



DEEPenn STEM Weekend 2024

October 11-13, 2024

Notice: This website is undergoing revisions to incorporate important updates. Please check back again soon for new information and the latest details.



Open to students attending college in the U.S. and its territories, DEEPenn STEM offers a unique platform to explore pathways toward advanced degrees in STEM fields. In 2024, the event was co-hosted by the Schools of Arts & Sciences, Engineering and Applied Science, Medicine, and Veterinary Medicine, offering a collaborative experience across multiple disciplines. Sixty-four (64) participants attended, gaining invaluable networking experiences with current graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, faculty, and staff across the schools, connecting with a broad community committed to fostering success in STEM.

Friday, October 11th, 2024
Session name: Keynote Address by Chinedum Osuji, PhD



Chinedum Osuji, PhD (Professor and Chair, Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering) presenting during 2024 DEEPenn STEM opening dinner.

Dr. Chindeum Osuji is the Eduardo D. Glandt Presidential Professor, and Chair, in the Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, and a secondary member of the faculty in Materials Science and Engineering, at University of Pennsylvania. Originally from Trinidad and Tobago, Dr. Osuji received his undergraduate degree in Materials Science and Engineering from Cornell University followed by his Ph.D, also in Materials Science and Engineering from MIT in 2003. From 2003-2005 he was a Senior Scientist at

a startup company, Surface Logix Inc., before moving to Harvard as a Postdoctoral Associate in Applied Physics (2005-2007). He started his academic career at Yale University in the Department of Chemical and Environmental Engineering where he was appointed from 2007-2018 before moving to Penn.

At Penn, Dr. Osuji leads an experimental research group investigating structure and dynamics of soft materials and complex fluids. While his work is fundamental in nature, it is motivated by the potential to develop new nanostructured polymeric materials for real world applications, including water purification and advanced separations.

Dr. Osuji is a Fellow of the American Physical Society, and a recipient of a CAREER award from the National Science Foundation (2008). He received an Office of Naval Research's Young Investigator award and the Dillon Medal of the American Physical Society (2015). He currently serves as an Associate Editor for Macromolecules.

Session name: Dessert Social hosted by the Division of the Vice Provost for Student Engagement

Hosted by the Division of the Vice Provost for Student Engagement, the dessert social provides participants with an opportunity to connect with notable members of the Penn community. Attendees are able to engage in meaningful conversations, exchange ideas, and learn more about Penn's culture, values, and the diverse



opportunities. The environment also proves to welcome discussions where participants deepen their understanding of Penn's offerings to support academic success, personal growth, and professional development.

DEEPenn STEM participants interacting with each other during the dessert social.

Saturday, October 12th, 2024

Session name: Overview of Graduate Degrees in STEM

Offering an in-depth look at the diverse graduate degree options available in STEM fields, the differences between Master's, PhD, and professional degrees, as well as the unique opportunities each pathway provides, are highlighted in this session. The session is designed to set the foundation for students to make informed decisions about their academic and career goals ahead of completing their bachelor's degrees.



Ashley Wallace, PhD (Associate Director of Education and Outreach, Laboratory for Research on the Structure of Matter) presenting an overview of graduate degrees.

Session name: Personal Statement, Research Statement, and Statement of Purpose Overview



Kelly Jordan-Sciutto, PhD (Director, Biomedical Graduate Studies, Perelman School of Medicine)

The application for graduate school often requires submitting multiple essays with each serving a specific purpose. This workshop provides an essential overview of how to write compelling essays for graduate school applications, specifically for admission to STEM-related graduate programs. Students gain insight into what admissions committees look for in the different statements, as well as key strategies for effectively

covering the significant components of a graduate school essay.

communicating their journey, experiences, research interests, motivations, and future goals. This session aims to equip students with

strategies to craft statements that showcase their unique strengths and fit for their desired programs.

Session name: How to Prepare a CV/Resume

A CV or resume is more than a summary of experiences. They are powerful tools used to showcase qualifications, skills, and fit. This workshop walks students through the documents and their significance to the graduate school application process, highlighting:

- Key differences between a CV and resume, and when to use them in applying for different positions
- How to effectively showcase academic achievements, research experiences, and leadership skills
- Tips for tailoring a CV or resume for specific graduate programs



DEEPenn STEM participants engaging during Q&A segment of session.

Session name: How to Request Letters of Recommendation

This workshop equips prospective graduate students with strategies for effectively requesting letters of recommendation. Participants learn how to identify suitable recommenders, communicate their strengths and goals, and provide the necessary materials to ensure strong



and personalized endorsements for their graduate applications.

Vanessa Gonzalez-Perez, PhD (Associate Vice Dean, School of Arts & Sciences) taking questions at the end of session.

Session name: Faculty Chat Session & Lunch



Dejian Ren, PhD (Professor of Biology, Graduate Chair) and Mecky Pohlschröder, PhD (Professor of Biology) engaging students in conversation during lunch.

Lunch with Faculty, Graduate Students, and Postdocs

A standout moment for prospective graduate students, this session offers participants a unique opportunity to connect informally with university faculty, current graduate students, and postdoctoral scholars. Over a shared lunch, participants delved into meaningful conversations about graduate school life, cutting-edge research opportunities, and diverse career paths. The relaxed setting creates space for participants and

volunteers to develop authentic connections and valuable insights, as well as a supportive environment for all to discuss and explore academic and professional aspirations.

Session name: Faculty Research Talks

In this session, participants have the opportunity to attend short scientific talks presented by Penn faculty as a chance to explore some of the cutting-edge research that can be found within SAS, SEAS, PSOM, and Veterinary Medicine. Research talks were presented by the following faculty:

- **Perelman School of Medicine**
 - **Raj Jain**, Associate Professor of Medicine
 - **Terence Gade**, Associate Professor of Radiology
- **School of Arts and Sciences**
 - **Mecky Pohlschröder**, Professor of Biology
 - **Zahra Fakhraai**, Professor of Chemistry
- **School of Engineering and Applied Sciences**

- **Ottman Tertuliano**, AMA Family Assistant Professor, Mechanical Engineering and Applied Mechanics
- **Noor Momin**, Stephenson Foundation Term Assistant Professor of Innovation in Bioengineering
- **School of Veterinary Medicine**
 - **Angela Brice**, Associate Professor of Laboratory Animal Medicine
 - **Andrew Modzelewski**, Assistant Professor of Molecular Biology and Biomedical Sciences



Rajan Jain, MD (Associate Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine and Cell & Developmental Biology) giving a mini-research lecture.

Session name: Overview of the PhD Application Process

Applying to graduate school can be an exciting but overwhelming process. From selecting the “right” program to crafting a competitive application, there’s a lot to navigate. This workshop is designed to guide prospective students through key aspects of the process, covering:

- A step-by-step overview of the application process
- Tips for identifying a PhD program that aligns with their interests, goals, and values
- Strategies for overcoming common challenges during the application process
- Building a competitive application that showcases the most important details of their journey



Daniel S. Kessler, PhD (Associate Professor of Cell and Developmental Biology) discussing the details of applying to graduate programs.

Session name: How to Navigate the PhD life and Build a

Support Network



Panel of current Penn graduate students and postdoctoral scholars.

This dynamic session is tailored for prospective students eager to gain a deeper understanding of life as a PhD student. Benefits of attending the session include gaining valuable insights into leveraging campus resources and thriving in an academic setting. Featuring current graduate students and postdoctoral scholars, the panel addresses common questions about managing research, coursework, and personal well-being, while also sharing practical strategies

for building a strong support network, fostering resilience, and balancing responsibilities.

Session name: Is graduate school the route for me? How to gain more research opportunities?

Deciding if graduate school is the “right” next step requires a lot of thoughtful consideration. This panel is designed to help students evaluate whether graduate school aligns with their personal and professional goals. Participants explore key factors to consider when making this decision and learn how to seek out research opportunities that build essential skills and strengthen their applications.



Group of participants giving close and thoughtful attention during a DEEPenn STEM session.

Session name: Poster Session, Career Resource Fair & Reception

As a key feature of the weekend’s agenda, this session offers prospective students an opportunity to engage with Penn’s vibrant academic community. Designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the resources available for academic and professional growth at Penn, the event combines a poster session and resource fair. Attendees gain a firsthand



DEEPenn STEM poster session, graduate resource fair, and reception.

look at the cutting-edge and innovative work happening across disciplines while exploring a variety of programs, support services, and research opportunities highlighted in the resource fair. Additionally, the setting fosters meaningful conversations around academic and campus life, helping prospective students envision their future at Penn.

Sunday, October 13th, 2024

Session name: Breakfast with Penn graduate students

A breakfast with Penn graduate students and postdoctoral scholars is more than just an informal meet-and-greet. During this session, students are presented an opportunity to network and build community with each other and future peers. Attendees can ask lingering questions and share experiences in a welcoming and relaxed environment. From navigating coursework and research to balancing personal and academic commitments, this session provides an invaluable opportunity to engage directly with those who have firsthand experience navigating graduate school.



DEEPenn STEM participant interacting with current Penn graduate student.

Session name: Graduate Student 1:1 & Lab Tour

Having direct interactions with graduate students is a valuable step toward understanding graduate school success. In this concluding session, participants engage in small groups based on research interests. The personalized discussions provide targeted feedback on application materials, advice on next steps, and deeper insights into achieving success in graduate school. Additionally, the lab tour component offers participants an inside look at



Cierra McKoy V'25 speaking with DEEPenn STEM participants.

the spaces where cutting-edge research happens, giving context to how their interests and career goals align with specific research groups at Penn. Equipped with a comprehensive overview of graduate school life at Penn, students are encouraged to use and apply the information to make informed decisions beyond the program.

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