

Study Life Sciences

FEBRUARY 2021

WARWICK
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Hello

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter for those thinking of studying Life Sciences at Warwick. We hope you enjoy finding out a little more about our School and its students and staff.

Full course details are on our [web pages](#). If you have any questions about studying with us then please do get in touch via ug.lifesciences@warwick.ac.uk.

Breaking news - Following a proposal from our School, the University just became a member of the [BBSTEM University Alliance](#). The Alliance brings together universities and BBSTEM (Black British Professionals in STEM) in an attempt to improve career prospects for Black students. Watch this space!

The UG Admissions Team



Representation for all matters

by Abbi G-Medhin and Toluwa Lipede

After the protests that occurred in support of Black lives last Summer, we felt moved to find out how the School of Life Sciences (SLS) would respond. Attitudes nationwide were shifting.

We wanted assurance that SLS was prepared to support and uplift Black students upon their return to university in October. Lines of communication needed to be established between staff and students from minorities; to do this we needed representatives.

Our first act was lobbying for the addition of a Minorities Officer to the Student Staff Liaison Committee. In partnership with **Dr Martin Mik** (Director of Student Experience) and **Dr Leanne Williams** (Director of Wellbeing), we then founded and became Co-Chairs of the SLS Black Students Sub-Committee. Working closely with the Minorities Officer, we can ensure that staff are knowledgeable about Black students' experiences and proactive in fostering change. We also hope to serve our community by sharing resources and organising events to promote Blackness in STEM.

We are currently working with Martin to arrange a speaker series featuring Black Life Science graduates. We hope that inspiring presentations, given by relatable Black individuals, will help to highlight the scope of careers achievable with our degrees.

Representation for all matters. In the long-term, we want to set up a range of Sub-Committee's, reflective of the various minorities within the SLS community. Each with its own framework of co-chairs and year reps. The overarching aim is to ensure that all students' voices are heard. Through close collaboration with staff we believe vital positive changes can be made to better ALL student experiences.

Abbi G-Medhin

3rd year Biomedical
Science student



Toluwa Lipede
3rd year
Biomedical
Science student





Gaining skills through a placement year

All our degree courses offer a placement year option. Biochemistry undergraduate **Rob Newell** tells us about his.

"My workplace, Micropathology in Coventry, is doing diagnostic PCR for COVID-19, we typically handle 600 samples a day. This year in industry has given me experience in preparing and operating PCR and DNA extraction machines and the various tasks that are necessary to keep a lab running.

I am more interested in the practical side of the lab and chose to apply for this placement during my BSc in Biochemistry to give me a better idea of what a job in industry would be like."

Model to predict drug targets against COVID-19

A [computational model of a human lung](#) cell has been used to understand how SARS-CoV-2, the COVID-19 virus, draws on human host cell metabolism to reproduce. This study helps understand how the virus uses the host to survive, and enables drug predictions for treating the virus to be made.

Professor Orkun Soyer says "We use the model to predict reaction perturbations the can inhibit SARS-CoV-2 reproduction without inhibiting th host metabolic pathways."



Wellbeing & Support

The wellbeing of our students is hugely important to us, particularly now the pandemic has changed the academic and social landscape of university life in so many ways.

Dr Leanne Williams (Director of Wellbeing) works alongside our senior tutor team and personal tutors to provide an inclusive network supporting all our students throughout their time with us.

[Wellbeing Support Services](#) are there to offer further assistance, including Masterclasses, one-to-one appointments and therapy groups.

We want our students to thrive during their time in Life Sciences.



Spin your thesis 2021

Third year Biochemistry student **Katie Savva** (top left in the photo) and 3 students from other Universities have been accepted onto the European Space Agency's Spin Your Thesis 2021 campaign, carrying out research into the movement of nutrients into vesicles under hypergravity. The team will travel to ESTEC in Noordwijk, Netherlands, in September to use the Large Diameter Centrifuge there.

[Find out more](#)

Listen to a fascinating interview Katie recently gave about her interest in biochemistry, space and quidditch! [YouTube interview](#) (6 Feb)

Warwick Institute of Engagement

by **Jerry Yu**
2nd year Biochemistry student

"Those of you who actively engage with the universities official social media pages may have seen a student feature in their most recent post introducing the new [Warwick Institute of Engagement](#) (WIE) fellows. I'm currently a 2nd year Biochemistry student and I'm also a fellow of WIE.

Engagement is all about sharing your passion with others. As a life sciences student, my passion lies in bioscience. However, I first discovered my eagerness for sharing as an Outreach Officer for Warwick BioSoc. The goal of this position was to spread enthusiasm towards life sciences around the local community and that is what I did. I organised talks and even designed and taught life sciences lessons to primary school children.



As a result of my work, I was recommended by a professor to apply to be a WIE fellow. I applied and here I am now.

Engagement is important as it inspires and allows others to make informed decisions about what they enjoy. As a WIE fellow, I will be working to improve engagement in the university and create more engagement opportunities which are welcoming and interesting, especially in the current pandemic. More importantly, I would like to inspire you to share your passions with others. After all, what is life without a little bit of spice."

