

Summer Blanco

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Education & Training

PhD Student, Plant Biology University of Georgia, Athens GPA: 4.00/4.00	Aug. 2021 – Present
Post-baccalaureate training, Success in Graduate Education (SiGuE) Program Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI Advisor: Dr. Erich Grotewold	Aug. 2020 – June 2021
Bachelor of Science, Biology major with Botany Subplan California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, CA Summa Cum Laude	Sept. 2015 – May 2020

Academic Fellowships

Presidential Fellowship (\$10,000 stipend supplement) University of Georgia, Athens	Sept. 2021– Present
National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship (\$34,000/yr)	Sept. 2021– Present
Minority Biomedical Research Support-Research Initiative for Student Enhancement (\$7,488/yr) California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, CA	June 2017 – May 2019
Summer Research Early Identification Program (\$5000 stipend) Leadership Alliance	June 2018 – Aug. 2018
Achieve Scholars (\$1000 stipend/yr) California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, CA	Sept. 2016 – June 2018
Louis Stoke Alliance for Minority Participation Fellow (\$2000 stipend) California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, CA	Feb. 2016 – June 2017

Honors & Awards

Palfrey Student Research Grant (\$1000) Department of Plant Biology, University of Georgia	Jan. 2023
Dr. Paul C. Hiemenz Award (\$2000) California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, CA	Feb. 2020
Woody Ornamental Identification 1st Place National Collegiate Landscape Competition, Colorado State University	March 2019
Harold Lint Memorial Scholarship (\$750) Department of Biological Sciences, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, CA	June 2018
Cal Poly Pomona College of Science Dr. Wu Scholarship (\$750) Department of Biological Sciences, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, CA	June 2018
Marilu Johnson Scholarship (\$800) San Diego Flower and Plant Society, San Diego, CA	June 2018
Cut Flower & Foliage Identification 1st Place National Collegiate Landscape Competition, Alamance Community College, NC	March 2018
Celebration of Teaching Future Teacher Nominee College of Education and Integrative Studies, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, CA	Oct. 2017

American Florists' Exchange Scholarship (\$2,200) American Floral Endowment, Los Angeles, CA	July 2017
Minority Affairs Committee Travel Grant Recipient (\$500) American Society of Plant Biologists, Honolulu, HI	June 2017
Program Recognizing Outstanding Undergraduate Distinction Scholar (\$500) Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, CA	June 2017

Publications

J.D. Rentsch, **S.R. Blanco**, & J.H. Leebens-Mack. 2023. Comparative transcriptomics of Venus flytrap (*Dionaea muscipula*) across stages of prey capture and digestion. *Frontiers in Plant Science*. *In review*.

Oral Presentations

Rose, Bud, and Thorn: Reflections on pursuing a PhD in Plant Biology College of Science Seminar, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona	March 2022
Pollen Magnetofection: Developing a Novel Transformation Technique in <i>Aquilegia coerulea</i> Creative Activities and Research Symposium, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona	Aug. 2018
Techniques to Understand Floral Organ Abscission in <i>Delphinium</i> Species Summer Research Symposium, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona	Aug. 2017

Poster Presentations

The Colors of Pollen: Using Citizen Science to Survey Anther Color Variation in <i>Geranium</i> Botany, Anchorage, AK	July 2022
Comparative Transcriptomics of Venus flytraps during various stages of prey capture & digestion Agavoideae Conferences and Bioinformatics Workshop, Mexico City, Mexico	June 2022
Pollen Magnetofection: Developing a Novel Transformation Technique in <i>Aquilegia coerulea</i> Leadership Alliance National Symposium, Hartford, CT	July 2018
Morphological Studies to Understand Transition to Flowering in <i>Aquilegia coerulea</i> American Society of Plant Biologists Conference, Honolulu, HI	June 2017
Studies to Understand Floral Transition and Inflorescence Patterning in <i>Aquilegia coerulea</i> Southern California Conference for Undergraduate Research, University of California, Riverside	Nov. 2016
Development of Tissue Culture and Transformation Protocols for <i>Aquilegia</i> and <i>Nigella</i> 4 th Annual CPP Student Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activities Conference, Cal Poly Pomona	March 2016

Mentorship & Panel Participation

'Preparing for Grad School' Panel Panel for UGA REU students hosted by the Summer Undergraduate Research Experience in Neuroscience program	July 2023
'How to Apply to Graduate School' Panel Panel for UGA REU students	July 2022
'Grad School Primer: How to Navigate the Challenges of Academia' panel Event held at the American Society of Plant Biologists annual conference, Portland, OR	July 2022
'Navigating your fellowship application' panel Virtual event hosted by American Society of Plant Biologists Early Career section	Sept. 2021

Cientifico Latino Graduate School Mentorship Initiative, Graduate student volunteer	Aug. 2021 – Dec. 2021
Science Educational Enhancement Services, Peer Mentor California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, CA	Sept. 2016 – May 2020
Achieve Scholars, Peer Mentor California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, CA	Sept. 2016 – June 2018

Certifications

Research Computing Instructor certification Software Carpentries	Feb. 2023
Research Mentor Training certification Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL) Network	May 2022

Leadership Experience

Athens Clarke County Seed Lending Library Organizer University of Georgia, Athens, GA	May 2021 – Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organized graduate students in the Department of Plant Biology to initiate a collaboration with the local library to provide free seeds to library patrons Our group procured over 10,000 seeds from various local and online organizations Launched August 2023 and maintained by our department's graduate students 	
Athens Science Café, VP of events University of Georgia, Athens, GA	May 2021 – Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinating monthly, accessible and engaging scientific presentations for the local Athens community 	
Integrated Plant Sciences Diversity Preview Weekend Organizer University of Georgia, Athens	Fall 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruited faculty members and graduate students to initiate a virtual, targeted recruitment event to support marginalized students applying to the Integrated Plant Sciences Program This program included (1) individualized feedback on written application materials, (2) meetings between prospective students and faculty members, (3) a graduate student panel to learn more about the program, and (4) fee waivers for accepted prospective applicants. Procured ~\$2000 for fee waivers (\$75/each) and to compensate graduate student reviewers for their time (\$15/hr) 	
Plant Biology Graduate Student Association, Teaching and Outreach chair University of Georgia, Athens	May 2021 – May 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating professional development opportunities for the Plant Biology department graduate student body Planning and executing outreach events targeted at local K-12 students and the Athens community 	
Early Career Plant Scientist Section (ECPS) Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion subcommittee member American Society of Plant Biology (ASPB)	Aug. 2020 – Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinated and participated on panel for a workshop titled, "Navigating your fellowship application", an event with a moderated discussion with 5 panelists that were awarded external academic fellowships Coordinating workshop and served as a panelist for ASPB 2022 meeting titled, "Grad School Primer: How to Navigate the Challenges of Academia" 	
Voices of Color Co-founder College of Natural Science, Michigan State University, MI	June 2020 – May 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Founded group that coordinated community-building events for graduate students of color in STEM 	
Voices of Color Co-founder College of Science, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, Pomona, CA	Dec. 2018 – May 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Founded group (of 3 student leaders) that coordinated events to support students, faculty, and staff of color 	

- Organized and lead two 2-hour meetings each semester with ~20 attendees including students, faculty, and staff to educate and connect community members
- Met monthly with the Dean and Associate Deans of the College of Science to communicate program goals and address student concerns discussed at each meeting

Social Justice Leader

Aug. 2019 – May 2020

Pride Center, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

- Maintained community lounge cleanliness and engaged with community members
- Participated on LGBTQ+ student panels to provide ally education to students and faculty
- Promoted Pride Center and Cultural Center resources/events to students

K-12 STEM Outreach

Scientific Research and Education Network (SciREN) Participant

January 2022

University of Georgia, Athens

- Attended Lesson planning workshop and developed 3rd grade lesson plan specific to my graduate research topic
- Attended networking event and presented lesson plan to local K-12 educators

Ernest Prete Jr. K-12 STEM Education Mentor (\$5100 stipend)

Aug. 2019 – Dec 2019

Center for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching

California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, Pomona, CA

- Communicated program goals and expectations between program directors, instructors, and fellows
- Conducted one-on-one advising meetings with fellows throughout the semester
- Coordinated with program mentors to lead training workshops for fellows

Ernest Prete Jr. K-12 STEM Education Fellow (\$5100 stipend)

Sept. 2018 – May 2019

Center for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching

California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, Pomona, CA

- Provided tutoring support in a K-3 Autism Spectrum and Related Disorders classroom at Kellogg Polytechnic Elementary School in Pomona, CA
- Attended workshops on tutoring, lesson planning, and classroom instruction
- Co-planned and taught a plant life cycle lesson according to the Next Generation Science Standards

Volunteer Experience

Rose Float Decorations Chair

Jan. 2018 – Dec. 2019

California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, Pomona, CA

- Determined floral material used to create color, texture, and theme for the Cal Poly Universities student-built entry in the 2019 Rose Parade, “Far Out Frequencies”
- Coordinated with the California Cut Flower Commission to procure floral material donations
- Supervised student leaders working with over 1000+ volunteers during Decorations Week in Pasadena, California
- Awarded the Extraordinaire Award for the most extraordinary float

Rose Float Decorations Assistant Chair

Jan. 2017 – Dec. 2018

California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, Pomona, CA

- Determined floral material used to create color, texture, and theme for the Cal Poly Universities student-built entry in the 2018 Rose Parade, “Dreams Take Flight”
- Supported the Decorations Chair in organizing priorities and meeting deadlines
- Awarded the Past President’s Award for most outstanding innovation in the use of floral and non-floral materials

Grow Native Nursery Volunteer

June 2015 – Aug. 2015

Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, Claremont, CA

- Propagated California native plants for retail nursery production and restoration purposes