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THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA



## May 2026

Celebrating graduates and 20th class of KEYS interns



### Hello Caroline,

May is a time of celebration on the University of Arizona campus, with graduation festivities everywhere. It's a wonderful moment to reflect on accomplishments while also looking towards the excitement of the future. We've been lucky to do both here this May.

This month's newsletter features stories on two students working in BIO5 laboratories who graduated this spring: [Jacob Galloway](#) and [Lynette Valenzuela](#).

I'm also happy to highlight a piece by our friends at Tech Launch Arizona about the recent investment in [ProxyBio, a startup run in part by BIO5 faculty member Curtis Thorne](#). This article highlights the translational nature of our work — making sure that we get the research to the people that need it the most.

Next week we'll welcome our 20th cohort of KEYS research interns. These 58 students, drawn from our largest ever application class of over 500, represent 36 schools from 19 cities in eight counties. Students will be based here in Tucson

(including a residential cohort of 13 thanks to generous philanthropic support) as well as our campus in Phoenix and a virtual cohort.

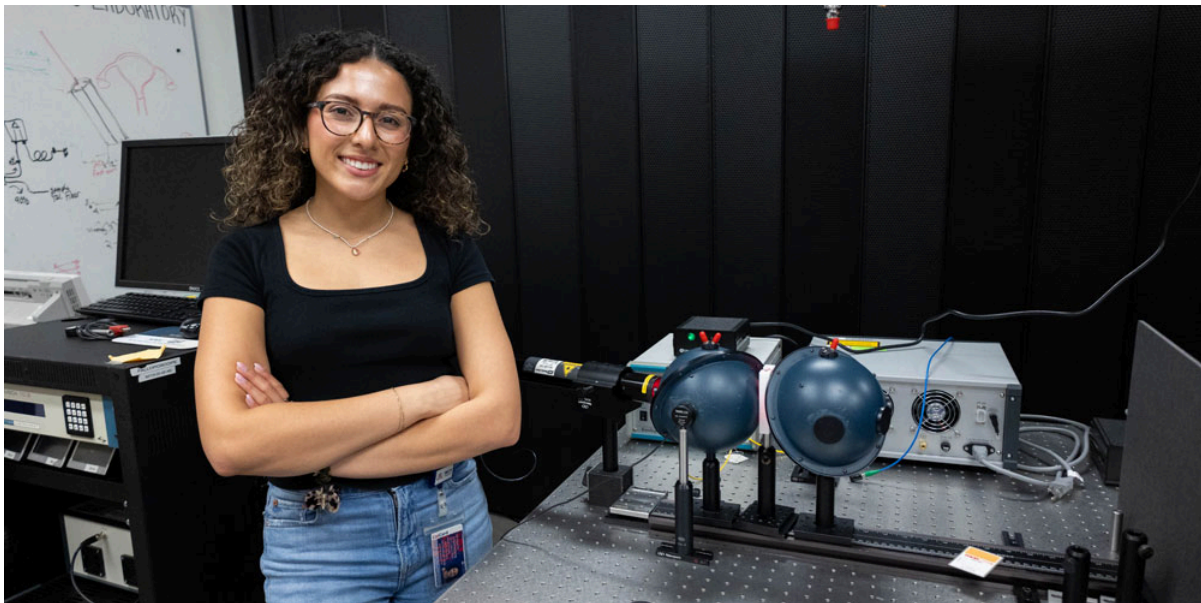
KEYS is one of my favorite parts of the year, and I am continuously inspired by the drive and talent of this next generation of researchers. You can read more about the program, its impact, and this year's class [in our 20th anniversary release](#).

With gratitude,

**Vignesh Subbian**

*Interim Director, BIO5 Institute*

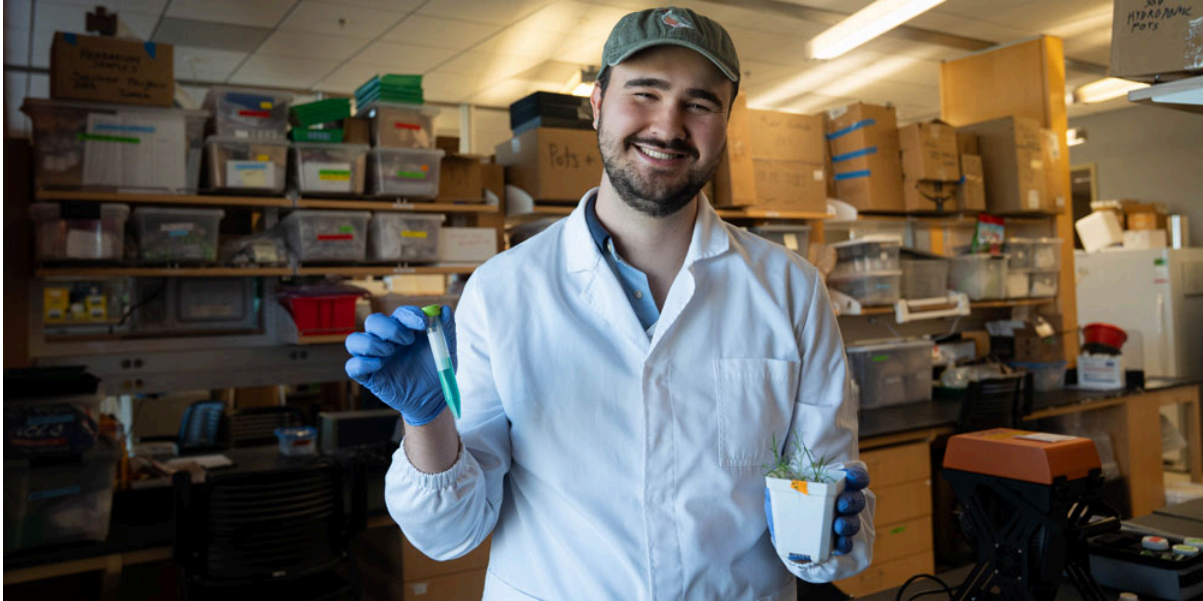
## Featured Stories



### Focusing the lens on ovarian cancer

Graduating with her master's in biomedical engineering, Lynette Valenzuela uses light to study fallopian tube tissue — work that advances ovarian cancer detection while helping launch her career in medical innovation.

[READ MORE](#)



## Turning toxic dirt into green gold

Transitioning from his master's to a doctoral program in environmental science, Jacob Galloway is using the "superpowers" of plants to clean toxic landscapes — pioneering a future where the metals in our technology are grown and recycled, not just mined.

[READ MORE](#)



## Celebrating 20 years of the KEYS Research Internship and the class of 2026

The BIO5 Institute's Keep Engaging Youth in Science (KEYS) Research Internship celebrates 20 years of providing transformative precollege research experience this summer and welcomes a new class of 58 students.

[READ MORE](#)

### Upcoming



#### Community Tours 2026: Plant-Soil-Environment Lab

**June 23, 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

**Thomas W. Keating Building**

Jump into the science on BIO5 community tour! These themed tours offer the opportunity to see the research in action by visiting laboratories, collaborative centers, and core support facilities. *Limited spots remain.*

**[Registration & Information](#)**



#### Inspiring Careers in Research 2026

**July 1, 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.**

**Thomas W. Keating Building Room 103**

Join us for an interactive panel featuring researchers from diverse disciplines. Anyone interested in learning more about pursuing a career in research and STEM is welcome!

**[Registration & Information](#)**



## KEYS Internship Showcase 2026

July 17, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Health Sciences Innovation Building

Join us in celebrating the 20th year of the KEYS Research Internship and the 2026 KEYS interns from across Arizona! Explore the research projects they've conducted alongside top scientists in University of Arizona labs.

[Registration & Information](#)

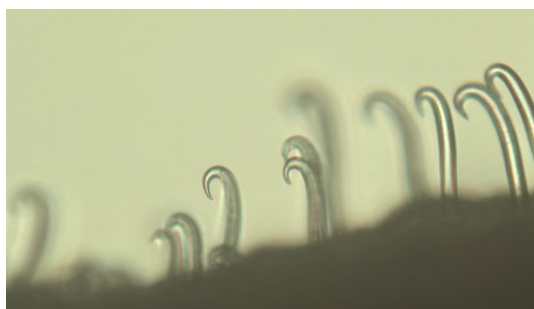
## In The News



### Graduating U of A student's health challenges led her to medical career

Mariam Rana's journey at the University of Arizona began with hands-on research through the BIO5 Institute's KEYS Research Internship in 2022 and led to dual degrees in physiology and medical sciences and public health.

[Read in Arizona Daily Star](#)



### Cool beans, smart roots: Scientists discover a new cell that helps seedlings survive drought-battered and nutrient-poor soils

BIO5 member **Alexander Bucksch** is part of a University of Arizona-led study that discovered a new root cell in common beans that helps seedlings survive drought and low-nutrient soils, offering insights for more climate-resilient crops and reduced fertilizer use.

[Read in UA News](#)



### New \$3.8M NIH grant funds research on 'mind after midnight' as a suicide risk factor

BIO5 member **Michael Grandner** is leading University of Arizona research supported by a \$3.8 million National Institutes of Health grant studying how being awake at night may affect decision-making and suicide risk.

[Read in UA News](#)



### University of Arizona startup ProxyBio raises \$3.5M to scale AI-powered organoid platform for cancer drug response

University of Arizona startup ProxyBio raised \$3.5 million to expand its artificial intelligence-powered organoid platform for cancer drug testing, with leadership from BIO5 member **Curtis Thorne**.

[Read in Tech Launch Arizona](#)

## Behind-the-Scenes



## Celebrating the next chapter

This month, we celebrated eight graduates from the BIO5 administration team at the University of Arizona, including five students and three staff members.

From communication and marketing to engineering, computer science and health innovation, each graduate brought their talents, creativity and hard work to the BIO5 community while earning their degrees. Watching them grow and pursue their goals has been incredibly rewarding.

We are so proud of everything they have accomplished and can't wait to see what comes next for each of them. 🎓

## Share with a friend!

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## Land Acknowledgment