

Center for Reproductive Science

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CRS Celebrates the MS-RSM Class of 2024

Anika Schimpa and Julia Sprenger, MS-RSM Graduate Students

On Friday, June 7th, 2024, the [Master of Science in Reproductive Science and Medicine \(MS-RSM\) Program](#) celebrated the graduation of nine exceptional reproductive scientists. Skillfully navigating a demanding curriculum, contributing to innovative research projects, and forging their career paths, 4 thesis and 5 non-thesis students exemplified excellence in our field. Congratulations to the outstanding thesis graduates: Tito Chai, Mariam Charles, Meredith Lohman and Sierra Orr, and non-thesis graduates: Emily Shiplett, Emily Strahl, Kara Wingo, Jessa Snower, and Julia Sprenger!



[Dr. T. Rajendra Kumar](#), Associate Vice Chair of Research in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at University of Colorado School of Medicine, proudly presented the [Makowski Award](#) to MS-RSM Thesis Student Mariam Charles, MS (mentor, Dr. Francesca Duncan). As the recipient of this award, Mariam is recognized for her exemplary work as a student, CRS community member, and contributor to the field of reproductive science and medicine. Through her thesis work, Mariam conducted an exemplary analysis of the ovarian microenvironment surrounding primordial follicles throughout the time course of ovulation.

Via recorded video address, [Dr. Teresa K Woodruff](#), past CRS Director and current Interim President for Michigan State University, presented the [Teresa K. Woodruff Award](#) for the Most Outstanding non-thesis MS-RSM Student. This year's awardee is Kara Wingo, MS (mentor, Dr. Pamela Monahan) who's work focused on the interaction of activin and notch signaling in ovarian granulosa cells.

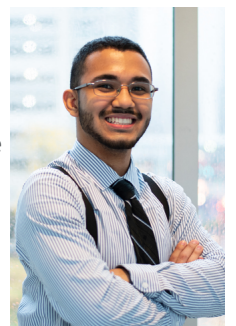
This year's celebration was filled with pride and excitement for our graduating master's students. Each of them entered the program brimming with potential and a shared passion for reproductive science and medicine. As they move forward into the next stages of their careers, their impact will be significant.

See what our exceptional reproductive scientists have to say about their educational journeys in the MS-RSM program and what they are doing now!

Tito Chai (Mentor: Dr. Yogesh Goyal, PhD)

"During my time at Northwestern I had the privilege to attend lectures given by esteemed Nobel prize laureates, rub elbows with the pioneers of developing and innovative research fields, and receive extensive training for cutting edge research techniques and equipment. The MS-RSM program provided the opportunities, and I utilized them to achieve my goals and advance my career as I saw fit." - **Tito Chai, MS**

Tito Chai is currently working as a clinical embryologist in Florida, applying the knowledge that he gained in the program to support patients and clinicians in an IVF clinic.





Mariam Charles (Mentor: Dr. Francesca Duncan, PhD)

"The field of reproductive science and medicine is becoming increasingly interdisciplinary with the intersections of medicine, science, public health and education, policy and law, business, and art. MS-RSM captures that so well as students with a variety of interests and curiosities come to the program and tailor their experience to their career goals. Integrating diverse disciplines fosters innovation, collaboration, and ensures graduates are well-equipped to address modern challenges inherent to reproductive health." - **Mariam Charles, MS**

Mariam is in the process of applying for medical school and is striving to become a patient advocate and supportive clinician.

Meredith Lohman (Mentor: Dr. Elnur Babayev, MD)

"Over the last two years in the MS-RSM program, I was able to develop my passion for reproductive health and education in a manner I could have never imagined. I feel so grateful to have been given the opportunity to push myself academically and professionally in a community that is so enthusiastic and supportive about something I'm so passionate about!" - **Meredith Lohman, MS**

Meredith is currently in the process of applying for jobs with a focus in the education sector in the Chicagoland area.



Sierra Orr (Mentor: Dr. Erin Rowell, MD)

"Being a part of the MS-RSM program and overall CRS community has allowed me to flourish as a student-researcher and learn more about myself than I ever expected. I have discovered an innate passion for reproductive science and medicine, and I am so thankful for the professors, lecturers and peers that I have met along the way that have allowed me to cultivate this interest. I will never forget my time in this program." - **Sierra Orr, MS**

Sierra is currently applying for medical school and is hoping to help build trust within healthcare, and to be a strong advocate for underserved communities.

Emily Shiplett (Mentor: Dr. Pamela Monahan, PhD)

"I am so grateful for the opportunities and experiences that I've had in my time in the MS-RSM program. Because of this program, I have a solid foundation in reproductive science and the passion to make a positive impact and contribute meaningfully to the advancement of reproductive health." - **Emily Shiplett, MS**

Emily Shiplett is in the process of applying to jobs, but she would like to stay within the reproductive science field. Additionally, she is in the process of applying to doctoral programs (MD, MD/PhD, DO).



Emily Strahl (Mentor: Dr. Pamela Monahan, PhD)

"The MS-RSM program has empowered me, fueled my curiosity, and has driven my purpose into Reproductive Science and Medicine. I expanded my creative horizons and delved deeper into my enthusiasm by being a part of this program. I am driven to create an impactful change based on my knowledge and experiences from Northwestern." - **Emily Strahl, MS**

Emily Strahl is excited to share that she will be working at a Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility (REI) clinic as a medical assistant, collaborating with some of the very doctors who taught our classes. Her ultimate career goal is to become a physician assistant specializing in OB/GYN, with a particular interest in infertility.

Kara Wingo (Mentor: Dr. Pamela Monahan, PhD)

" The MS-RSM Program facilitated a welcoming environment to allow me to further build upon my passion for reproductive biology with the strong support of CRS students and leadership. I am proud to be a part of this community, and to have had the opportunity to build strong, lasting professional and interpersonal relationships with the people here." - Kara Wingo, MS



Kara Wingo is currently applying to jobs within the clinical field while preparing her applications for MD, DO, and MD/PhD dual degree programs. Additionally, she is also continuing to work with Dr. Jain on a project that explores IVF utilization rates in Virginia compared to states with mandated insurance coverage.



Jessa Snower (Mentor: Dr. Lindsey Block, PhD)

“The MS-RSM program has challenged me and inspired me to leave my comfort zone and become a more well-rounded student. I am leaving this program confident in my next steps in my ability to think scientifically, spread knowledge to others, investigate what I am passionate about, and be part of a team. I am very grateful to those who have helped me along the way, and I hope to stay connected to the CRS community.” - Jessa Snower, MS

Jessa Snower is going to be starting medical school at Tulane School of Medicine at the end of summer. This program greatly furthered her research ability, which is something she wants to continue in medical school.

Julia Sprenger (Mentor: Dr. Lindsey Block, PhD)

"My time spent in the MS-RSM program has been invaluable. Through the rigorous coursework, I discovered a passion for science writing and communication within the field of reproductive science. I am deeply thankful for the profound knowledge and skills I have acquired, as well as the incredible personal and professional relationships I have developed throughout my journey here." - Julia Sprenger, MS



Julia Sprenger is currently working with Dr. Lauren Streicher, MD, who lectured in the MS-RSM Reproductive Health and Disease class this spring quarter. She will be assisting in writing a research paper that explores the use of marijuana in alleviating menopausal symptoms as well as completing research for a book Dr. Streicher is writing.

Congratulations again to all of the 2024 MS-RSM graduates!

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