Xue Liang, Ph.D., Merck Exploratory Science Center

Dr. Xue Liang has over 7 years of experience in microbiome research and is co-leading several programs in her current role to evaluate the impact of microbiome in health and disease, and how it influences therapeutic response. She has multiple publications in this field and is a member of Editorial Board of Frontiers in Pharmacology. She is an active member of AAAS and APS, and is on the Executive Committee of SAPA-GP. She earned her B.S. in Biological Sciences from Zhejiang University Chu Kochen Honors College, and a Ph.D. from the Department of Pharmacology in the laboratory of Dr. Garret A. FitzGerald at the University of Pennsylvania.

Travis Whitfill, Azitra Inc

Travis Whitfill is the Chief Science Officer of Azitra Inc. His background began in molecular biology and biochemistry after receiving scientific training at the MD Anderson Cancer Center and Duke University. He has co-founded several biotech and healthcare startups companies, including Azitra. Mr. Whitfill's strong background in entrepreneurship and business was recently acknowledged when he was named one of Forbes' 30 Under 30 in Healthcare in 2018. He serves as a partner at Bios Partners, a healthcare-focused venture capital fund based in Texas, and as the Senior Analyst at Bios Research, which provides research services to institutional investors. He also is an Associate Research Scientist in the Department of Pediatrics at Yale University. Mr. Whitfill received degrees from Yale University (MPH) and Dallas Baptist University (BS in biology).

Sonia Timberlake, Ph.D., Finch Therapeutics

Sonia is an expert at designing NGS-based algorithms for applications in microbial genomics, immunogenomics, and evolution. Prior to joining Finch, she built and managed AbVitro's computational algorithms and infrastructure, supporting high throughput single-cell immune phenotyping and repertoire sequencing technology. This technology platform was acquired by Juno Therapeutics, where Sonia led a multidisciplinary team to harness native adaptive immune responses for developing engineered cell therapies in oncology. Sonia graduated from Caltech with a B.Sc in Molecular Biology and received her Ph.D. in Biological Engineering from MIT.

Jason Norman, Ph.D., Vedanta Biosciences

Dr. Norman is the Associate Director of Systems Biology at Vedanta Biosciences, Inc. He has been with Vedanta since August of 2015 and is responsible for the development of the bioinformatics workflows utilized throughout the company. This includes establishing protocols for the metagenomic analysis of microbial communities in human clinical studies, detection of live bacterial consortia in human subjects, and *de novo* assembly of bacterial isolates. Dr. Norman completed his post-doctoral training with Dr. Herbert "Skip" Virgin at Washington University in St. Louis, where he discovered that the human virome was altered and may contribute to bacterial dysbiosis in inflammatory bowel disease patients. He completed his graduate training at the University of Michigan in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology where he studied HIV immune evasion mechanisms. Dr. Norman received his B.Sci. in Microbiology from Auburn University. He has published his work in several top tier journals including Cell, Science, eLife, and Nature Immunology.

Molly Gibson, Ph.D., Flagship Pioneering & Kaleido Biosciences

Molly is an associate with Flagship Pioneering, working as part of a team of entrepreneurial scientists to conceive, create, and grow first-in-class scientific ventures. Prior to Flagship, Molly lead the development of data strategy and computational capabilities at Kaleido Biosciences, a start-up focused on developing novel chemistries to target the microbiome. Molly received her Ph.D. in Computational & Systems Biology from Washington University School of Medicine, studying the development of the infant gut microbiome, emergence of antibiotic resistance in the environment and the clinic, and engineering of novel bacterial strains as therapeutics.