



2019 Scholar on Campus Nominee: Diana Samaroo, PhD

Diana Samaroo is an Associate Professor and Chair of the Chemistry Department. After the completion of her doctorate in Biochemistry, she was a post-doctoral fellow at Weill Medical College of Cornell University. Prof. Samaroo's research interests over the years spanned immunology, neurology, organic chemistry, biochemistry, and nanomaterials. She has worked on research projects that investigated the link between celiac disease and gluten, as well as schizophrenia. Applications of novel synthetic porphyrinoid-related compounds to photodynamic therapy and nanomaterials have been her main research focus. Porphyrin-type molecules appended to sugars and amines are often designed to target cancer cells or disease-causing cells. She investigates their photophysical properties and cancer cell uptake. Prof. Samaroo's research also seeks to address the molecular transport of these molecules and their interaction with proteins and DNA. Some of her most notable works, which she has co-authored, includes Eric Kandel, Nobel Laureate on RNA probes for cell imaging; photophysical properties of chlorins for theranostics (diagnostic and therapeutic) and the immune response to gluten in patients with schizophrenia.

Prof. Samaroo also has a pedagogical research agenda, addressing the chemistry curriculum and incorporating peer led team learning into it. Prof. Samaroo has a solid publication record; and its impact is evident, since her scholarly works has garnered over 400 citations. Prof. Samaroo has considerable experience reviewing grants and manuscripts. She has been a panel reviewer for the National Science Foundation, PSC-CUNY, and journals such as *Langmuir*, *Molecules*, *New Journal of Chemistry* and the *Journal of Chemical Education*.

Prof. Samaroo serves the institution as a member of the Assessment Committee and College Council; she has co-organized two conferences held at City Tech – SENCER Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference and the 13th Annual Black Male Initiative Conference. Since joining City Tech in 2009, she has shown a passion for mentoring undergraduate students by becoming involved in the Black Male Initiative program and Undergraduate Research Committee. She was the Chemistry Club Advisor for over eight years; and more recently the National Society of Collegiate Scholar (NSCS), where she was recognized by the NSCS as co-advisor of the year for Region 1. Prof. Samaroo has mentored over fifty undergraduate students at the college. Some of whom have been co-authors on her publications.

Aside from receiving funding for her own research, she has been a co-PI or senior personnel on a number of institutional grants funded by the National Science Foundation and National Institute of Health, exceeding \$2 million. The grants craft opportunities for underrepresented students at City Tech, by providing scholarships or research experiences.

A hallmark of Prof. Samaroo's research is the training of underrepresented minorities, specifically women and the mentoring of undergraduate students.