Jordan R. Willis

11475 MRB IV Home - Permanent Address

Vanderbilt University 9022 NW 86th Ter

Nashville TN 37232 Kansas City MO 64153

Telephone: 615-343-8263 Cell Phone: 816-674-5340

Email: Jordan.R.Willis@vanderbilt.edu

PROFILE

Computational and Molecular Biologist, Vaccinologist, Human immunologist, and Synthetic Chemist.

* 8 years experience with molecular biology
* 4 years experience with cell culture and transfection
* 5 years experience with molecular modeling
* 3 years experience with high throughput sequencing and analysis
* 3 years experience with systems biology

EDUCATION

**Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN** 2008-2013

Ph.D. Chemical and Physical Biology

Dissertation: “Rational Antibody Design: From Mechanisms of Antibody Binding to Novel Vaccine Strategies”

Advisors: James E. Crowe, Jr., M.D., Jens Meiler Ph.D.

**Northwest Missouri State University** 2008

Bachelor of Science in A.C.S accredited Chemistry

Magna Cum Laude, In Honors

*GPA* 3.81/ 4.0

**Northwest Missouri State University** 2008

Bachelor of Arts in Biology with a focus in Molecular Biology

Magna Cum Laude, In Honors

*GPA* 3.81/ 4.0

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Vanderbilt Vaccine Center, Center for Structural Biology,

Vanderbilt University

Graduate Student 2008-present

Principal Investigator: James E. Crowe, Jr., M.D, Jens Meiler PhD

My project involved incorporating computational design to answer specific questions in immunology with a focus in antibody design. The computational expertise was accomplished in the Meiler Lab while the experimental focus in the Crowe lab. My project can be divided into four parts: 1) Multi-state antibody design to interrogate mechanisms for antibody polyspecificity. How do antibodies use a limited sequence repertoire to bind many antigens? 2) Molecular mechanisms of CD4-binding site escape for HIV-1 gp120. How does gp120 escape VRC01 and b12 neutralization, two broadly neutralizing antibodies that bind the CD4-binding site? We use computational characterization, homology modeling, and biophysical characterization to corroborate our hypothesis. 3) HIV broadly neutralizing antibody design from HIV-naïve sequences. Using computational modeling, high-throughput sequencing, and bioinformatics, we developed antibodies designed from HIV-naïve sequence pools that mimic broadly neutralizing antibodies with exceptionally long HCDR3s. The goal of this project is to see how close HIV-naïve individuals are to development of broadly neutralizing antibodies with long HCDR3s against HIV. 4) Using mutli-state design to rescue binding to influenza stem binding antibody CR6261 against previously non-binding HA subtypes.

Department of Chemistry, University of Missouri 2007-2008

Principal Investigator: Kent Gates, PhD

Lead optimization drug discovery of hypoxic molecules that target tumors. Using the pharmacaphore Tirapazamine as a scaffold, I used combinatorial synthesis techniques to add organic groups and evaluate structural activity relationships.

**SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL EXPERTISE**

* Molecular Modeling
  + Development and application of the software suite Rosetta
  + Molecular mechanics applications with software suite MOE and AMBER
  + Molecular viewing, PyMOL and RasMoL
* Bioinformatics resources and tools
  + Proteomics
  + Protein structure prediction
  + Post-translational modifications
  + Similarity search and alignments
  + Phylogeny and evolution
* Dynamic computer languages
  + Java
  + C++
  + Scripting with Python and BioPython
  + BioPython Development
* Computer databasing
  + MySQL
  + MongoDB
* Influenza and Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) applications
  + HIV neutralization assays
* Virus like particles and pseudovirions
  + Production and purification
* Viral pathogenesis
* Systems biology
* Protein expression and purification
  + Novel cloning strategies
  + Novel purification strategies
  + Cell culture and maintenance
* Biophysical characterization
  + Biolayer interferometry
  + ELISA
  + Isothermal titration calorimetry

**RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS**

1. Joyner AS, **Willis JR**, Crowe JE Jr, Aiken C (2011) Maturation-Induced Cloaking of Neutralization Epitopes on HIV-1 Particles. PLoS Pathog 7(9): e1002234.

2. Briney BS, **Willis JR**, Crowe JE Jr (2012) Human Peripheral Blood Antibodies with Long HCDR3s Are Established Primarily at Original Recombination Using a Limited Subset of Germline Genes. PLoS ONE 7(5): e36750

3. Briney BS, **Willis JR**, McKinney BA, Crowe JE (2012) High-throughput antibody sequencing reveals genetic evidence of global regulation of the naïve and memory repertoires that extends across individuals plasticity Genes and Immunity 13(6), 469-473.

4. Briney BS**, Willis JR**, Crowe JE (2012) Location and length distribution of somatic hypermutation-associated DNA insertions and deletions reveals regions of antibody structural plasticity Genes and Immunity 13(7), 523-529

5. Briney BS, **Willis JR**, Hicar MD, Thomas JW, Crowe JE (2012) Frequency and genetic characterization of V(DD)J recombinants in the human peripheral blood antibody repertoire Immunology 131(1) 56-64

6. **Willis JR\*,** Combs SA**\***, DeLuca SL**\***, DeLuca SH**\***, Lemmon GH**\***, Nguyen ED**\***, Sheehan JH, Nannemann DP, Meiler J (2013) Comparative Modeling and Small-Molecule Ligand Docking in Rosetta Nat. Prot. 8(7) 1277-1298

7. **Willis, JR**, Briney, B. S., Deluca, S. L., Crowe, J. E. & Meiler, J. (2013) Human germline antibody gene segments encode polyspecific antibodies PLoS Computational Biology **9,** e10030 AA45 L

In submission or preparation

1. Briney, BS, **Willis JR**, Finn, JA, McKinney, BA, Crowe JE (2013) Tissue-specific expressed antibody variable gene repertoires PLoS One

2. **Willis JR**, Finn, JA, Briney, BS, Meiler J, Crowe, JE (2013) HIV-Neutralizing Long Heavy Chain Complementary Determining Region 3 Sequences from HIV-naïve Donors Nature/Nat. Struct. Bio./Nat. Medicine

3. **Willis JR**, Meiler J, Crowe JE Entropic Mechanisms of Neutralization Escape of CD4 Binding Site Targeted Antibodies Predicted using Rosetta Design (2013) J. Virol

4. **Willis JR\***, Nannemann DP\*, Cisneros A, Meiler J, Crowe JE Cross sub-group binding influenza antibodies designed with Rosetta (2013)

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

**Instructor - Rosetta teaching workshop** 2012

Developed protocol, taught background and gave hands on

demonstration for design for Rosetta teaching workshop 2012

**Instructor - Rosetta teaching workshop** 2011

Developed protocol, taught background and gave hands on

demonstration for protein docking for Rosetta teaching workshop 2011

**Laboratory teaching assistant to Professor Richard Toomey,** 2007-2008

Northwest Missouri State University

Chemistry 1 and 2

**Tutor - Talent Development Center,** 2005-2006

Northwest Missouri State University

Tutored in the following subjects. General physics I and II.

General, organic, analytical and physical chemistry.

All mathematics including statistics, algebra, and calculus.

**HONORS AND AWARDS**

**Research and Scholarly Awards**

NIH 5T23AI060571 HIV/AIDS Research Training Program 2010-2011

Vanderbilt University

Steven’s Research Scholarship, $4,800 2007-2008

University of Missouri

Mary Marie Smith Chemistry Scholarship, $4,850/year 2007-2008

Northwest Missouri State University

J. Gordon Strong Chemistry Scholarship, $2,450/year 2006-2007

Northwest Missouri State University

Tower Scholar, $1,500/year 2004-2008

Northwest Missouri State University

**Travel Awards**

Keystone HIV Vaccine Symposium Scholarship 2012

Chemical and Physical Biology Travel Award 2012

IBC Antibody Engineering Symposium Scholarship 2011

## RECENT ASSIGNED TRAINEES (Under the mentorship of laboratory PI)

1. Albert Cisneros 2013

Graduate student, Crowe laboratory

1. Martha Wall 2012

Graduate student, Young laboratory, Vanderbilt University

1. Katherine Bradley 2012

MPH student, University of California Berkeley

1. Jessica Finn 2011

Graduate student, Crowe laboratory

1. Mason Sanders 2011

Summer undergraduate research intern

1. Katherine Nichols 2010

Graduate student, Kalams laboratory, Vanderbilt University

## ABSTRACTS AND PRESENTATIONS (underline indicates presenter)

1. **Willis JR**, Crowe JE, Meiler J (2013) Broadly Neutralizing Antibodies to HIV in HIV-Naïve Donors Populations: The Broadly Neutralizing Antibody Problem. Chemical and Physical Biology Retreat
2. Finn, JA, Nannemann, DP, **Willis JR**, Crowe, JE (2013) *De Novo* Modeling of Antibody CDRH3 Loops with Constraints. RosettaCon
3. **Willis JR**, Briney BS, Finn J, Meiler J, Crowe JE (2012) Potential Paradigm Shifts in HIV Vaccine Design Using Ultra High-Throughput Sequencing and Antibody Modeling. Chemical and Physical Biology Retreat
4. Briney, BS, **Willis JR,** Crowe JE (2012) Somatic hypermutation-associated insertions and deletions reveal regions of antibody structural plasticity. Keystone Symposium on HIV Vaccines
5. Finn JA, **Willis JR**, Briney, JE, Crowe, JE, Meiler J (2012) Structural Prediction of Long Complementarity Determining Region 3 Loops. RosettaCon
6. Briney, BS, **Willis JR**, Crowe JE (2011) Genetic and Functional Analysis of the Human Anti-HIV Antibody Repertoire. Keystone Symposium on HIV Vaccines
7. Briney, BS, **Willis JR**, Crowe JE (2011) Genetic origin of long HCDR3s in the circulating antibody repertoire. BC Life Sciences - Antibody Engineering & Therapeutics
8. **Willis JR**, Crowe JE, Meiler J (2011) Structural Basis for Development of Broadly Neutralizing Antibodie3s to HIV Using Computational Predictions. . Chemical and Physical Biology Retreat.
9. **Willis JR**, Briney, BS, Crowe JE, Meiler J (2011) Antibody design Infers Optimal Sequences for Binding Breadth and Affinity Maturation. IBC Life Sciences - Antibody Engineering & Therapeutics
10. **Willis JR**, Crowe JE, Meiler J (2010) Constrained Design of Broadly Neutralizing HIV Antibody-Antigen Interactions. RosettaCon
11. **Willis JR**, Meiler J, Crowe JE (2009) HIV gp-160 Targeted Broadly Neutralizing Antibodies - Modeling and Design. RosettaCon

**INVITED LECTURES AND SEMINARS**

**Willis JR,** Finn JA, Briney BS, Meiler J, Crowe JE (2012) Potential Paradigm Shifts in Vaccine Design using Rosetta. RosettaCon

## Willis JR, Briney BS, Meiler J, Crowe JE (2012) Structure Analysis of Healthy Donor Repertoire Confers Sequences that Match Long Complementary Determining Regions of Broadly Neutralizing Antibodies. Keystone Symposium on HIV Vaccines

**Willis JR**, Crowe JE, Meiler J (2011) Multi-State Design of Antibody-Antigen Interactions Confers Conformational Flexibility. RosettaCon

## MEMBERSHIPS

American Society of Collegiate Scholars 2004–2008

American Chemical Society 2006-2010

Tri-Beta biology honor society 2008

**REFERENCES**

1. James E.Crowe, MD

Professor Pediatrics and Microbiology and Immunology

Director, Vanderbilt Program in Vaccine Sciences

Vanderbilt University Medical Center

2213 Garland Ave.  
 11475 MRB IV  
 Nashville, TN 37232  
 615-343-8064

[James.Crowe@Vanderbilt.edu](mailto:James.Crowe@Vanderbilt.edu)

2. Jens Meiler, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor Chemistry, Pharmacology and Bioinformatics  
Center for Structural Biology  
465 21st Ave South

BIOSCI/MRBIII, Room 5144B

Nashville, TN 37232  
Tel: 615 -936-5332  
[Jens.Meiler@Vanderbilt.edu](mailto:Jens.Meiler@Vanderbilt.edu)

3. Kent S. Gates, Ph.D.

Herman G. Schlundt Distinguished Professor of Chemistry

University of Missouri

325.1 Chemistry

601 S. College Avenue

Columbia, MO 65211-7600

Tel: 573-882-8374

[GatesK@Missouri.edu](mailto:GatesK@Missouri.edu)