

Graduate student profile:

Carina Carianopol

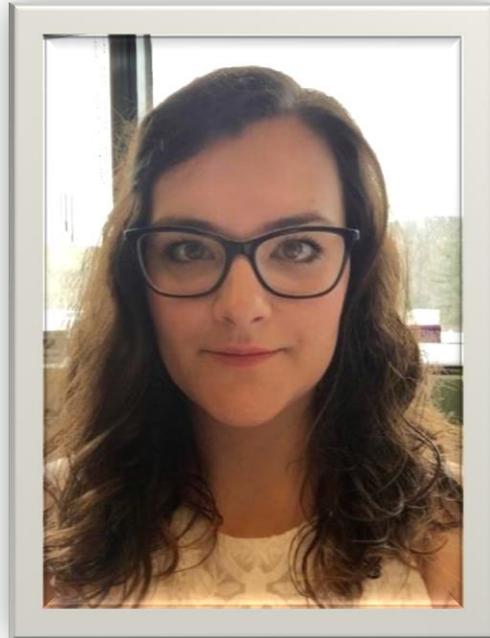
*PhD Cell and Systems Biology, 3rd year,
Gazzarrini Lab*

Previous degrees:

*Hon BSc, Cell and Molecular Biology
Specialist at UTSC*

Tell us about your research at UTSC:

My research involves investigating mechanisms important for plant stress response and seed germination (sprouting). I study a well conserved eukaryotic protein kinase, and am currently investigating the identity of its partners, and the complexes it forms under specific stressors during germination, and the mechanism through which this promotes plant survival under stress. Through this research, I hope to further our understanding of plant stress response, which could then be used to generate more resilient crop plants.



Tell us about why you chose your graduate program or lab:

Molecular biology has always been my passion, so the Cell and Systems Biology Program seemed to be a perfect fit. In the last year of my undergrad I had the chance to learn about plants and perform research in Dr. Sonia Gazzarrini's lab, studying seed development. I thoroughly enjoyed working with plants, the research projects in the lab and the atmosphere, and so I chose to stay for graduate studies.

What are your future career goals and how has your graduate work set you up to achieve those goals?

Throughout my graduate degree, my passion for both science and teaching have grown stronger. In the future, I would enjoy a career in academia, as a professor, which would allow me to teach as well as conduct research. Being in graduate school and having the opportunity to be a Teaching Assistant for various courses has developed my love for teaching and also deepened my passion for science. There is nothing better than explaining science to younger students! In addition, as a grad student I've had the opportunity to attend various conferences and share my research with the scientific community, as well as network and learn about research being conducted all over the world.

Tell us about life in Toronto:

Life in Toronto is very diverse! There are lots of hidden gems to visit if you're a nature fanatic, but also lots of city hangout spots.

Complete the sentence:

In my free time I like to create different types of crafts, read and swim.

Do you have any advice for prospective students?

"A good scientist is a person in whom the childhood quality of perennial curiosity lingers on. Once he gets an answer, he has other questions" (Dr. Frederick Seitz). If you are passionate about learning and conducting research, then graduate school is most likely right for you. Once you are in grad school, you will soon learn that research takes up most of your day, and even when you're no longer in the lab, you are still thinking about your research. My advice would be to take the time to get involved in other activities and take care of yourself, because it will ultimately help you persevere in your research.

Tell us about your craziest experimental finding or experience:

The craziest experience/experimental finding for me is reminiscent of Alexander Fleming discovering penicillin (although obviously not [yet] as grand). I mistakenly (because it was a late Friday night), left a treated set of plants to grow for longer than usually experimentally required, which resulted in an unusual but very interesting phenotype. Currently, this mistakenly found phenotype, is the main focus of my experiments.

Tell us something about where you are from:

I was born in Romania, and came to Canada when I was 12. Romania is mostly well known for Count Dracula, but in my (unbiased) opinion, there are many beautiful places to visit there, and if you're planning a trip to Europe, Romania should be on your list!