

Christina Ann Torres

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EDUCATION:

Teachers College, Columbia University

Fall 2020 – Present

Science Education Ph.D.

Graduate Research Assistant

August 2022 – Present

Co-President of the Sustainability Task Force

August 2021– Present

Arthur Zankel Urban Fellow, Project: Youth at the Center

August 2020 – August 2022

The City College of New York Honors Program (Full-Tuition Scholarship), CUNY

Fall 2013 – January 2019

Biology B.S./M.S.; Jewish Studies Minor

Master's Defense: Wood trait preferences of Neotropical xylophagous beetles (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae).

December 2018

Study Abroad: Evolution, Ecology, and Conservation in Ecuador and the Galápagos

January 2016

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Fashion Institute of Technology, *Adjunct Professor*

August 2018 – Present

Ecology and Environmental Problems: Fall 18; Fall 19; Spring/Fall 20; Spring/Fall 21; Spring/Fall 22; Spring 23

- Goal of this course is to teach ecology basics and apply them to analyze human caused environmental problems.
- Designed panel discussion debates that incorporated environmental current events and the fashion industry.

Intro to Physical Science: Spring 20; Fall 20

- Goal of this course is to teach physical science basics spanning physics, meteorology, and astronomy.

Intro Biology: Spring 19

- Goal of this course is to teach biology basics spanning cell biology, molecular biology, and ecology.

Ethics and Sustainability Club, *Faculty Advisor*

Spring 2020 – Present

- Advised the undergraduate students in this FIT student run organization. Organized guest lectures on sustainability for club members. Collaborated with students to take part in New York City climate action demonstrations.
- Guided grant writing and execution of a secondhand fashion swap education event during Sustainability Week.

OpenSciEd, *Educational Consultant*

September 2021 – May 2022

- Worked with the high school science development consortium to develop the high school science "ecosystems" unit using a Storylining curriculum development approach. All curricula are aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

Teachers College, Columbia University, *Arthur Zankel Urban Fellowship*

August 2020 – August 2022

Created the "Youth at the Center" (YATC) program in partnership with the Center for Sustainable Futures. The purpose of the initiative is to ensure all youth have the opportunity to engage with climate research and action.

2021–2022:

- YATC Storytelling Project: This project aimed to create a virtual repository of the voices and stories of the Climate Movement in New York City Public Schools. Future YATC work will use these stories to formulate political action on a local and state level.

2020–2021:

- Climate Action 101 Program: Immersed middle school students with no previous activism experience in climate action with climate experts and experienced youth climate activists. Students completed a project by the end of this program to communicate to their peers an aspect of the climate movement.
- Bridging Activism to Policy Making Program: Engaged NYC youth climate activists with a research project to understand how K-12 students think about climate change and the activism opportunities available to them. Key findings were used to facilitate meaningful interactions between youth climate activists and local policymakers.

See Thru (previously Skinno), *Co-founder and Chief Scientific Officer*

October 2017 – September 2019

The first B2B SaaS technology created that automatically communicates ingredient function to consumers while they are shopping for personal care products online.

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ROLE: Lead and managed the daily operations of a five-person development and data science team in the creation of a B2C iOS app (Skinno), online skin assessment (SkinMood), and B2B SaaS technology (See Thru). Translated the primary scientific literature for ingredient description database and designed backend database architecture.

Sephora Accelerate

March 2019 – September 2019

- One of 14 companies selected for the 2019 global cohort

Zahn Innovation Center 2018 Accelerator

June 2018 – August 2018

- Developed SkinMood skin assessment

Zahn Innovation Center 2018 Venture Competition, Zahn Technology Track

February 2018 – May 2018

- Developed Skinno's proof of concept (App Store Release: April 2018)

Nestlé Skin Health SHIELD Hackathon, 1st place winner, Team Leader

October 2017

- Lead a team of five peers in an app competition addressing skin health

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE:

Columbia University, Graduate Research Assistant

August 2022 – Present

Learning the Earth with Artificial Intelligence and Physics (LEAP); NSF-funded project

- Developed a summer institute for New York City public school teachers to create strategies for teaching about climate change using a standards aligned, multidisciplinary approach. First iteration will target needs in grade 1-5 classrooms in summer 2023.

Center for Sustainable Futures, Teachers College, Columbia University

- Conducted virtual focus groups to understand New York City public school sustainability coordinators' perceptions of engaging their students in climate change education and climate justice.
- Mapped organizations running climate change education related programming throughout the United States.

The City College of New York, Research Assistant

January 2015 – January 2019

Berkov Tropical Ecology Lab

Master's Thesis: Wood trait preferences of Neotropical xylophagous beetles (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae).

December 2018

- Examined how wood traits (wood density, moisture content, bark thickness, and nitrogen content) affect cerambycid community composition the Neotropics. Data were collected in partnership with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI).

RISE Program, NIH-funded, *RISE scholar*

August 2015 – June 2018

- Analyzed delta-15N with Panama cerambycid emergence and plant traits database.
- Used thin layer chromatography to test for secondary plant chemicals in the sapwood of tropical trees.
- Weekly career development and graduate school preparation workshops

Research Experience for Undergraduates, NSF-funded Internship

June 2015 – August 2015

- Analyzed the abundance, species richness, and community structure of cerambycids according to wood nitrogen.
- Prepared sapwood samples from Panama rearing project (2010) for total nitrogen analyses.
- Performed ANOVA (JMP), regression (JMP), and canonical correspondence analysis (PC-ORD).

PUBLICATIONS:

- Torres C, Barrios H, Pinzon-Navarro S, Berkov A. Wood trait preferences of Neotropical xylophagous beetles. *Biotropica*. 2023, *In Press*.
- Torres C, Vasudevan R, Gehring L, Casellato M. 2023. Youth at the Center: reflections of a partnership between researchers and youth climate activists during the COVID-19 pandemic. *In prep*.

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS:

- **Torres C, Vasudevan R, Gehring L, Casellato M.** 2023. "We all start somewhere": Reflections from the Youth at the Center Program. Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) Conference. Feb. 22, 2023.
- **Torres C, Gehring L.** 2022. Youth at the Center. Columbia Student Climate Symposium. Columbia Business School. Feb. 18, 2022.

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- **Torres C.** 2021. Equity and Justice in Sustainability Education. Presidential Webinar Series. Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE). Aug. 12, 2021.
- **Torres C.** 2021. Ecology Education: Youth activist perspectives and place-based learning. Doctoral Student Sustainability Research Showcase. Teachers College, Columbia University. April 1, 2021.
- **Torres C, Berkov A.** 2019. Wood is hard to eat. Why do beetles eat wood, anyhow?. Science in and beyond the city. 6th Street & Avenue B Garden, Sept. 19, 2019.
- **Torres C, Berkov A.** 2018. Wood density preferences of Neotropical xylophagous beetles (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae). Master's thesis defense, City College of New York, NY, Dec. 3, 2018.
- **Torres C, Berkov A.** 2017. Do wood functional traits affect the community structure of wood-boring beetles? CSTEP Regional Conference, New York, NY, April 29, 2017.
- **Torres C, Berkov A.** 2016. Do wood functional traits affect the community structure of wood-boring beetles? Annual City College Academy for Professional Preparation Poster Presentation, City College of New York, NY, Nov. 17, 2016.
- **Torres C, Berkov A.** 2016. Do wood functional traits affect the community structure of wood-boring beetles? Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students, Tampa, FL, Nov. 9-12, 2016.
- **Torres C, Berkov A.** 2016. Crepuscular cerambycids favor trees with moist wood. International Congress of Entomology, Orlando, FL, Sept. 26-30, 2016.
- **Torres C, Berkov A.** 2015. Correlations between wood-boring beetles and wood nitrogen content. Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students, Seattle, WA, Nov. 11-14, 2015.
- **Torres C, Berkov A.** 2015. Correlations between wood-boring beetles and wood nitrogen content. The fifth annual Research Experiences for Undergraduates Symposium, Washington D.C., Oct. 25-26, 2015.
- **Torres C, Berkov A.** 2015. Do beetles prefer a high protein diet?. Science in and beyond the city. 6th Street & Avenue B Garden, Oct. 7, 2015.
- **Torres C, Berkov A.** 2015. Correlations between wood-boring beetles and wood nitrogen content. NSF-REU Final Presentation, City College of New York, NY, Aug. 7, 2015.

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION:

Boss Girls Bootcamp, Guest Lecturer "Research 101"

July 2020; July 2021; July 2022

- Developed and taught a three-hour virtual workshop on the fundamentals of finding and interpreting peer reviewed papers to Boss Girls high school students.

FI:AF French Institute Alliance Française, Guest Lecturer "Nature Week"

July 2021

- Developed and taught a three-hour in-person workshop on city ecosystems and lead a mini Central Park "BioBlitz" using iNaturalist to middle school students in a French language immersion summer course.

8 Ball Community Quarantine Hangouts, Guest Lecturer "Bugs 101"

May 2020

- Developed and taught a workshop on the fundamentals of insect ecology to the 8 Ball and NYC community during a virtual public event.

BioBlitz, Team Leader

September 2015 – 2019

- Taught groups of students from Macaulay Honors College to collect arthropods using several methods in Fresh Kills Park, Brooklyn Bridge Park, Alley Pond Park, and Gowanus Canal.

American Museum of Natural History's Student Research Mentoring Program, Panelist

November 2018

- Spoke on a career panel to discuss scientific careers with high school students conducting research at the American Museum of Natural History.

APS Conferences for Undergraduate Women in Physics (CUWiP), Student Competition Judge

January 2018

- Judged the biophysics student competition research projects at the New York City CUWiP location.

East River Park BioBlitz, Team Leader

August 2017

- Taught groups of children from the Lower East Side Ecology Center to collect arthropods using several methods.

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE:

Sustainability Task Force, Co-President

August 2021 – Present

- STF is a student organization dedicated to climate action and growing a sustainable culture at Teachers College, Columbia University (TC).

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- Fall 2022 – Spring 2023: TC committed to making a sustainability a central tenet of the university. Working with TC administration, students, faculty, and staff to integrate climate change and sustainability into TC departments.
- Fall 2021 – Spring 2022: Created a set of climate action goals for TC to execute on by 2030, including divestment from fossil fuels and private prisons, climate change education for all TC students, and green infrastructure upgrades. Received support from 700 students, faculty, and staff in two weeks of petitioning. Leveraged this action to discuss changes with the TC President and Provost in January 2022. Organized a Climate Teach-In event with students, faculty, and staff representing the Education, Health, and Psychology sectors at TC in March 2021.

Zahn Innovation Center, Alumni Committee August 2021 – Present

- Collaborated with Zahn Center alumni and staff to engage current CCNY students in entrepreneurship.

Harlem Launch Alliance, Education Program Advisor May 2020 – May 2022

- Advised the creation of a hybrid, semester long curriculum to teach engineering students design, systems, and manufacturing engineering, with a rocket science and aerospace engineering concentrations.
- Created all course materials in collaboration with the CCNY Mechanical Engineering department and HLA Engineers.

Zahn Innovation Center, Entrepreneur in Residence January 2019 – January 2021

- Mentored college student run startups in the venture competition with technical product development.

Techstars Startup Weekend NYC Latinx in Tech, Pitch Coach and Mentor September 2018

- Assisted with mentorship of and gave pitch critiques to 14 participating startups.

Relay For Life, CCNY, Team Ambassador Manager/ Bring the People Lead August 2015 – May 2017

- Relay 2015: Team Ambassador Manager; Relay 2016-2017: Bring the People Lead. Head of all teams and team captains for events that collectively raised close to \$30,000 for the American Cancer Society.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS:

- Comparative and International Education Society, member
- Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation, member

HONORS AND SCHOLARSHIPS:

- Department Minority Scholar Scholarship Award, Science Education August 2022
- Lawlor Endowed Scholarship Recipient for Science Education August 2021
- Sephora Accelerate Global Finalist for See Thru March 2019
- BNY Mellon x Zahn Innovation Center Accelerator Pitch Competition, 1st place for Skinno August 2018
- Zahn Innovation Center 2018 Venture Competition \$25,000 Grand Prize Winner May 2018
- City College Academy for Professional Preparation Service Award May 2018
- Nestlé Skin Health SHIELD Hackathon, 1st place for Skinno October 2017
- Pearl Rosenthal Scholarship April 2017
- Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS) Presentation Awardee, Developmental Biology and Genetics November 2015
- United Transportation Union Insurance Association Scholarship May 2015
- Federal Law Enforcement Foundation Scholarship Winner October 2013
- New York State Regents Scholarship June 2013
- City College Honors Program, Four-Year Full Tuition Merit Scholarship May 2013

SKILLS:

Languages: Fluent in English; Intermediate Proficiency in Spanish

Software and Services: Microsoft Word, Power Point, and Excel, EstimateS, JMP-SAS, PC-ORD, AWS, Django

Project Management: Trello, Jira, Accelo, Airtable, Slack

Lab techniques: DNA extraction, PCR and gel electrophoresis, gene cleaning, thin layer chromatography, and preparing organic materials for nitrogen analyses.