

2026 GSBS Alumni Career Symposium

Building Your Future

Event overview

In-person date: Thursday, October 29, 2026

In-person program: 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

In-person location: Onstead Auditorium and Forum, 6767 Bertner, Houston, Texas 77030

Networking dinner: 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.; pre-registration required

Dinner location: III by Wolfgang Puck, 6550 Bertner Avenue, 6th Floor, Houston, Texas 77030

In-person sessions

Thursday, October 29, 2026

Time: 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Location: Onstead Auditorium and Forum, 6767 Bertner, Houston, Texas 77030

3:30 p.m. - Welcome

Raquel Salinas, PhD, Assistant Dean, Career and Alumni Engagement

3:35 p.m. - Alumni Career Spotlights

GSBS alumni from a variety of career paths will share brief reflections on their professional journeys, highlighting the skills, relationships, and experiences that helped them build what is next. Discover practical takeaways you can apply throughout your own graduate training.

Speakers

- [Jayanta Mondal, PhD](#), R&D Scientist, CellChorus
- [Kristine Ferrone Waller, PhD](#), Associate Systems Director, The Aerospace Corporation
- [Ali Azhdarinia, PhD](#), Associate Professor, McGovern Medical School, UTHealth Houston
- [Alexandria Cogdill, PhD](#), Head of Strategic Initiatives, Global Business Development, Daiichi Sankyo

4:30 p.m. - 2026 Distinguished Alumni Award Presentation and Keynote Lecture

[Yolanda Sanchez, PhD](#), Director and CEO, UNM Comprehensive Cancer Center; Professor, Internal Medicine, Division of Molecular Medicine

Yolanda "Yoli" Sanchez, PhD, class of 1993, is an internationally recognized cancer researcher and Director and CEO of the University of New Mexico Comprehensive Cancer Center. A pioneer in DNA damage response research, she has made lasting contributions to cancer biology while demonstrating a deep commitment to mentorship and developing future scientific leaders. We are proud to recognize her scientific achievements, leadership, and service with the 2026 Distinguished Alumni Award.

5:30 p.m. - Networking Mixer

Continue the conversation with GSBS alumni, students, faculty, and guests during this informal networking reception.

Alumni and Student Networking Dinner

Date: Thursday, October 29, 2026

Time: 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Location: III by Wolfgang Puck, 6550 Bertner Avenue, 6th Floor, Houston, Texas 77030

Registration: Pre-registration required

Join us for a networking dinner with GSBS alumni and current students. This event provides a relaxed environment for building professional relationships, sharing experiences, and exploring career opportunities.

Virtual sessions

Zoom meeting link: [Join the GSBS Alumni Career Symposium virtual sessions](#)

Tuesday, October 27, 2026

Time: 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Building Your Foundation: Skills for the Future of Biomedicine

This panel will feature GSBS alumni discussing the skills and experiences that have been most valuable throughout their careers and reflecting on how the biomedical workforce continues to evolve. Panelists will share insights from their career paths, highlight the technical and professional skills they believe will become increasingly important in the years ahead, and offer practical advice on how students can begin building these skills during graduate school.

Panelists

- [Alex \(Chieh-Yuan\) Li, PhD](#), Chief Technical Officer and Co-Founder, Pathmaker Biosciences
- [Vivian Salama, MD, PhD](#), Research Assistant Professor, Department of Medical Oncology, West Virginia University Cancer Institute
- [Jie \(Jenny\) Yang, PhD](#), Senior Expert II Data Scientist, Novartis

Wednesday, October 28, 2026

Time: 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Building Beyond Expertise: Communication, Collaboration, and Professional Relationships

Success in biomedical careers depends on more than technical expertise. In this panel, GSBS alumni will share their career paths and reflect on how communication, collaboration, and professional relationships have shaped their work and career development. Panelists will discuss their experiences building trust, working across teams and disciplines, developing and sustaining professional relationships, and navigating communication challenges in the workplace. Through real-world examples from their careers, they will offer practical strategies for strengthening these skills during graduate school and using them to work effectively with others throughout your career.

Panelists

- [Tamara Laskowski, PhD](#), Vice President, Academic Alliances and Strategic Collaborations, BostonGene
- [Monica Goss, PhD](#), Director, Research Operations, UT Health San Antonio
- [Jacob Verghese, PhD](#), Vice President, Trophic Communications
- [Bryan Wehrenberg, PhD](#), Senior Scientist, Agios Pharmaceuticals