

Alicia Davis, M.S. in Biology

Alicia Davis was awarded the 2015-2016 Outstanding Thesis Award for her exceptional thesis, *Characterization of Influenza Nucleoprotein Body Domain as Antiviral Target*. Her research examined antiviral targets for influenza and could potentially lead to new, more effective flu vaccines. The Influenza A virus is ever changing, so vaccinations developed to combat one strain may not be effective when a new strain emerges. As Alicia explains in her thesis, the influenza A virus contains eight genome segments that reconfigure to form new subtypes of the flu, causing new outbreaks and sometimes leading to influenza pandemics.

Alicia's research focused on conserved domains of the viral nucleoprotein (NP), a more stable antiviral target less likely to mutate than other influenza proteins. Her work involved altering an NP protein and mimicking replication of the virus, resulting in changes in amino acids. Her research supports further investigation into the development of antiviral drugs that target this NP body domain.

The quality and significance of Alicia's work is well recognized: She has been published in the peer reviewed journal, *Virology*, and is the recipient of two prestigious research awards, the Southern California American Society for Microbiology MS Student Research Award, and the CSUPERB Don Eden Graduate Student Research Award.

Alicia is currently pursuing a Ph.D. at Irell & Manella Graduate School of Biological Sciences at the City of Hope in southern California. After receiving her degree, she plans to complete a postdoctoral fellowship, then pursue a career in academia. Her contributions to her field will help lead to more effective antiviral medications and improve the lives of many.

The Office of Graduate Studies offers a hearty congratulations to Daniel and Alicia. We wish them the best in their careers!