

From July 2014 Scholar Spotlight:

GORDON AND BETTY MOORE FOUNDATION SUPPORTS ARCS SCHOLAR'S POSTDOCTORAL WORK

Alecia Septer was an ARCS Scholar at the University of Georgia during the 2010-2012 academic years. Following completion of her Ph.D. degree, Dr. Septer moved to Cambridge, MA, and Harvard University, where she is a Life Sciences Research Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Molecular and Cellular Biology. The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation is funding the three-year fellowship. She has published two first-author papers from her dissertation work and two co-author papers from her postdoctoral work.

Dr. Septer describes her postdoctoral research focus as follows: “Communication between individuals is an important aspect of social behavior and is required for coordinating group activities in a wide range of organisms. While we use language as a primary mode of communication, microorganisms have evolved their own diverse strategies employing diffusible molecules and contact-dependent mechanisms to send and receive signals both within and between species. Bacteria use these communication methods to coordinate group functions including host infection and toxin production for inter-cellular competition. As a microbiologist, I’m interested in understanding the genetic approach to identify and characterize the environmental factors, regulatory pathways, and molecular mechanisms that control social behavior in bacteria.”



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