

DEAN’S OFFICE

María S. Soengas
Dean for Academic Affairs

PARTICIPANTS
Personnel in training:
Nicolás Cuesta
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The main objective of Dean’s Office at the CNIO is to contribute to one of its core missions, that is, to train and promote new generations of scientists. In fact, over 60% of the work force at our institution are young researchers, including undergraduate students, predoctoral and postdoctoral fellows. We also hosted medical residents and a broad spectrum of visiting scientists from different countries and institutions. The CNIO dedicates particular emphasis to career development, supported in part by highly competitive PhD and postdoctoral programmes. Agreements are also in place with multiple universities and medical centres, to ultimately bridge the gap between academic and clinical environments.

Central to the activities of the CNIO Dean’s Office is to ensure the efficient training of our research personnel. We oversee PhD committee meetings and coordinate weekly Progress Report seminars, where PhD students and postdocs receive feedback on the scientific aspects of their work and on soft

skills that may help further their career. The Dean’s Office also works very closely with the CNIO Student Association (CNIOSA), which has increasingly become a highly active driving force behind an inspiring series of workshops designed to improve soft skills in and beyond academia. These activities are performed in concert with CNIO’s Training Programmes, as well as with the Innovation and Communications Offices, which are deeply committed to providing the best environment for our personnel. We are most grateful to the *Fundación Jesús Serra*, for their continuous support to strengthen career development programmes at the CNIO.

We believe that an informed society is better prepared to understand (and if needed, face) the diseases that constitute human cancer. Therefore, we are actively involved in knowledge dissemination. For example, over 60 CNIO PhD students and postdoctoral fellow volunteers this year took part in the 9th edition of our “*Meet a Scientist, Become a Scientist*” event.

Elena Sánchez
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Staff/Faculty:
Ana Cuadrado
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Juan Méndez

Jorge L Martínez
Héctor Peinado

This is an open doors activity that we hold as part of the *Marie Skłodowska Curie European Researchers’ Night* and through which over 260 participants of all ages learn about daily life at our Centre and have the opportunity to run an experiment side by side with our researchers.

Another of our highlights in 2022 was our Annual CNIO Lab Day. We had over 85 communications, which were evaluated by an *ad hoc* committee to select 14 “elevator pitch presentations” that highlight studies from each of the Centre’s Scientific Programmes at the forefront of research in their fields. We also had external speakers, focusing on different aspects of *Science and Communication* and on *Sustainable Laboratory Environments*. We thus learned from **Arkaitz Carracedo** (*CICbioGUNE*) about tips and tricks for a career in cancer research, and from **Guzmán Sánchez** (*European Climate Foundation*) about options for scientists in consultancy in European institutions. In addition, **Nikoline Borgermann** (*Ava sustain*) and **Iuliia Konko** (*Merck Life Science*) told us about products and solutions for a more nature-friendly laboratory space.

We also enjoyed the ‘*Director’s List Awards*’, which recognise outstanding contributions made by our personnel in 3 categories:

1. Awards for Excellence in Research by Predoctoral Fellows

We are grateful to the Agüera-Nieto family for a generous donation, in the name of their mother Antonia Nieto, to support an award to acknowledge the PhD student authoring the article with the highest impact in a scientific journal. In 2022, the ‘*Antonia Nieto Award*’ went to **Cátia Monteiro** for translationally significant new findings on radiosensitization of brain metastasis, published in the prestigious *Nature Medicine* journal. Additional awards in the PhD category went to **Mónica P de Andrés** (*Gut*), **Amanda Garrido** (*Journal of Hepatology*), **Javier Lanillos** (*European Urology*), **Antonio Galarreta** (*EMBO J*), and **Karolina Jodkowska** (*Nucleic Acids Research*), for their contributions to the understanding of different aspects of tumour initiation, progression and response to therapy.

2. Award for Excellence in Research by Postdoctoral/Staff Investigators

The awardee was **Carolina Villarroya**, for exciting new findings related to different genomic alterations in subtypes of chronic

“At the CNIO we aim high: to carry out the most innovative basic and translational research, and to prepare our trainees ‘to think outside the box’ so that they can best fulfil their potential as influential leaders.”

lymphocytic leukaemia (*Science Advances*) and in the control of pluripotent cells in cancer (*EMBO J*).

3. Outstanding Contribution to Outreach and Awareness

The 2022 recipients were *ex aequo*: **Ernesto López**, for his altruistic efforts in reorganising and promoting the CNIO Student Association (CNIOSA), and **Miriam Rodríguez**, for her continued contribution as a volunteer in the various activities related to dissemination of science to society carried out by the CNIO, such as the European Researchers’ Night, among others.

The Lab Day proceeded with additional awards from the Dean’s Office: 4 awards for the Best Oral presentations and 3 for the Best Posters. Beyond these, also presented were the Awards for Scientific Videos (**Anabel Sáez Mas**) and for T-Shirt Design (**Natalia Cuervo-Iturrioz**), both portraying the mission of the CNIO to get research closer to the bedside.

In summary, we are as proud as ever of the achievements of our young investigators at the CNIO. We thank all those public and private contributors that have helped fuel their efforts, and we will strive in our commitment to being useful to other investigators and to the society at large. ■