

# William Chase

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## *Executive Summary*

- Microbiologist and bioinformatician with 5 years of independent research experience with strong computational skills, excellent written and verbal communication, and a collaborative mindset
  - Fluent in R; expert in many bioinformatics and data analysis methods including: phylogenetics of complex gene families, statistical analysis, data wrangling, database management, and more
  - Expert in data visualization including static plots, animations, data stories, and literate programming
  - Conceived of 3 independent projects as an undergraduate researcher and taught myself the computational techniques required to answer our questions; these projects resulted in three first author manuscripts in preparation
  - Collaborated with experts in a wide variety of fields to formulate research questions and develop novel methods as part in a trans-disciplinary research center
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## *Education*

### **BSc in Microbiology**

May 2017

The Pennsylvania State University

### **Relevant Coursework**

- Multivariate calculus
  - Differential equations
  - Probability theory
  - Linear algebra
  - Bioinformatics
  - Advanced microbiology lab
  - Microbial pathogenesis
  - Evolution of infectious disease
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## *Research*

### **Research Technician**

July 2017 - Present

Department of Biology, Center for Lignocellulose Structure and Formation

The Pennsylvania State University

Advisor: Daniel J. Cosgrove

- As a research technician with the trans-disciplinary Center for Lignocellulose Structure and Formation (CLSF), my time was split between independent projects and collaborative research with CLSF members. I collaborated with experts in fields ranging from polymer physics to chemical engineering on hypothesis generation and methods development. I also trained and supervised two undergraduate students

on cloning, protein expression, and bioinformatics pipelines. My independent research projects focused on better understanding the relationship between plant primary cell wall structure and plant growth. I designed molecular probes to examine the distribution of different polysaccharides in the cell wall and developed novel methods in Atomic Force Microscopy (AFM) to obtain nanoscale images and nanomechanical maps of the cell wall. I also designed and implemented a new statistical workflow in R—including custom algorithms—for the processing and analysis of force spectroscopy data and wrote an R package for the analysis of AFM images. We are currently analyzing the results of this project and expect two publications to result.

### **Independent Research**

June 2016 - Present

Collaborators: Lori Shapiro, Olga Zhaxybayeva, Rob Dunn, Daniel Cosgrove

- In early 2016, I began researching the distribution of expansin genes in non-plant species as an independent curiosity. The initial results were promising, and I reached out to Lori Shapiro and others to collaborate on the evolution of expansin genes. Through this project I taught myself new phylogenetic methods including the use of IQ-TREE to test and implement advanced evolutionary models, and application of duplication-transfer-loss (DTL) models to infer the evolutionary history of a gene. I also developed a novel method of inferring the relative age of horizontal transfer events and used R to analyze and visualize our phylogenies with associated data. This project is currently in preparation for submission. I have also begun a project with Lori Shapiro and Kerry Mauck where we perform a meta-analysis of plant pathogen occurrence, evolution, and life history of pathogens. This project involves significant web scraping, database construction, geospatial analysis, and statistical modeling. Using these data, we hope to create a useful database for plant pathogen researchers, involve citizen scientists in documenting plant pathogens, and ultimately identify life history traits that promote plant pathogen emergence and spread.

### **Research Assistant**

June 2013 - June 2017

Department of Biology

The Pennsylvania State University

Advisor: Daniel J. Cosgrove

- As an undergraduate, I worked in the Cosgrove lab designing and carrying out original research on the structure, function, and evolution of expansin proteins. I was tasked with heterologously expressing plant expansins—a goal which has eluded the cell wall community for 30 years. Like my predecessors, I was unsuccessful, but along the way I gained valuable experience in cloning, mutagenesis, protein purification, experimental design, and heterologous expression methods for bacteria, yeast, and algae. After numerous failed attempts, I proposed a computational solution to study expansin structure-function. This proposal was funded as a research grant by the Department of Biochemistry, and I carried out this research in collaboration with molecular modelers from our department, teaching myself sequence analysis and protein structural prediction along the way. This work resulted in a first author publication which is now submitted at New Phytologist.

## Publications

1. **Chase, W. R.**, & Cosgrove, D. J. (2018). Carbohydrate Binding Module Family 63. *CAZypedia*.  
[cazypedia.org/index.php/Carbohydrate\\_Binding\\_Module\\_Family\\_63](http://cazypedia.org/index.php/Carbohydrate_Binding_Module_Family_63)
  2. **Chase, W. R.**, Yang, H., & Cosgrove, D. J. (2018). An in-silico structure of the expansin AtEXPA4 reveals the structure-function of  $\alpha$ -expansin. *Manuscript submitted for publication*.
  3. **Chase, W. R.**, Mauck, K., Zhaxybayeva, O., Dunn, R. R., Cosgrove, D. J., Rocha, J., Kolter, R., & Shapiro S. R. (2018). From morphogenesis to pathogenesis: A cellulose loosening protein is one of the most widely distributed tools in nature. *Manuscript in preparation*.
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## Presentations

- What I Wish I Knew When I Started R: R Projects, Version Control, and the Tidyverse (*talk, PSU Department of Anthropology, 2018*)
  - Using R to Build Websites: Blogdown and the Rmarkdown Universe (*talk, We R: PSU UserR Group, 2018*)
  - Visualization of phylogenetic trees with ggtree (*talk, PSU Libraries*)
  - A Cellulose Loosening Protein is One of Nature's Most Widely Shared Tools (*poster, PSU Bioinformatics and Genomics Retreat, 2018*)
  - A Computational Solution to Expansin Structure-Function (*poster, PSU Undergraduate Research Exhibition, 2014*)
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## Awards

### Summer Discovery Grant

May 2014

The Pennsylvania State University Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

\$4000 awarded for independent research proposal

### 1st place in BMB category

September 2014

Undergraduate Research Exhibition

For poster: "A Computational Solution to Expansin Structure-Function"

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## Skills

### Lab Skills

- DNA purification and PCR
- Cloning and heterologous protein expression
- Protein purification (affinity, ion exchange, FPLC)
- Microbial culturing (bacteria, yeast, algae, diatoms, fungi)
- Light and fluorescence microscopy
- Atomic Force Microscopy

### Computational Skills

- R
- Data visualization
- Web scraping
- Data wrangling
- Geospatial analysis
- App development with Shiny
- HTML/CSS
- SQL
- Bioinformatics (sequence analysis, protein modeling, phylogenetics)

## Other

- Reproducible Research with Git and Rmarkdown
  - Fluent in Spanish and Portuguese
  - Development of new protocols and experimental design in a trans-disciplinary research group
  - Documentation, backup, and sharing of research notes using Microsoft OneNote and OneDrive
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## References

### **Daniel J Cosgrove**

Eberly Chair in Biology  
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### **James Endres Howell**

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### **Lori Shapiro**

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