

October 2025

Mikayla A. L. Watt Appointed as BDRP Trainee Council Liaison

On behalf of the Society for Birth Defects Research and Prevention (BDRP) Student Affairs Committee, we're thrilled to welcome Mikayla A. L. Watt as our newly appointed BDRP Trainee Council Liaison!

As the Trainee Council Liaison, Mikayla will have the opportunity participate in and learn the inner workings of the Society. She will also continue to participate in the Student Affairs Committee, work directly with other trainee members, and will be the voice of our trainees to our Council.



Mikayla brings an inspiring blend of leadership, mentorship, and scientific excellence to the role. A Ph.D. student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in Toxicology and Environmental Medicine, Mikayla has dedicated her academic and professional journey to fostering community and innovation in science. Known for her initiative and compassion, Mikayla has mentored students from diverse backgrounds through programs like IMSD and the Society of Black Biomedical Scientists. Within the BDRP and HESI communities, she has already made her mark in ensuring trainee experiences are more inclusive and impactful. Her colleagues describe her as a thoughtful leader who listens deeply, builds connections, and turns ideas into action.

As Pragati Coder, 2025-2026 BDRP President, notes: "With her bright smile and her well-honed skills in mentoring and leadership, I know that Mikayla will do great in welcoming and embracing our new and existing trainee members. I look forward to having Mikayla at our monthly council meetings and am excited to hear her ideas for creating an inclusive community for our students and trainees."

Please join us in congratulating Mikayla on this well-deserved recognition and in welcoming her as she begins her term. We look forward to all the ways she'll continue to strengthen and represent the BDRP trainee community.

Hao Chen, PhD, DABT
BDRP Student Affairs Committee Chair