

Dr. Mellissa Nixon, former WV-INBRE-supported research student publishes 16 peer reviewed articles with more than 160 co-authors.

Former WV-INBRE-supported summer research student, Mellissa Nixon (maiden Hicks), is currently a senior scientist at Merck & Co. She is working in the tumor intrinsic group where her research is focused on understanding how tumors evade the immune system. Dr. Nixon earned her Bachelor of Science degree from West Virginia Wesleyan College in 2010. There, she conducted research supported by WV-INBRE under the mentorship of Dr. Luke Huggins. Her work culminated in the publication of a paper in the European Journal of Scientific Research where she was first author (“Antibacterial and cytotoxic effects of red mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*, L. Rhizophoraceae) fruit extract”. *European Journal of Scientific Research*;11/5/2011, Vol. 63 Issue 3, p439). Dr. Nixon then attended The Ohio State University to pursue her PhD. She was the first author of 3 basic science manuscripts investigating the role of therapy resistance in breast cancer, and one clinical manuscript conducting a meta-analysis examining the benefit of dual anti-HER2 therapy vs single agent combined with chemotherapy. Dr. Nixon did her post-doctoral fellowship at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, where her research focused on how tumors evolve and become resistant to several drugs including immune checkpoint inhibitors. As a research fellow, she was awarded the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Scholar-In-Training-Award and podium presentations at the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium, the largest single organ site meeting in the world, and the AACR annual meeting. Dr. Nixon frequently worked in highly collaborative teams of oncologists, pathologists, bioinformaticians, cell biologists and cell signaling experts to co-author 14 additional publications with more than 160 different collaborators from around the world.



Dr. Nixon is now a senior scientist at Merck & Co. where she utilizes patient data from clinical trials to better understand how tumors evade the immune system. This work, she hopes, will lead to better drugs and rationale combinations to extend the life of patients with cancer. She is incredibly grateful to WV-INBRE for igniting her passion in research and opening the door to rewarding career opportunities.