

**Name:** Nico Graham Menjivar (PhD Candidate)

**Affiliation:** Colorado State University (USA)

**Biography:** Originally from the ‘Central Coast’ of California, I grew up in production agriculture raising primarily Angus cattle with some Simmental influences. Inspired by the craft of livestock judging, I spent a couple of years in Oklahoma on scholarship before transferring to Colorado State University (CSU) to complete my B.S. in Animal Sciences. Following my undergraduate studies, I then worked on my M.S. in Biomedical Sciences with a Specialization in Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ARTs) under the advisement of Dr. Jennifer Barfield. Today, I am a Ph.D. Candidate in the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences (CVMBS) under the direct supervision of Dr. Dawit Tesfaye. My current research focus is investigating the role of extracellular vesicle (EV)-mediated molecular signaling during oocyte and preimplantation embryo development and furthermore deciphering their molecular cargoes to engineer EVs for potential downstream application in ART procedures. Given the opportunity to serve the IETS Morulas Trainee Association, it would be my hope to strengthen the personal and professional development of trainees amid their graduate studies for a more optimal post-grad transition, albeit a position in academia or an industry-based profession. Furthermore, as a trainee myself, I faithfully encourage ‘trainee forums’ with agendas such as a better understanding of the publication process, webinars to exemplify the work being completed by ‘Morula Trainees’ and related experts in the field and expanding the opportunities within our society to strengthen the scientific connections between trainees of the varying institutions contributing greatly to the field. I currently serve as a Student Representative on the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion task force committee for CVMBS at CSU and keenly recognize the opportunities to implement and adapt some of these goals to strengthen IETS and the Morulas Trainee Association. My desire to serve in the governing position for the upcoming term is solely rooted in giving back to the society that continues to offer each of us so much opportunity in the field of reproduction. I look forward to the opportunity to address questions of the “Morulas Trainee Group” and to further discuss my interests and ideas.