

## Christine Mirzayan Science and Technology Policy Graduate Fellows 2011 Fall Biographical Sketches



**Matt Aldag** (Fall 2011; IOM/HCS) received his PhD in neuroscience from UCLA, where his doctorate focused on epilepsy and characterizing electrophysiological abnormalities in brain regions associated with intractable seizures and memory formation. During his doctoral work, Matt was a member of UCLA's Neuroengineering Training Program and conducted research in collaboration with medical device companies. He holds a bachelor's degree in neuroscience with a co-major in journalism from Emory University. Matt has written freelance science and medicine feature stories for major newspapers including *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and *The Los Angeles Times*. For the last four years, Matt has worked as a health care consultant providing strategic advice for hospitals, healthcare systems and federal government clients on topics including neurological disorders, traumatic brain injury, mental health and medical devices. As a Mirzayan Fellow, Matt plans to explore ways in which

policy shapes the quality and cost-effectiveness of health care delivery. Matt's career goals include developing new medical diagnostic and therapeutic methods, as well as working to advance the public's understanding and perception of science. In his spare time, Matt enjoys international travel, marathon running, skiing, yoga and soccer. (Updated 12/2011)



**Sarah Beachy** (Fall 2011; IOM/HSP) is a postdoctoral fellow in the Genetics Branch at the National Cancer Institute/National Institutes of Health where she characterizes transgenic mouse models of leukemia and lymphoma. Prior to joining NCI in 2007, Sarah earned her PhD in biophysics from the Roswell Park Cancer Institute Graduate Division at the University at Buffalo where she evaluated the therapeutic efficacy of a targeted therapy for cancer, a project funded by a dissertation grant from the Susan Komen Foundation. Since 2002, Sarah has been an active teacher and mentor for several students and most recently, she led a journal club for postbaccalaureate students at the NIH. She also serves as a reviewer for a peer-reviewed journal and as an assistant editor for the *Association for Women in Science Magazine*. As a Mirzayan Fellow, Sarah looks forward to understanding how the fields of

translational scientific research and policy intersect and how she could contribute to the decision-making process that

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directly influences patients in the clinic. When not in the lab, Sarah enjoys trying a new recipe, traveling to a new city, reading a novel and learning to renovate her home. (Updated 12/2011)



**Sharon Bergquist** (Fall 2011; NAS/Koshland) received her PhD in neuroscience from the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). Her doctoral work focused on the molecular mechanisms that underlie the nervous system's ability to compensate for perturbations and maintain brain activity and function. She also holds a BS in biology from the University of California, San Diego. During her doctorate, Sharon worked in the San Francisco public schools through the Science Education Partnership (SEP), which pairs scientists with public school teachers to develop and teach science lessons. Sharon served on the graduate student executive committee as the student health chair working to usher in an improved student health insurance plan. She also managed UCSF's Alliance to Save Energy Green Campus team, working to identify and implement programs to reduce energy usage across California campuses. Sharon is looking forward to her time as a Christine Mirzayan Fellow

where she is eager to learn first-hand how science and health policy are made, the links between research and policy, and how she can use her background to best contribute. In her spare time, Sharon enjoys sports of all kinds, yoga, and spending time with friends. (Updated 12/2011)



**Timothy Bouley** (Fall 2011; DELS/NRSB) is currently working with the World Bank to assess and respond to disease threats posed by global environmental change. In recent years he has contributed to a number of health and environmental projects around the globe. He has worked with the World Health Organisation climate change and health team in Switzerland, initiated global health and environment initiatives at Duke and Oxford, studied with Ayurvedic physicians in India, and partnered with other healthcare practitioners, students, and academics to raise awareness for global environmental health issues through international advocacy campaigns. He has served on several global health committees and environmental steering groups and authored a number of articles for both popular and academic press on global health and/or global environmental change. While a Fellow at the National Academies he worked with the Nuclear and Radiation Studies Board, supporting a report exploring

potential cancer risk affiliated with nuclear facilities in the U.S. He holds degrees in biology, bioethics, environmental change and management, and medicine from Tufts, Harvard, Oxford, and Duke. (Updated 2/2012)



**Carey Chen** (Fall 2011; PGA/STEP) received her master of Philosophy in technology policy from the Judge Business School at University of Cambridge, where she led a team to devise a policy valuation framework to screen the universe of a sustainable agrifund in order to categorize companies in various sustainability tiers for Sustainable Asset Management, the company behind the design of the methodology of the Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes. Previously, she worked for three years as a consultant at Accenture and acted as a subject matter expert in SAP business intelligence. Thanks to the job, she also became an expert in frequent flyer and hotel points programs. While completing her bachelor's degree in chemical engineering at Columbia University, she gained valuable financial modeling and analytical skills through internships at BlackRock and Merrill Lynch Equity Research. Carey

loves basketball and tennis and is always up for a game (or two) whenever and wherever. She also enjoys traveling (has touched a koala and a tree kangaroo in Melbourne, Australia!) and doing bike tours in new cities. (Updated 12/2011)

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**Winyoo Chowanadisai** (Fall 2011; IOM/FNB) received his PhD in nutrition from the University of California, Davis. For his undergraduate studies, he attended the University of California, Berkeley, majoring in psychology and neurobiology. He completed his postdoctoral training at the University of California, Davis and the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Mass. He is currently a tenure-track assistant professor at Oklahoma State University. His research program seeks to identify nutrient transport genes which may underlie genetic susceptibilities to developmental disorders and be responsive to nutritional interventions. His interest in public policy is centered on translating findings of suboptimal nutrition and inadequate health into health promotion by improving nutrient intake, increasing access to healthful foods, and fostering physical activity. He uses the science policy exposure gained through the Mirzayan Fellowship on a daily basis when teaching how research findings can be translated into policy recommendations in nutrition at the national level. (Updated 4/2016)



**David Cooke** (Fall 2011; DEPS/BEES) received his PhD in condensed matter physics in December 2010 from the University of California, Berkeley, where his dissertation focused on the fundamental science behind modern hard drive technology, exploring the electronic and magnetic properties of these novel material systems through microcalorimetry. Prior to this, he received his BS in physics from Harvey Mudd College, a liberal arts college that specializes in the sciences while stressing a broader impact. Dave first became interested in science policy while campaigning for the Union of Concerned Scientists against Propositions 23 and 26 in California in 2010. In the spring of 2011, he worked with the Goldman School of Public Policy and the Environmental Protection Agency to find ways of mitigating the adverse health impacts of poor air quality in the San Joaquin Valley while remaining within the EPA's mandate. As a Mirzayan Fellow, he developed a better understanding of energy and environmental policy through work with the Board on Energy and Environmental Systems, focusing on efficiency studies in the automotive and lighting sectors and renewable energy opportunities through marine hydrokinetic power. He continues to work with BEES as a Research Associate. In his free time, Dave enjoys cooking, eating, experiencing live music, and fighting an on-again/off-again relationship with running. (Updated 2/2012)



**Sarah Domnitz** (Fall 2011; IOM/HCS & NCPF) earned a PhD in physiology and biophysics and a certificate in molecular medicine from the University of Washington in 2011. Her graduate research focused on proteins that facilitate chromosome movement during cell division. In the molecular medicine certificate program, she learned to apply her knowledge of basic cell biology to the understanding, diagnosis, and treatment of human disease. She earned her undergraduate degree in biopsychology from the University of Michigan. Sarah's experience in science research and teaching the biological basis of health to students sparked her interest in communication of science to the public. Her career goals include improving communication between the scientific community and the general public to positively impact public health and advance science policy. As a Mirzayan Fellow, Sarah wants to learn how a scientist with a cell biology background can contribute to health science policy on a national level. In her spare time, Sarah serves on an advisory board at Seattle Art Museum where she develops event programming and policies. (Updated 12/2011)

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**Candice Sachi Gerbin** (Fall 2011; NAE/Media) received her PhD in biological chemistry from UCLA, where she focused on regulation of receptor proteins involved in cancers and development of fluorescence-based assays aimed at finding more targeted cancer drugs. She holds a BS in biology from Harvey Mudd College. Sachi enjoys teaching science to a broad audience, which she has done as a high school biology teacher in Japan through the JET Program, and as a writer for Nature Publishing Group's education website. She is interested in improving public health and safety by increasing public awareness about related issues. Through the Mirzayan Fellowship, Sachi is looking forward to learning about how to effectively communicate information to the public, promoting science and engineering, and gaining a better understanding of how the policy world works. In her free time, she enjoys traveling and good food. (Updated 12/2011)



**Paola Giusti** (Fall 2011; PGA/BHEW) is research assistant professor in the Department of Genetics at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, where she is using functional genomics and genetics approaches to gain mechanistic insight onto schizophrenia and other psychiatric disorders. For this work, she was recently awarded a K01 Mentored Research Scientist Development Award by the National Institute of Mental Health. Since joining UNC as a postdoctoral researcher in 2012, Paola has served as a leader and co-chair (from 2013-2014) of the Postdoctoral Association. Before coming to UNC for her postdoctoral position, Paola was a Mirzayan Fellow at the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, where she worked on policy issues related to diversity and equity in education and the competitiveness of higher education institutions. Paola grew up in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where she earned a BS in biology at the University of Puerto Rico-Rio Piedras. In April 2011, Paola completed her PhD in cell and developmental biology at Harvard University, where her doctorate research focused on studying the molecular basis of neurodegeneration. Since 2013, Paola has been working with Ciencia Puerto Rico (CienciaPR; [cienciapr.org](http://cienciapr.org)), a non-profit volunteer-based organization that connects the Puerto Rican scientific community and seeks to broaden Latinos' engagement with science through education, careers in STEM disciplines, and the development of science endeavors in Puerto Rico. (Updated 4/2016)



**Daniel Grady** (Fall 2011; DBASSE/CNSTAT) grew up in the hidden valley of Oak Ridge, Tenn. He earned his B.S. in mathematics from the College of William & Mary in 2006, and moved on to study applied mathematics at Northwestern University where he was awarded his PhD in 2012. His doctoral work, conducted in Northwestern's Research on Complex Systems group led by Dr. Dirk Brockmann, focused on novel methods for identifying the multi-level community structures encoded in measurements of human mobility, as well as finding generic, valid simplifications of systems drawn from many fields such as transportation, neuroscience, economics, and sociology. Daniel is also an experienced teacher and scientific communicator. Aside from giving presentations on his work at physics and network science conferences around the world, he has also designed and taught summer courses for undergraduates, and was a winner of the 2009 International Science & Engineering Visualization Challenge along with his colleague Christian Thiemann for a video they co-produced. The Mirzayan Fellowship provided Daniel with invaluable first-hand experience of how scientific issues are researched and discussed at the national level. Daniel is now pursuing postdoctoral studies with collaborators from Northwestern University while living in California. He enjoys bicycling uphill. (Updated 5/2012)

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**Victoria Gunderson** (Fall 2011; PGA/CWSEM & NAE/DEW) is currently completing a PhD in chemistry at Northwestern University. Her doctoral research focuses on understanding the basic design requirements necessary to practically convert solar energy to electricity and/or fuels. Prior to graduate school, Victoria received a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Carleton College and also worked as a chemist at UOP (Honeywell). Her professional interests lie at the intersection of science, technology, and policy with emphasis on energy and the environment as well as promoting workplace diversity. Victoria is excited to become a Mirzayan Fellow, where she can merge her academic and industrial scientific expertise with new policy insights. Additionally, Victoria has been active in the local community by teaching monthly science lessons to third/fourth graders and volunteering with Big Brothers Big Sisters. She is an avid traveler, aspiring wine connoisseur, and die-hard Cubs fan. (Updated 12/2011)



**Catherine Kolf** (Fall 2011; NAS/PNAS) is a native of Rockville, Md. Growing up near D.C., her love of science has always come with a keen understanding of the interplay between science, policy and private citizens. This led her to study biology and philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. In graduate school at Johns Hopkins University, through the National Institutes of Health's Graduate Partnership Program, Catherine followed her passion in the policy-rich field of stem cell biology. After graduate school, she worked towards her goal of educating the public in the sciences by teaching biology for non-science majors at community colleges, while also creating and teaching a summer course about the stem cell debate for Johns Hopkins University. She is currently immersed in the policy world as a legislative assistant for Congressman Dan Lungren. Catherine is excited to re-enter the science world through her Mirzayan Fellowship in the media office at PNAS where she hopes to hone her skills in science communication. She hopes to always remain active in educating the public in the sciences in order to affect policy. In her free time, she enjoys hiking and woodburning. (Updated 12/2011)



**Shan Ma** (Fall 2011; DELS/BANR) is a PhD candidate in agricultural, food and resource economics at Michigan State University. She received a master's degree from her current department and a bachelor's degree in environmental economics and management from Renmin University of China. Her graduate research focuses on the valuation of ecosystem services linked to agriculture, using both revealed preference from agricultural land market and stated preference by farmers and residents. Shan has served as a graduate representative for an agro-ecological research site in the U.S. Long Term Ecological Research Network for two years, and actively interacted with people from multiple disciplines. She also worked as an undergraduate intern in the China office of the World Wide Fund for Nature. Shan's career goal is to transform research into real-world policies and strategies that promote the sustainable development globally. By participating in the Mirzayan Fellowship, she hopes to obtain practical experience in science policy analysis, and bring additional economic perspectives to BANR. In her spare time, Shan enjoys exploring diverse nature and culture through traveling, photographing, reading and museum visiting. (Updated 12/2011)

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**April Melvin** (Fall 2011; DELS/BASC & PRB) recently defended her PhD in ecosystem ecology at Cornell University. She holds a bachelor's degree in ecology from the University of Rochester. April's research focuses on understanding how pollutants influence ecosystem health and nutrient cycling. For her dissertation, she investigated how changes in soil calcium availability caused by acid deposition affect carbon and nitrogen dynamics in temperate forests. Prior to graduate school, she worked at Duke University, where she studied the effects of elevated atmospheric carbon dioxide levels on forests. These experiences piqued her interest in science policy and led her to take an environmental science policy course in Washington D.C., where she explored the current state of federal climate change legislation. As a Mirzayan Fellow, April hopes to gain a better understanding

of how scientists contribute to the development of effective environmental policy. In the long term, she would like to work at the interface between research and policy, promoting the incorporation of science into policy formulation while striving to find solutions that balance environmental health with the various socio-political pressures that often surround this issue. In her free time, April enjoys being outside hiking and biking. (Updated 12/2011)



**Kristina Mitchell** (Fall 2011; DBASSE/BOSE) is currently completing her PhD in chemistry from the University of California, San Diego. Her research focuses on the synthesis, characterization, and biological applications of biodegradable, silica nanoparticles. She will be a first-generation PhD recipient and has come to greatly value education. During the last two years of graduate school Kristina was given the opportunity to be an NSF GK-12 STEM fellow. The GK-12 program served as a way to combine her passion for education and science. During this time, she gained more insight into K-12 science education and became interested in the development of educational standards. She is interested and excited to work with BOSE because she wants to understand how science education policy is formed and how science standards are developed. Kristina ultimately

plans to go into teaching. She feels the Mirzayan Fellowship would provide her with the opportunity to help her peers understand how educational policy is determined while also allowing her to help students navigate the path from high school to college and beyond. Kristina enjoys participating in book clubs, knitting, and experimenting with dessert recipes. (Updated 12/2011)



**John "J.P." O'Har** (Fall 2011; TRB/TAD) is currently in the second year of the doctoral program in civil engineering in the transportation systems engineering group at Georgia Tech. He earned his MS in civil engineering in the summer of 2011 and earned his BS in civil engineering in 2009, both from Georgia Tech. J.P. was awarded a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship in 2010. His proposed research includes developing a risk appraisal framework for vulnerable (to the impacts of climate change) transportation infrastructure assets, that uses existing transportation asset management systems, in order to provide a strategic platform for climate change-related investment decision making. Through his participation in the Mirzayan Fellowship, J.P. seeks to improve his understanding of the federal transportation policy-making process. J.P. recently stepped

down as the president of Georgia Tech's student chapter of the Institute of Transportation Engineers. Prior to graduate school, J.P. briefly worked for a structural steel erection firm in the New York City area, where he is originally from. When he is not tackling transportation problems, J.P. enjoys playing, watching, and following soccer. (Updated 12/2011)

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**Vivek Prasad** (Fall 2011; DBASSE/CHDGC) completed his PhD studies in the summer of 2011 in Environmental Science and Public Policy at George Mason University (GMU) in Virginia. His dissertation took a bottom-up approach and explored the challenges and the potentials of adaptation to climate change. Prior to his PhD studies, he obtained a bachelor's degree in geology from Ranchi University and a post graduate diploma in rural development from the Xavier Institute of Social Service in India. He started his career as an assistant rural development officer at Hindalco Industries Ltd., where his work focused on emerging mining issues and strengthening local economies. In 2004 he received the Ford Foundation International Fellowship Program award, which enabled him to pursue graduate studies in the U.S. Through this fellowship he obtained a master's degree in resource management and administration in 2006 from Antioch University New England in New Hampshire. As a consultant for the World Bank, Vivek worked in the social development department where he provided support to the social dimensions of climate change team. Vivek teaches environmental policymaking in developing countries at GMU while continuing his research in climate change vulnerability, adaptation, and mitigation.(Updated 12/2011)



**David Proctor** (Fall 2011; PGA/COSEPUP) recently completed postdoctoral research at the University of Dundee where he characterized the structure and activity of the catalytic RNA from the fungus *Neurospora crassa*. In addition to postdoctoral research, David collaborated with colleagues to establish the UK Research Staff Association in order to provide a collective voice for UK postdoctoral researchers. He also facilitated the creation of strong ties between the College of Life Sciences Postdoc Association at the University of Dundee and organizations throughout Scotland. Prior to becoming a postdoctoral researcher, David received a PhD in chemistry from The Pennsylvania State University and a BS in biology and chemistry from Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania. He continues to nurture researcher communities and build bridges between organizations as a member of the UK Research Staff Association and National Postdoctoral Association, and he also seeks to connect science and human rights as a volunteer with the AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition. As a Mirzayan Fellow, David hopes to focus and further develop his interests in science policy, which include the research workforce, science and human rights, evidence-based policy, and international collaboration.(Updated 12/2011)



**Chris Prosser** (Fall 2011; DELS/OSB) is currently a research scientist with Exxon Mobile Biomedical Sciences Inc. Prior to his current job he worked as a Knauss Fellow placed in the US EPA. Within the agency Chris worked on developing numeric nutrient criteria for fresh water bodies and establishing updated national ambient water criteria for aluminum. Chris received his PhD from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), College of William and Mary in marine science. His dissertation focused on the multi-stressor interactions between toxicants and bacterial pathogens in the zebrafish. While at VIMS he served as co-President of the VIMS graduate student association and as a graduate student representative for the school of marine science to the W&M graduate student association. Prior to his dissertation work, Chris received his masters in environmental management from Duke University, Nicholas School of the Environment. Chris received his bachelor's degree in biology and marine science from Coastal Carolina University. He has volunteered at the Bimini Biological Field Station, (Bimini Bahamas) working primarily to assist in a lemon shark tagging program. Additionally he had the opportunity to work as a production assistant with National Geographic. Through his work at the National Academies of Science, Chris gained a better understanding of how science helps shape policy and was able to use his interdisciplinary background to assist in decision making. In his spare time Chris enjoys sports, outdoor activities, travel and home-brewing beer. (Updated 1/2013)

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**Latarsha (Reid) Carithers** (Fall 2011; (IOM/BSP) is a Project Manager with the Office of Biorepository and Biospecimen Research at the National Cancer Institute. She completed her Ph.D. in pathobiology and molecular medicine at Columbia University in February 2011. Her doctoral work was funded by a National Research Service Award from the NIH and focused on developing mouse models of breast cancer to study the biological function of the protein encoded by the breast cancer susceptibility gene 1 (BRCA1). Prior to graduate school, Latarsha received her BS from Spelman College and participated in summer biomedical research programs at Morehouse School of Medicine, Stanford University, and the National Cancer Institute. As a Mirzayan Fellow, Latarsha worked with the Institute of Medicine on the Board on the Health of Select Populations where she gained a broad understanding of how science and policy intersect. Latarsha enjoys trying out new restaurants, traveling, and painting in her spare time. (Updated 12/2011)



**Naira (Rezende) Simmons** (Fall 2011, PGA/CSTL) is a patent agent in the San Francisco office of Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati (WSGR), where she is a member of the patent and innovation strategies practice working on matters in the biotechnology, medical device, pharmaceuticals, chemical and life science industries. She applies her scientific background to the prosecution of domestic and foreign patent applications, freedom to operate studies, patent portfolio development strategy, pre-transaction due diligence on behalf of both technology companies and venture capital firms, and IP counseling. Naira received a Ph.D. in the joint biochemistry, cellular & molecular biology program of Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences (2012), and a B.A. in biology with honors from Hunter College (2001-2005). She is currently completing a J.D. at the University of California, Hastings College of the Law. During her tenure at Cornell, Naira was a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Gilliam Fellow (2005-2010) and had the honor to learn from the Committee on Science Technology and Law (CSTL) as a Christine Mirzayan Science and Technology Policy Fellow. (Updated 2/2016)



**David Sweeney** (Fall 2011, PGA/CISAC & DELS/NRSB) is currently working on his PhD in nuclear engineering at Texas A&M University. He holds an MS in nuclear engineering also from Texas A&M and a BS in chemical engineering from Northwestern University. David's graduate research has focused on nuclear safeguards, nuclear nonproliferation, and international security. His dissertation research involves the characterization and modeling of state nuclear proliferation. While this study is very much concerned with the overall time necessary for proliferation it also seeks to understand state decision making and characterize the impact of specific technology acquisition or blockage, international safeguards, and a dynamic international environment. David has also held several internships and participated in technical training programs at Los Alamos, Lawrence Livermore and Oak Ridge National Laboratories. Through the Mirzayan Fellowship, David hopes to gain a better understanding of U.S. policy decision making processes that support the technical advancement and development of this country. Out of the office, David enjoys Crossfit, swimming, skiing, biking, most other things outdoors, good wines and fine beers, and spending time with his dog. (Updated 10/2011)

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**Cynthia Wei** (Fall 2001, NAS/NASEO) is currently Assistant Director of Education and Outreach at the National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center (SESYNC). As a Mirzayan Fellow, she worked on the Thinking Evolutionarily: Evolution Education Across the Life Sciences convocation and the Community Colleges in the Evolving STEM Education Landscape summit. Prior to coming to the National Academies, Cynthia was an AAAS Science and Technology Policy Fellow working at the National Science Foundation in the Division of Undergraduate Education. Building on her experiences as a K-12 science teacher and college-level biology instructor, Cynthia has explored a wide range of issues in STEM education while at NSF, focusing primarily on biology education and climate change education. At NSF, she also had opportunities to work on science writing and communication, an interest she has held since graduate school. Prior to the AAAS fellowship, she was a postdoctoral research associate at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, where she researched the cognitive abilities of corvids (including jays, magpies and nutcrackers). She has also studied cognition in honeybees, work that earned her a dual-degree PhD in zoology and ecology, evolutionary biology, and behavior from Michigan State University. She also holds a BA in biology (neurobiology and behavior) from Cornell University. (Updated 9/2012)



**Anna Williams** (Fall 2011; DEPS/SSB) is a Research Analyst with CNA's Center for Naval Analysis. Anna holds a PhD in organic chemistry from Northeastern University where her doctoral work focused on the development of small organic compounds as functional mimics of the protein alpha helix, for use as inhibitors of protein-protein interactions. Additionally, in another area of work, she developed synthetic methodology to incorporate radioactive nuclides upon complex aromatic compounds. Prior to her graduate studies, Anna received her bachelor's degree in chemistry with a minor in philosophy from Dickinson College. Anna first began to explore a growing interest in science policy while a graduate student, most notably through an NSF GK-12 Fellowship, and following the defense of her dissertation, she relocated to Washington D.C. as a Mirzayan Fellow with the Space Studies Board. In coming to the Academies, Anna was excited by its mission to provide independent scientific advisement in order to enhance policy decisions, and she greatly benefited from her experience as a Mirzayan Fellow as well as through a subsequent internship with the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the U.S. House of Representatives. (Updated 9/2012)



**Pria Young** (Fall 2011; NAE/CEES) is a current PhD candidate in the Chemical and Biological Engineering Department at Northwestern University. Pria's doctoral work focuses on the design, synthesis, and characterization of new solid catalysts with potential applications for the conversion of carbon dioxide into desirable compounds such as chemical feedstocks and potentially liquid fuels. In addition to her degree work, Pria has also served the graduate student body in several campus leadership positions through her organization of a "Preparing Future Professionals" panel series for S&T graduate students and through her advocacy work as the chair of the Graduate Leadership Council. Before arriving at Northwestern, she received her BS with high honors from Hobart and William Smith Colleges, as well as a BA in English, and then spent some time snowboarding and hiking in the mountains. Pria is passionate about the implementation of alternative energy resources and sustainable technology into the complex socio-technical infrastructure, and is looking forward to the opportunity provided by the Mirzayan Fellowship to examine the complexities of this field from a policy perspective. (Updated 10/2011)