

SFRBM Featured Woman in Science
[Samantha \(Sam\) Giordano](#), Ph.D.



Hometown: Staten Island, NY

Title and current institution: Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Alabama at Birmingham

Research interests: The effects of estrogen and estrogen deprivation on mitochondria, and cholesterol homeostasis in inflammatory cells.

How I fell in love with the role of estrogen in mitochondrial function: I love studying the mitochondria because the DNA is maternally inherited and being a girl that is fascinating! I am a bit of a feminist (hehehe). During my first post doc, I was exposed to the world of estrogen research and I thought that the mitochondria and its maternally inherited DNA had to somehow be linked to estrogen levels (the female hormone) and now I am hooked! There is an increased incidence of CVD, diabetes etc. in women after menopause and since mitochondrial dysfunction plays a role in these diseases, it is interesting to understand the role of estrogen.

A life challenge you had to overcome: One of the biggest challenges I had to overcome was admitting I didn't want to be a tenure track faculty member in a large academic institution, but at a smaller liberal arts college. I had always heard that being successful was a big academic job, but admitting to myself, that an undergraduate liberal arts primarily teaching job was the right position for me was difficult. I didn't want to disappoint my mentors but now I know I don't want to disappoint myself. Teaching at a primarily undergraduate college is where I am meant to be.

Best advice you have ever received: Take time for yourself, you only live one life. I used to think I needed to be constantly busy, always working toward a goal. I have now learned to appreciate a quiet day at home, just relaxing.

Pet peeves in science: Sloppy notetaking! How can anyone replicate your work if it's not organized!!! Always take detailed, organized notes!

Book or article that you would recommend: "Letters to a Young Scientist" Edward O. Wilson. This was a graduation gift from a friend. The different lessons imparted in the different letters describe the goal of all scientists, to problem solve. The advice is beneficial for all young scientists aiming for all different career paths in science!

Three things people may not know about me:

- 1) I'm addicted to caffeine...I love coffee!
- 2) I love the color pink (Although anyone who attended the past annual meeting knows that since I wore pink every day).
- 3) I love hard rock music; I have even been to see Disturbed and Rob Zombie.