

# Canadian Science Policy Fellowship

## 2019-20 Federal Government Fellow Biographies

### **Margaret Bancercz, Ryerson University** **Hosted by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada**

Margaret Bancercz received her PhD in Policy Studies from Ryerson University in Toronto. She specializes in food policy and governance, and multi-stakeholder collaboration in food policy development. She also holds a master's degree in Environmental Studies from York University in Toronto where she began her studies in food policy. It was during her graduate studies when her passion for food studies flourished. She has carried this passion through as a sociology instructor in the latter years of her PhD, educating undergraduate students on topics in the social, environmental, political, and economic sides of food production and consumption.

Between her master and doctoral educations, she obtained experience as a policy and programs intern at the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs in the Regional Economic Development Branch. Margaret also has an undergraduate degree in international studies from Glendon College at York University, where she focused on environmental issues and Latin America. Collectively, her education has been very interdisciplinary, allowing her to take an interdisciplinary approach toward research and policy problems.



### **Tamazight Cherifi, Université de Montréal** **Hosted by Canadian Food Inspection Agency**

Tamazight Cherifi holds a bachelor's degree in food science from the University of Tizi-Ouzou in Algeria. She received her master's degree in applied microbiology and biological engineering from the AgroParistech School in France. Before applying to the Canadian Science Policy Fellowship, she was a doctoral student at the Research Chair in Meat Safety (CRSV) in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Montreal. While pursuing her master's degree, she joined the National Institute of Agronomic Research to study food processes alongside the dynamics and structure of lipid bodies. She worked on the possibilities of storing large amounts of lipids in the yeast *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* by using plant compounds as a source of renewable energy.

Her passion for food microbiology led her to do a thesis in veterinary microbiology. During this thesis, research, identification, and characterization of certain peculiarities of food pathogens on the raw materials of meat products were at the heart of her research. I had the privilege of collaborating with researchers from the provincial and federal governments, leading to three successful publications.



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### Jacqueline Ha, McGill University

#### Hosted by Infrastructure Canada

Jacqueline Ha obtained her PhD in Experimental Medicine at the Lady Davis Institute for Medical Research, McGill University. Her thesis investigated cell signaling networks and mechanisms of therapeutic resistance in breast cancer. Prior to her doctorate, Jacqueline completed her BSc-Biological Sciences and MSc-Medical Sciences degrees at the University of Alberta. She also holds a business certificate from the Life Science Entrepreneurial Program at the John Molson School of Business, Concordia University.

Jacqueline is the co-founder of two non-profit organizations, TeamUP Science and National Student Network, and Vice President of Communications for Science & Policy Exchange. She is a strong proponent of equal opportunity, mentorship, and youth advocacy. Using her experiences, Jacqueline hopes to engage the public and facilitate active and productive discussions in national and international policy and governance.



### Sarah I.K.M. King, McGill University

#### Hosted by the Office of the Chief Science Advisor

Dr. Sarah I.K.M. King has a wealth of entrepreneurial, academic, and industrial experience. In her role as Science Advisor at Canada's Museums of Science and Technology (Ingenium), she offered strategic advice and guided teams in the establishment of science communication strategies. She also participated in the development and delivery of knowledge transfer, new exhibitions, digital projects, public and educational programs. Before joining Ingenium, Sarah worked as an agri-food engineer and senior consultant, where she led the foundation of a consulting agency, developed corporate training and advisory services for agri-food businesses and investors, and conducted market research and financial analysis. Her academic and professional training included advanced studies and application of statistics, modelling, and mathematics.

After earning her MSc in Agri-Food Engineering from Université Laval, Sarah pursued a PhD in Biomedical Engineering at McGill University where she managed several multidisciplinary research projects on the design of novel nutraceuticals with potential against cancer and chronic diseases. Within the community, she has contributed her time and expertise to non-profit organizations that promote social safety and well-being, including Community Mediation Ottawa and Educate and Feed Communities Foundation.



Dr. I.K.M. King believes in the power of innovation, science and technology to create products, food, therapeutics and processes that will bring greater economic and social gains to our society.

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### James McCoy, University of British Columbia

#### Hosted by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research

As an undergraduate student at the University of Melbourne, James McCoy completed a double Bachelor of Arts (Philosophy of Science) and Science (Biotechnology), which sparked his interest in asking both how and why we do science. After completing a PhD at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute in Melbourne, he began his post-doctoral studies with Professor Brett Finlay at the University of British Columbia. There, James developed a series of interlocking projects using high throughput technologies to investigate how disease-causing bacteria modify the human gut.

As a senior postdoctoral researcher, he was also a leader in the laboratory. Much of his work involved coordinating close collaborations between other academic and industry research groups, supervising the projects of junior lab members and initiating a range of mentorship and peer-support programs. Outside of the lab, James became keenly interested in policy for early career researchers (ECRs). He co-founded Future of Research Vancouver, a group aimed at developing policy recommendations to improve funding and training structures for Canadian early career researchers (ECRs). He organised a symposium in 2017, bringing together ECRs to discuss the challenges faced by young scientists and poll potential solutions. Through this work, James received a travel award to attend the Canadian Science Policy Conference, which exposed him to the wider world of evidence-based policy. In 2019, he began discussion with the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research to include recommendations in their strategic guidelines.

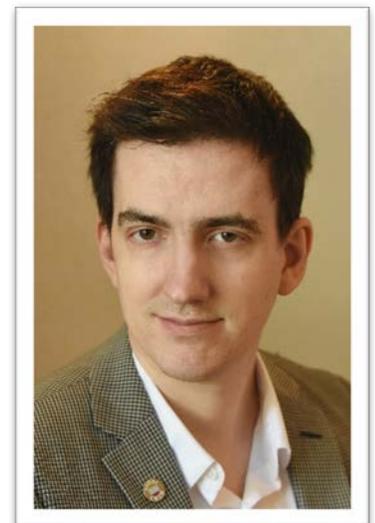


### François Pelletier, Université de Montréal

#### Hosted by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

François Pelletier is a recent graduate of the Université de Montréal and Paris 1: Panthéon-Sorbonne, with a doctorate in History. His primary research studies the relationship between government and business, the formulation of energy policies, and international relations. His thesis, which will soon be published in France, concerns the career of the first president and founder of the oil company Total, Ernest Mercier. Since completing his PhD, François has published and participated in conferences on subjects linked to economic history such as government regulations, trade policy, strategic planning, and natural resources.

François also worked as an editor and writer for one of the largest editing companies in Montreal. In April 2019, he finished a research fellowship at the Management Department of HEC Montréal. This postdoctoral position was his first opportunity to link past and present and to mobilize his knowledge of business history in order to tackle current issues facing governments and companies. François has since focused on how history can guide and inform policies. He firmly believes knowledge of the past brings perspective and context to the formulation and implementation of public policies.



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### **Olga Pena, University of British Columbia**

#### **Hosted by Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Office of the Chief Science Operating Officer**

Olga Pena completed her PhD at the University of British Columbia, where she contributed to a better understanding of the immunopathology of sepsis and discovered a new set of biomarkers. She is a former Canada Vanier CIHR and Killam scholar and her PhD work laid the research grounds for the creation of Sepset Biosciences Inc, a spin-off biotech company developing a first-in-class diagnostic assay for the early and rapid diagnosis of sepsis. Olga earned her undergraduate degree in Clinical Microbiology from Javeriana University in Colombia, where she was born and raised. She was selected as a Young Research Scholar by Colombia's Science Funding Agency, Colciencias, allowing her to expand her interest in science research. Olga possesses extensive research and management experience, which she obtained working at research institutions in Colombia, the United States, Australia, and Canada.

Olga is involved in a variety of local and international capacity-building initiatives and organizations. She founded the Accessible Science Initiative and was part of several Sepsis organizations such as the Canadian Sepsis Foundation. Through her involvements, Olga connects her passion for science to the impact it can have in society by applying effective science communication, promoting international cooperation and supporting patient engagement activities. Moreover, based on her own challenges and experiences as an Immigrant Woman in Science (IWS), Olga co-founded the IWS Network to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion, and empower other IWS across Canada. Olga hopes to combine her science expertise and advocacy efforts to contribute to the development of evidence-based policy in Canada and the strengthening of science diplomacy in the world.



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### Arthi Ramachandran, Concordia University

Hosted by Natural Resources Canada

Arthi Ramachandran's interest in marine biology and conservation began in high school when she had the opportunity to participate in an educational program at the Huntsman Marine Science Centre in St. Andrews, New Brunswick. This amazing opportunity started her on the path towards becoming a scientist. Following her passion for science, Arthi received a Bachelor of Science in Biology and went on to pursue a PhD in Microbial Ecology, both at Concordia University. During her graduate studies, she focused on Arctic ecosystems, which led to an opportunity to conduct research in the Arctic Ocean, both on CCGS Louis S. St.-Laurent, Canada's largest icebreaker, and at the Canadian High Arctic Research Station in Nunavut. Her research expeditions allowed her to witness the dramatic effects of climate change to Arctic ecosystems first hand. She had meaningful discussions with members of Northern communities about how climate change is directly affecting their way of life. Her research experiences changed her outlook and led her towards science policy. Arthi hopes to use her scientific education and knowledge of ecosystems to create policies that help preserve biodiversity and mitigate the negative effects of climate change on remote communities.



In addition to her studies, Arthi is very involved within her community. She is the Treasurer at Science & Policy Exchange, a Council Member at the Association of Polar Early Career Scientists (APECS) and a member of the Youth Advisory Committee at the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. Her philanthropic work stems from her desire to build more collaborative and inclusive environments for active public discourse on global affairs. Through these various organizations, Arthi aspires to bring the many voices of young diverse Canadians onto national and international platforms.

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### **Nicholas Zacchia, University of British Columbia** **Hosted by Defense Research and Development Canada**

Nicholas Zacchia completed his PhD at the University of British Columbia and TRIUMF: Canada's Particle Accelerator Centre. His research in nuclear medicine focused on developing new theoretical models to describe the production of radionuclides for medical scans. He earned a Master of Science from the University of California in Santa Barbara where he worked in a biophysics lab, developing scientific instruments for studying biological nano-materials. Nicholas obtained his Bachelor of Engineering with a minor in philosophy at Concordia University where his graduating capstone project — the design and construction of a linear particle accelerator — won a national student design competition and earned him a spot as a TEDx conference speaker.

In his spare time, Nick builds and programs autonomous robots for various university and international level competitions. He has punctuated his academics with exchanges and internships in Australia, Denmark, Germany, and Canada. Being keenly interested in the way science and technology affect society, he has also published journal papers studying the tangible effects of bioterrorism events in the United States.



### **Razak Abu, University of Saskatchewan** **Hosted by the Canada Energy Regulator in Calgary, Alberta**

Razak Abu moved to Canada from Ghana to pursue his PhD in Environment and Sustainability at the University of Saskatchewan. Having lived in Norway, where he obtained his Master's in Development Geography at the University of Bergen, the weather in Canada is not new to Razak. Growing up in a farming community and watching rural communities lose their farmland to large developmental projects, Razak developed a research interest in environmental governance and sustainable rural livelihoods. This interest steered him towards completing a Bachelor of Arts with a major in Geography and Resource Development, and a minor in Political Science at the University of Ghana. For his master's thesis, Razak examined the effects of land sales on farming livelihoods in a rural community in Ghana. He proceeded to investigate the socio-economic impacts of hydro-dam development on Indigenous communities in Northern Saskatchewan for his PhD dissertation.

As a graduate student at the University of Saskatchewan, Razak received training in Mentored Teaching and Philosophy and Practice of University Teaching. He then went on to teach an undergraduate course and co-teach a master's project course. He held the International Dean's Scholarship and Teacher Scholar Doctoral Fellowship at the University of Saskatchewan. Razak's passion for contributing knowledge to impact society has led him to focus on a career in research and development.

