin Russian Cancer  
Research Center, 2019, MD

**Research Mentors:** Shay Soker, PhD  
Lance Miller, PhD

**Research Interests:** Cancer biology; cancer immunology; immune  
response; cancer treatment; tumor organoids; translational science



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**Molecular Medicine and Translational Science Graduate Program**  
**Student Profiles**



**Madeleine Bibby**

**Third Year PhD Student, 2025-2026**

**Year Matriculated:** 2023

**Email:** mbibby@wakehealth.edu

**Education:** Washington State University, BS in Neuroscience and Biology

**Research mentor:** Graca Almeida-Porada, MD, PhD (WFIRM)

**Research Interests:** In-utero therapies; hemoglobinopathies; posterior fossa syndrome; sickle cell disease; organ on a chip; organ tissue equivalents



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**Student Profiles**



**Marcel G. Brown, MD**

**Fifth Year PhD Candidate, 2025- 2026**

**Orthopaedic Surgery Physician Scientist Program**

**Year Matriculated:** 2022

**Email:** marcebro@wakehealth.edu

**Education:** MD, Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth, 2022  
BA, Chemistry, Williams College, 2015

**Research Mentor:** Xue Ma, MD, PhD (Orthopaedics)

**Research Interests:** Regenerative medicine and applications of amniotic fluid stem cells; Degenerative joint disease; Arthroplasty; Degenerative disc disease and disorders of the spine; peripheral nerve injury and repair



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**Student Profiles**



**Justin Campbell**

**Fifth Year PhD Candidate, 2025-2026**

**Year Matriculated:** 2022

**Email:** jdcampbe@wakehealth.edu

**Education:** BS Biology; Minor in Pre-Health; Winston-Salem State University; Associate in Applied Science; Major in Biotechnology; Major in Nanotechnology; Forsyth Technical Community College

**Research Mentors:** Thomas Shupe, PhD (WFIRM); Frank Marini, PhD (Cancer Biology)

**Research Interests:** Cell biology; virology; tissue engineering; regenerative medicine



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**Molecular Medicine and Translational Science Graduate Program**  
**Student Profiles**



**Alicia Costa-Terryll**

Third Year PhD Student: 2025-2026

**Year Matriculated:** 2023

**Email:** acostate@wakehealth.edu

**Education:** BS Biology, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro,  
2019

**Research Mentors:** Dr. Michael Munley, PhD, Dr. Jeffrey Willey, PhD

**Research Interests:** Relative biological effectiveness; radiation oncology  
and proton therapy



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**Student Profiles**



**Tameka Dean, DO, MS**

**Sixth Year PhD Candidate, 2025-2026**

**Orthopaedic Physician Scientist Program**

**Year Matriculated: 2021**

**Email:** tamdean@wakehealth.edu

**Education:** Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine; Doctorate of Osteopathic Medicine, 2021; MS, Biomedical Science, 2021

**Research mentor:** Xue Ma, PhD (Orthopedics)

**Research Interests:** Ischemia-reperfusion injury; skeletal muscle physiology



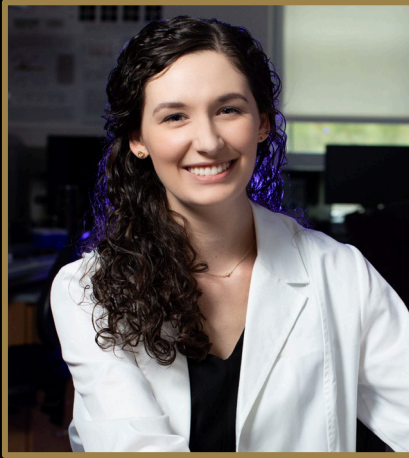
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Student Profiles



Hope Didier

**Fifth Year PhD Candidate, 2025-2026**

**Year Matriculated:** 2021

**Email:** hdidier@wakehealth.edu

**Education:** Kennesaw State University; BS Molecular & Cellular Biology,  
2021  
BA Dance, 2021

**Research Mentor:** Karen Haas, PhD

**Research Interests:** Cancer immunology; translational Science;  
b lymphocyte response/differentiation; tumor associated carbohydrate  
antigens; anti-tumor immune response



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Molecular Medicine and Translational Science Graduate Program  
Student Profiles



**Maryssa Ellison**

**Fifth Year PhD Candidate, 2025-2026**

**Year Matriculated:** 2021

**Email:** maelliso@wakehealth.edu

**Education:** BS, Biology Major; Molecular Biology & Biotechnology concentration; Palm Beach Atlantic University, 2016

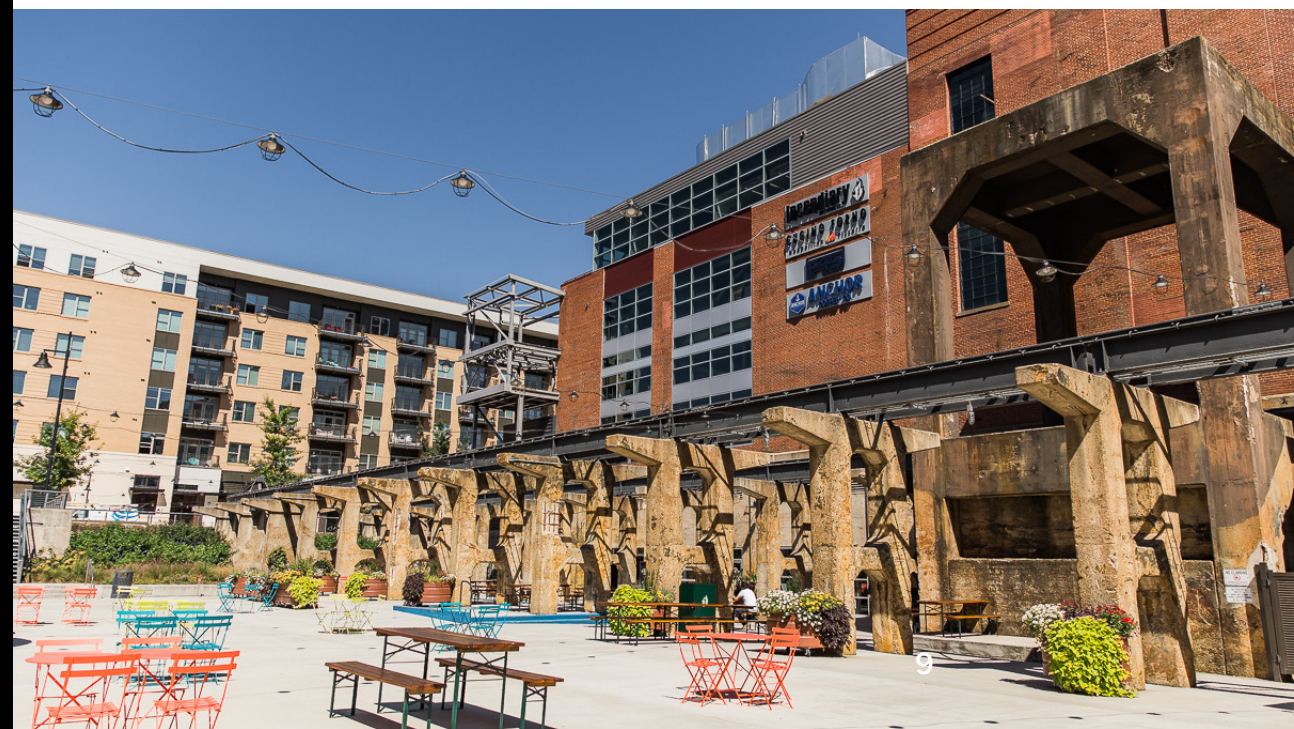
**Research mentors:** Anthony Atala, MD and Victoria Weis, PhD, (Regenerative Medicine)

**Research Interests:** necrotizing enterocolitis; mucosal immunology; intestinal stem cell niche; placental stem cell-based therapeutics; regenerative medicine



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**Student Profiles**



**Aya Abdel Raouf El- Taibany, MD**

**Sixth Year PhD Candidate, 2025-2026**

**Year Matriculated:** 2021

**Email:** aeltaiba@wakehealth.edu

**Education:** MD, School of Medicine, Alexandria University, 2008  
Internship School of Medicine, Alexandria University, 2010; MS, Medical  
Genetics, Alexandria University, 2016

**Research mentors:** Michael Seeds, Ph.D. (WFIRM) and Anthony Atala, MD  
(WFIRM)

**Research Interests:** Neurodegenerative; neuroimmunological; blood  
brain barrier; molecular genetics; drug discovery and translational  
research



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**Student Profiles**



**Yosuri Fernandez Figuereo**

**Fourth Year PhD Candidate, 2025-2026**

**Year Matriculated:** 2023

**Email:** yfernan@wakehealth.edu

**Education:** BS; Ecology and Environmental Management; Pontificia Universidad Catolica Madre y Maestra-PUCMM; Associate in Applied Science; Biotechnology; Forsyth Technical Community College

**Research Mentor:** Stephen J. Walker, PhD (WFIRM)

**Research Interests:** Autism spectrum disorder (ASD); intestinal stem cells; intestinal organoids; gut- bran axis; genetics and genomics; microbiology



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**Student Profiles**



**Austin Foster, MD**

**Third Year PhD Student, 2025-2026**

**Orthopaedic Surgery Physician Scientist Program**

**Year Matriculated: 2023**

**Email:** jeafoste@wakehealth.edu

**Education:** University of South Carolina School of Medicine Greenville, MD;  
Furman University, BA in Business Administration

**Research Mentor:** Jeffrey S. Willey, PhD (Radiation Oncology)

**Research Interests:** Radiation and cancer-induced bone injury; bone health and metabolism; pathologic fractures; bone pain; analgesia



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**Molecular Medicine and Translational Science Graduate Program**  
**Student Profiles**



**Balqees Khader**

**Third Year PhD Student, 2025- 2026**

**Year Matriculated:** 2023

**Email:** bkhader@wakehealth.edu

**Education:** MS; Biology/ North Carolina A&T State University, 2023, BS;  
Biology/ Physics Minor, North Carolina A&T State University, 2021

**Research Mentor:** Baisong Lu, PhD (WFIRM)

**Research interests:** Cellular therapy; gene editing; lipid nanoparticle  
regenerative medicine



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Student Profiles



**Hannah LaMond**

**Fifth Year PhD Candidate, 2025-2026**

**Year Matriculated:** 2022

**Email:** hlamond@wakehealth.edu

**Education:** BS; Biochemistry/Molecular Biology Major; Writing Minor, Loyola University Maryland, 2020

**Research mentor:** Dr. Ellie Rahbar, PhD (Biomedical Engineering)

**Research Interests:** Inflammation; immunology; liver; polyunsaturated fatty acids



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**Molecular Medicine and Translational Science Graduate Program**  
**Student Profiles**



**Nequesha Mohamed, MD**

**Fifth Year PhD Candidate, 2025- 2026**

**Orthopaedic Surgery Physician Scientist Program**

**Year Matriculated: 2020**

**Email:** nmohamed@wakehealth.edu

**Education:** MD – University of Medicine and Health Sciences St. Kitts, 2016;  
BS – University of Toronto, 2011

**Research Mentor:** Jeff Willey, PhD (Orthopaedics)

**Research Interests:** Arthritis, diabetes, joint replacement, healthcare disparity



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**Molecular Medicine and Translational Science Graduate Program**  
**Student Profiles**



**Courtney S. Moore, DVM**

**Third Year PhD Student, 2025-2026**

**Year Matriculated:** 2024

**Email:** cosmoore@wakehealth.edu

**Education:** Tuskegee University College of Veterinary Medicine, DVM and  
University of North Carolina at Pembroke, BS in Biology

**Research mentor:** J. Mark Cline, DVM, PhD, DACVP

**Research Interests:** Genetic mutations; radiation-induced sarcomas



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**Student Profiles**



**Alexis Elizabeth Adams-Sims**

**Fourth Year PhD Candidate, 2025-2026**

**Year Matriculated:** 2023

**Email:** aemorse@wakehealth.edu

**Education:** MS Biomedical Science; Concentration in Cancer Biology;  
Wake Forest University; Bachelor of Science Chemistry; Minors in  
Biology and Mathematics; Wingate University

**Research Mentor:** Karen Haas, PhD

**Research Interests:** Microbiology and immunology, immune responses  
to vaccines, vaccinology



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Student Profiles



**Ayobami S. Ogunsola, MD**

**Fourth Year PhD Candidate, 2025-2026**

**Orthopaedic Surgery Physician Scientist Program**

**Year Matriculated: 2023**

**Email: [aogunsol@wakehealth.edu](mailto:aogunsol@wakehealth.edu)**

**Education:** Medical degree (MB; BS) - University of Ibadan, 2015;  
Master of Public Health (MPH) - Texas A&M University, 2021

**Research mentor:** Xue Ma, MD, PhD (Orthopaedics)

**Research Interests:** Clinical outcomes, mortality epidemiology, and  
molecular biology



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**Student Profiles**



**Emma Parsons**

**Sixth Year PhD Candidate, 2025-2026**

**Year Matriculated:** 2020

**Email:** [ecparson@wakehealth.edu](mailto:ecparson@wakehealth.edu)

**Education:** BA Biology and Sociology; Minor in Chemistry, Wake Forest University, 2018

**Research Mentors:** Anthony Atala, MD (WFIRM)

Robert Hampson, PhD

**Research Interest:** Immunology; translational science; osteoarthritis; immunomodulatory cell-based treatment; cellular and molecular mechanisms



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Student Profiles



**Daniela A. Key- Planas**

**Third Year PhD Student, 2025-2026**

**Year Matriculated:** 2023

**Email:** dkeyplan@wakehealth.edu

**Education:** BS Computational Biology, Florida State University, 2021

**Research Mentor:** Michael Olivier PhD, (Molecular Medicine)

**Research Interests:** OMICS research; mass spectrometry technologies;  
cardiovascular diseases; genetics



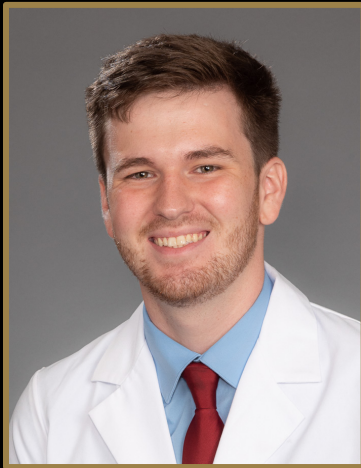
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**Student Profiles**



**Patrick Ralph**

**Fifth Year MD/PhD Dual Degree Candidate, 2025-2026**

**Year Matriculated:** MD 2019, PhD 2021

**Email:** pralph@wakehealth.edu

**Education:** BS Biology, William Peace University

**Research Mentor:** Sang Jin Lee, PhD (WFIRM)

**Research Interest:** Tissue engineering; model development; neurobiology; regenerative medicine; neurodegeneration; behavioral neurology; neuropsychiatry



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**Student Profiles**



**Kaitlyn Reno**

**Fifth Year PhD Candidate, 2025-20256**

**Year Matriculated:** 2022

**Email:** kreno@wakehealth.edu

**Education:** BS Biology, Chemistry Minor, Virginia Tech, 2021

**Research Mentor:** Jeff Willey, PhD

**Research Interest:** Identifying novel biomarkers of bone damage due to radiation therapy; identifying novel biomarkers of NSCLC progression and radiation resistance; radiation oncology; identifying biomarkers of progressive fibrosis and pneumonitis in NSCLC



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Molecular Medicine and Translational Science Graduate  
Program Student Profiles



**Gemma Nomdedeu-Sancho**

**Fourth Year PhD Candidate, 2025-2026**

**Year Matriculated:** 2022

**Email:** gnomdede@wakehealth.edu

**Education:** BS in Human Biology from Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Barcelona, Spain), 2020; MS in Biomedical Research from Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Barcelona, Spain), 2021

**Research Mentors:** Shay Soker, Ph.D. and Anthony Atala, MD

**Research Interests:** Skin biology; in-vitro 3D models; organoids; melanoma; regenerative medicine



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Molecular Medicine and Translational Science Graduate Program  
Student Profiles



**Nicholas Schneider**

**Third Year PhD Candidate, 2025- 2026**

**Year Matriculated:** 2024

**Email:** [nfschnei@wakehealth.edu](mailto:nfschnei@wakehealth.edu)

**Education:** University of South Carolina, Columbia, BS in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

**Research Mentor:** Tao Ma, MD; PhD

**Research interests:** Alzheimer's disease; dementias, neuropsychiatric disease



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Molecular Medicine and Translational Science Graduate Program  
Student Profiles



**Christina Stevens, DVM**

**Fourth Year PhD Candidate, 2025-2026**

**Year Matriculated:** 2023

**Email:** chmsteve@wakehealth.edu

**Education:** BA, Biological Sciences, Barnard College, 2018; DVM, Colorado State University, 2022

**Research Mentor:** Kylie Kavanagh, DVM, MS, MPH (Pathology, Comparative Medicine)

**Research Interest:** Colon; mucosal immunity; inflammaging; digital pathology



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**Molecular Medicine and Translational Science Graduate Program**  
**Student Profiles**



**Kayla Vandiver**

**Second Year PhD Candidate, 2025-2026**

**Year Matriculated:** 2025

**Email:** kvandive@wakehealth.edu

**Education:** MSc in Applied Physiology, University of Colorado, 2023; BS in Biology, University of Colorado, 2021

**Research mentor:** P. Darrell Neuffer, PhD (Molecular Medicine)

**Research Interests:** Mitochondrial bioenergetics; redox biology; obesity; insulin resistance; women's health



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**Molecular Medicine and Translational Science Graduate Program**  
**Student Profiles**



**Vy H. Vuong**

**Fourth Year PhD Candidate, 2025-2026**

**Year Matriculated:** 2023

**Email:** vvuong@wakehealth.edu

**Education:** BA, Cell & Molecular Biology, Barnard College, 2019

**Research Mentor:** Patrick McNutt, Ph.D. (WFIRM)

**Research Interest:** Ocular toxicity, vapor exposure,  
injury & wound healing



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**Student Profiles**



**Sarah Wachtman**

**Fourth Year PhD Candidate, 2025-2026**

**Year Matriculated:** 2023

**Email:** [swachtma@wakehealth.edu](mailto:swachtma@wakehealth.edu)

**Education:** BS, Biology, Florida State University, 2022

**Research Mentors:** Graça Almeida-Porada, MD, PhD (WFIRM) and  
Christopher Porada, PhD (WFIRM)

**Research Interests:** Stem cell and gene therapy; molecular genetics;  
adeno-associated virus (AAV)-based therapeutics for hemophilia A



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Student Profiles



**Lauren E. Washco**

**Second Year PhD Candidate, 2025-2026**

**Year Matriculated:** 2025

**Email:** lwashco@wakehealth.edu

**Education:** BS in Biochemistry from Muhlenberg College, 2024

**Research mentor:** Adam Hall, PhD (Biomedical Engineering)

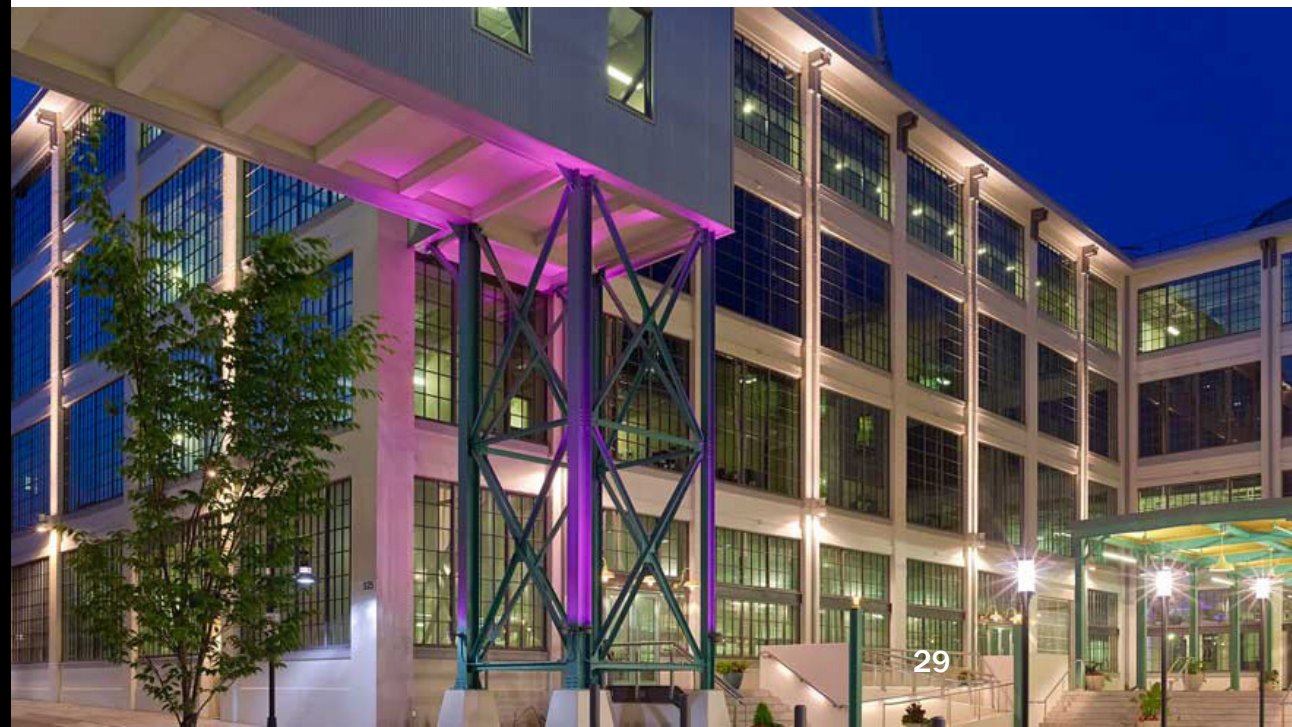
**Research Interests:** Nucleic acid biomarkers; DNA damage/repair;  
solid-state nanopores



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Student Profiles



**Kathryn E. Wilson**

**Second Year PhD Candidate, 2025-2026**

**Year Matriculated:** 2025

**Email:** kaewilso@wakehealth.edu

**Education:** BS in Biology with a concentration in Biomedical Science-  
Gardner Webb University, 2023

**Research Mentor:** : Giselle Melendez, MD ; Jared Weis, PhD

**Research Interest:** Chemotherapy, gut-heart axis, chronic  
inflammation



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