

2023

CCST Science & Technology Policy Fellows

PhD scientists, engineers, and social scientists making California's policies #StrongerWithScience.



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2023 CCST S&T Policy Fellows | Gurleen Roberts

CALIFORNIA STATE ASSEMBLY



Sam Mahanes (he/him/his)

After moving from Virginia to Southern California, Sam studied seaweeds and how they provide habitat to other marine species.

PhD: Biological Sciences, UC Irvine **BS:** Biology, Univ. of Miami

Utilities & Energy Committee



Stephanie Mitchell (she/her/hers)

Originally from Chicagoland, Stephanie investigated the impact of electric vehicle battery materials on the environment.

PhD: Chemistry, Univ. of Minnesota **BS:** Chemistry, Butler Univ.

Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee



Dirk Jamal Spencer (he/him/his)

Born and raised in New York City, Dirk studied how plants build leaves that maximize carbon dioxide absorption and minimize water loss.

PhD: Cellular Molecular Organismal Biology, Stanford

Transportation Committee **BS:** Genetics, University of Wisconsin-Madison



Aiyana Cortez (she/her/hers)

Raised in Southern California, Aiyana moved north to study early prediction of drug safety in individuals.

PhD: Biophysics, UC Davis **BS & Second. Teaching Cred.:** Microbiology, Cal State Long Beach

Housing Committee



Jeanmarie Gonzalez (she/her/hers)

Raised in Southern CA, Jeanmarie moved to the Bay Area in 2010 where she studied the immune responses behind cancer, asthma, and most recently eczema.

PhD: Biomedical Sciences, UC San Francisco **BA:** Molecular and Cell Biology, UC Berkeley

Office of Senator Durazo



Theresa Keates (she/her/hers)

Growing up mainly in the SF Bay Area, Theresa studied where in the open ocean seal food is and why.

PhD: Ocean Sciences, UC Santa Cruz **BS:** Biology, Western Washington University

Environmental Quality Committee

CALIFORNIA STATE AGENCIES & OFFICES OF THE GOVERNOR



Sophia Chan (she/her/hers)

Born and raised in the Bay Area, Sophia used X-rays to study membrane materials for carbon capture and other gas separations.

PhD & MS: Chemical Engineering, Columbia Univ.

Dept. of Toxic Substances Control **BS:** Chemical Engineering, UC Berkeley



Anh L. Diep (they/them/theirs)

Originally from Vietnam, Anh has called the Central Valley home for the last decade where they studied immune responses to Valley fever.

PhD: Quantitative and Systems Biology, UC Merced **BS:** Biological Sciences: Immunology and Microbio., UC Merced

Calif. Natural Resources Agency
30x30 California



Paul Furumo (he/him/his)

From the Midwest and Hilo, Hawaii, Paul studied sustainable land systems and worked with companies & farmers in Colombia to meet zero-deforestation goals.

PhD: Environmental Sciences, Univ. of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras **BS:** Biology, Univ. of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Calif. Air Resources Board
Office of the Chair



Opeoluwa O. Oyewole (she/her/hers)

From Nigeria and raised in Benin, Ope studied how viruses interact with human cells to identify targets for therapy.

PhD: Immunology, Pathology, and Infectious Diseases, Univ. of Nebraska Medical Center **MS:** Biochem., Univ. of Tulsa **BS:** Biomedical Chem., Oral Roberts Univ.

Department of Insurance
Climate and Sustainability Branch



Elyse Pennington (she/her/hers)

Born and raised in the greater Los Angeles area, Elyse studied smog formation from consumer products and Los Angeles air quality.

PhD: Chemical Engineering, Caltech **BS:** Chem., Harvey Mudd College

Gov's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES)
Recovery and Mitigation Programs



Alejandra Rios (she/her/hers)

From Los Angeles, Alejandra studied the use of microfluidics for high throughput optimization of radiotracers used in positron emission tomography.

PhD: Physics and Biology in Medicine, UCLA **MS:** Physics, Cal State LA **BS:** Biochemistry; Biophysics, Cal State LA

Calif. Energy Commission
Office of Chair David Hochschild



Elana Varner (she/her/hers)

From the Boston area, Elana's chemical ecology research used pheromones to help address bumblebee conservation and rodent pest management challenges.

PhD: Biological Sciences, Simon Fraser Univ. **BS:** Pre-Veterinary Sciences, Univ. of Mass. Amherst

Dept. of Pesticide Regulation
Executive Office



Diana Zamora-Reyes (she/her/hers)

Born and raised in the El Paso/Ciudad Juarez region, Diana studied changes to California's hydroclimatic extreme events in the past and present.

PhD: Hydrology, Univ. of Arizona **BS:** Environmental Geosciences, Univ. of Texas at El Paso

Strategic Growth Council
Climate Change Research Program