**Jessica White, MS, MLS (ASCP)$^{CM}$**

## Background

My educational background includes a Bachelor of Science in Biology from the Pennsylvania State University (University Park, PA) and a Master of Science in Bioscience Technologies from Thomas Jefferson University (Philadelphia, PA). I am a board-certified Medical Laboratory Scientist with clinical training in microbiology, immunology, chemistry, hematology, blood banking, and molecular techniques. Over the two years preceding my enrollment at the University of Pittsburgh, my responsibilities in the Department of Pathology, Microbiology and Immunology Section at Virginia Hospital Center included isolating, identifying, and reporting infectious microorganisms. Additionally, I have three years of laboratory work experience from the Avian Virology Diagnostic Lab at Penn State University and the Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Department at Thomas Jefferson University.

I chose to continue my education at the University of Pittsburgh for its reputation and numerous opportunities. The Graduate School of Public Health is home to faculty with diverse research interests, offers a wide-selection of courses, has close ties to external public health facilities, such as the Allegheny Department of Health, and has many active student organizations; all great opportunities for obtaining a well-rounded education.

## Areas of Interest and dissertation work

Building upon my clinical laboratory background, I am interested in studying effects of infectious and inflammatory diseases on subclinical cardiovascular disease measures. I would like to focus on high-risk and minority populations, especially those with HIV or SLE.

## Remote training experience

I am interested in pursuing a remote training experience at a facility that measures subclinical cardiovascular disease in underserved, rural or minority populations.

## Perspectives on the program

As a new trainee on the Cardiovascular Training Grant, I was immediately impressed with the organization, enthusiasm and support of the faculty, staff, and fellow trainees. The high faculty-to-student ratio allows for a personalized program that compliments my background and supports my interests. The program also provides an environment to interact with senior students. I find comfort communicating with those experiencing similar schedules and pressures.

I am confident that the Cardiovascular Training Grant will provide me with the knowledge and experience to become a successful Epidemiologist. After one semester, I gained a solid foundation of epidemiological principles, biostatical methods, and SAS programming. Over the next several semesters I plan to obtain a deeper knowledge of the risks that lead to cardiovascular disease, acquire the technical skills to measure subclinical atherosclerosis, and have the opportunity to collect and analyze data to answer my own scientific questions. This program will also provide me with the platform to become a confident leader in the field by providing me with the tools and support to grow professionally.

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## Advice to current and prospective students

My advice for prospective or newly enrolled students is to make contact with faculty and advisors early after your decision to enroll. Working with your advisor and networking with faculty are the best ways to find opportunities.

## Future plans and opportunities

After graduation, I plan to pursue a public health position that provides me with an opportunity to apply my knowledge and skills in both infectious and chronic disease in a practical setting. Currently, I am interested in a position where I may implement evidence-based medical policy in underserved, rural, or minority populations.