

François Charih

(pronunciation: *Fran-swa Sha-ree*)

NuvoBio

Health Sciences Building, Room 4302

1125, Colonel By Drive

Ottawa, ON (K1S 5B6)

✉ francois@charih.ca

🌐 <https://charih.ca>

Research interests

Peptide therapeutic design
Computational biochemistry

Applied machine learning
Health informatics

Clinical decision support
AI in education

Education

Ph.D. in Electrical and Computer Engineering

Carleton University

Jan 2019 - Sep 2025

📍 Ottawa, ON

Thesis: Sequence-based peptide binder design to modulate the lysine methylome and beyond

Thesis advisor(s): [James R. Green](#) and [Kyle K. Biggar](#)

M.A.Sc. in Electrical and Computer Engineering

Carleton University

Sep 2016 - Dec 2018

📍 Ottawa, ON

Thesis: Machine Learning in Audiology: Applications and Implications

Thesis advisor(s): [James R. Green](#)

B.A.Sc. in Chemical Engineering

University of Ottawa

Sep 2010 - Apr 2016

📍 Ottawa, ON

Thesis: Design, Simulation and Optimization of a High Production Volume Toluene Plant

B.Sc.(Hons.) in Biochemistry

University of Ottawa

Sep 2010 - Apr 2016

📍 Ottawa, ON

Thesis: Structural Insights into the DNA-Binding Activity of Metalloregulator Fur in *C. jejuni*

Thesis advisor(s): [Jean-François Couture](#)

Relevant employment experience

Director of AI research & co-founder

NuvoBio

Sep 2023 - present

📍 Ottawa, ON

- Design, implementation, deployment, and continuous development of DarwinAI, NuvoBio's AI-based peptide therapeutic discovery platform
- Execution of a research program and dissemination of results in patents, peer-reviewed journals and conferences
- Fulfillment of peptide binder design contracts for academic and industrial clients
- Management of high performance computing platforms (computer clusters, cloud infrastructures, on-site hardware)
- Scientific popularization and communication

Lead researcher (contractual position)

Carleton University

May 2020 - Aug 2020

📍 Ottawa, ON

- Collaboration initiated by the WSIB of Ontario upon reading my master's thesis
- Managed a team composed of myself, one M.Eng. student, and one undergraduate student
- Responsible for developing a semi-automated audiogram digitization/interpretation solution using machine learning and computer vision to support the claim adjudication process at WSIB

Contract researcher

The Ottawa Hospital Rehabilitation Centre

Sep 2018 - Mar 2019

📍 Ottawa, ON

- Developed data collection software (iOS) for the annotation of stress levels of post-traumatic stress disorder/traumatic brain injury patients undergoing VR therapy (collaboration with Rehabilitation VR Lab at The Ottawa Hospital)

Contract researcher

Natural Resources Canada

Sep 2017 - Apr 2018

📍 Ottawa, ON

- Co-authored a technical report detailing how deep learning strategies can be deployed for passive monitoring of critical electrical infrastructure
- Responsible for the annotation of thousands of images for the development of deep learning-based segmentation models

Teaching assistant

Carleton University

Sep 2017 - Dec 2023

📍 Ottawa, ON

- SYSC4001 - Operating Systems (Fall 2023)
- SYSC2100 - Data Structures and Algorithms (Spring 2023)
- SYSC4415 - Introduction to Machine Learning (Winter 2023)
- SYSC2002 - Data Structures and Algorithms (Spring 2020)
- SYSC2006 - Foundations of Imperative Programming (Fall 2017, Winter 2019)

Undergraduate research assistant

Ottawa Institute of Systems Biology

May 2014 - Aug 2016

📍 Ottawa, ON

- Successfully crystallized and contributed to the resolution of the crystal structure of the protein under study
- Performed and optimized a variety of biochemistry techniques, including protein overexpression, mutational studies, structural characterization and protein-DNA interaction studies
- Used tools including high-throughput crystallization robots, x-ray diffractometer, FPLC/HPLC, protein modelling software, isothermal titration calorimetry on a regular basis in addition to applying other common techniques

Publications

Peer-reviewed journal articles

- [J17] N. Ridgeway, A. Chopra, V. Lukinović, M. Feldman, **F. Charih**, D. Levy, J. R. Green, K. K. Biggar. Machine learning-driven prediction of substrates for enzymes introducing or removing protein post-translational modifications (2025). *Communications Chemistry*, 8. [\[Link\]](#)
- [J16] G. M. Rurak, C. Groulx, A. McFee, A. Aguilar-Valles, **F. Charih**, J. R. Green, B. Woodside, G. Coppola, N. Salmaso. Phenotypic changes in cortical astrocytes transcriptome across the estrous cycle (2026). *Glial Health Research* [\[Link\]](#)
- [J15] **F. Charih**, J. R. Green, K. K. Biggar. Sequence-based protein-protein interaction prediction and its applications in drug discovery (2025). *Cells*, 14(18). [\[Link\]](#)
- [J14] **F. Charih**, M. Boulter, K. K. Biggar, J. R. Green. Leveraging learned representations and multitask learning for lysine methylation site discovery (2026). *Scientific Reports* (In press). [\[Link\]](#)
- [J13] V. Lukinović, H. Adhikary, M. Hoekstra, A. Shukri, **F. Charih**, A. Chopra, K. K. Biggar. Design of a selective peptide inhibitor targeting KDM5C demethylase activity (2025). *Structure*, 33. [\[Link\]](#)
- [J12] A. Shukri, A. C. Carroll, R. Collins, **F. Charih**, A. Wong, K. K. Biggar. Systematic in vitro optimization of antimicrobial peptides against *Escherichia coli* (2024). *JAC-Antimicrobial Resistance*, 6(4). [\[Link\]](#)
- [J11] A. H. Shukri, V. Lukinović, **F. Charih**, K. K. Biggar. Unraveling the Battle for Lysine: A Review of the Competition among Post-Translational Modifications (2023). *Biochimica et Biophysica Acta (BBA) - Gene Regulatory Mechanisms*, 1866(4). [\[Link\]](#)
- [J10] **F. Charih**, J. R. Green. Audiogram Digitization Tool for Audiological Reports (2022). *IEEE Access*, 10. [\[Link\]](#)
- [J9] **F. Charih**, K. Biggar, J. R. Green. Assessing sequence-based protein-protein interaction predictors for use in therapeutic peptide engineering (2022). *Scientific Reports*, 12(9610). [\[Link\]](#)
- [J8] K. Dick, J. B. Tanner, **F. Charih**, J. R. Green. GasBotty: Multi-Metric Extraction in the Wild (2022). *IEEE Access*, 10. [\[Link\]](#)

- [J7] G. M. Rurak, S. Simard, M. Freitas-Andrade, B. Lacoste, **F. Charih**, A. Van Geel, J. Stead, B. Woodside, J. R. Green, G. Coppola, N. Salmaso. Translomic database of cortical astroglia across male and female mouse development reveals two distinct developmental phenotypes (2022). *Cell Reports*, 38(5). [[Link](#)]
- [J6] **F. Charih**, J. R. Green, K. K. Biggar. Machine Learning-Driven Identification of Novel Lysine Methylation Sites with MethylSight (2020). *Star Protocols*, 1(3). [[Link](#)]
- [J5] K. K. Biggar*, **F. Charih***, H. Liu, Y. B. Ruiz-Blanco, L. Stalker, A. Chopra, J. Connolly, K. Frensemier, M. Galka, Q. Fang, C. Wynder, W. L. Stanford, J. R. Green, S. S-C. Li. Proteome-wide Prediction of Lysine Methylation Reveals Novel Histone Marks and Outlines the Methyllysine Proteome (2020). *Cell Reports*, 32(107896). [[Link](#)]
- [J4] **F. Charih**, M. Bromwich, A. E. Mark, R. Lefrançois, J. R. Green. Data-Driven Audiogram Classification for Mobile Audiometry (2020). *Scientific Reports*, 10(3962). [[Link](#)]
- [J3] S. Sarvan, A. Yeung, **F. Charih**, A. Stintzi, J.-F. Couture. Purification and characterization of *Campylobacter jejuni* ferric uptake regulator (2018). *BioMetals*, 32(3). [[Link](#)]
- [J2] S. Sarvan, **F. Charih**, J. Butcher, J. S. Brunzelle, A. Stintzi, J.-F. Couture. Crystal structure of *Campylobacter jejuni* peroxide regulator (2018). *FEBS Letters*, 592(13). [[Link](#)]
- [J1] S. Sarvan, **F. Charih**, M. Askoura, J. Butcher, J. S. Brunzelle, A. Stintzi, J.-F. Couture. Functional insights into the interplay between DNA interaction and metal coordination in ferric uptake regulators (2018). *Scientific Reports*, 8(1). [[Link](#)]

Conference proceedings

- [C5] R. Selzler, A. Smith, **F. Charih**, A. Boyle, J. Holly, C. Bridgewater, M. Besemann, D. Curran, A. D. C. Chan, J. R. Green. Exploratory Analysis of Ultra-Short-Term Heart Rate Variability Features in Virtual Rehabilitation Sessions. *IEEE International Symposium on Medical Measurements and Applications (MeMeA)*, Bari, Italy, June 1-July 1, 2020. [[Link](#)]
- [C4] K. Dick, **F. Charih**, J. Woo, J. R. Green. Gas Prices of America: The Machine-Augmented Crowd-Sourcing Era. *Conference on Computer and Robot Vision (CRV)*, Ottawa, ON, May 13-15, 2020. [[Link](#)]
- [C3] **F. Charih**, A. Steeves, M. Bromwich, A. E. Mark, R. Lefrançois, J. R. Green. Applications of Machine Learning Methods in Retrospective Studies on Hearing. *IEEE Life Sciences Conference*, Montréal, Canada, October 28-30, 2018. [[Link](#)]
- [C2] **F. Charih**, M. Bromwich, R. Lefrançois, A. E. Mark, J. R. Green. Mining Audiograms to Improve the Interpretability of Automated Audiometry Measurements. *IEEE International Symposium on Medical Measurements and Applications (MeMeA)*, Rome, Italy, June 11-13, 2018. [[Link](#)]
- [C1] K. Dick, **F. Charih**, Y. Souley Dosso, L. Russell, J. R. Green. Systematic Street View Sampling: High Quality Annotation of Power Infrastructure in Rural Ontario. *15th Conference on Computer and Robot Vision (CRV)*, Toronto, Canada, May 8-10, 2018. [[Link](#)]

Patents

- [P1] **F. Charih**, K. K. Biggar, J. R. Green. Method for in silico sequence-based design of a peptide which binds to a target. *Patent*, United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), 2025. (Provisional patent application no: 63/747,936)

Presentations and workshops

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| [PW12] MethylSight 2.0: Leveraging protein language models and multitask learning to uncover the human lysine methylome
CEEHRC 11th Annual Canadian Conference on Epigenetics | Mar 2026
📍 Online |
| [PW11] Drug discovery in the era of AI: Where are we, and where do we go from here?
BMG6696/BMG9901 | Jan 2026
📍 Ottawa, ON |
| [PW10] Introduction to molecular biology: fundamentals and standard practice
BMG5112/BIOM5101 | Nov 2025
📍 Ottawa, ON |
| [PW9] Machine learning in biomedical informatics and bioinformatics (guest lecture)
ECOR1055 | Nov 2024
📍 Ottawa, ON |
| [PW8] Machine learning in biomedical informatics and bioinformatics (guest lecture)
ECOR1055 | Nov 2022
📍 Ottawa, ON |

[PW7] Evolution-inspired peptide drug design GRADflix Challenge [Link]	Apr 2021 📍 Ottawa, ON
[PW6] AI in biology and biomedical engineering (guest lecture) ECOR1055	Dec 2019 📍 Ottawa, ON
[PW5] X-ray crystallography and computational biochemistry (guest lecture) BIOC3202	Nov 2019 📍 Ottawa, ON
[PW4] Machine learning in audiology (guest lecture) HLTH2001 and HLTH4102 (Carleton University)	Nov 2019 📍 Ottawa, ON
[PW3] Introductory data analysis with Pandas (workshop) Lecture Series (IEEE EMBS Carleton)	Oct 2019 📍 Ottawa, ON
[PW2] Building interactive visualizations in the browser with D3.js (workshop) Lecture Series (IEEE EMBS Carleton) [Link]	Feb 2019 📍 Ottawa, ON
[PW1] MethylSight: a computational approach to the elucidation of the methyllysine proteome 21st Chemistry and Biochemistry Graduate Research Conference	Nov 2018 📍 Montreal, QC

Selected posters

[P6] In silico design of a novel SMYD3 inhibitor with Darwin Life Science Day 6.0 (Carleton University)	May 2023 📍 Ottawa, ON
[P5] Darwin: an evolution-inspired algorithm for target-specific peptide inhibitor engineering American Peptide Society Symposium	Jun 2022 📍 Whistler, BC
[P4] Machine Learning in Audiology: Applications and Implications Ottawa-AI Alliance Workshop	Oct 2018 📍 Ottawa, ON
[P3] Extending the SHOEBOX Audiometry mobile audiometer with an automated audiogram classification system Life Science Day 2.0 (Carleton University)	May 2018 📍 Ottawa, ON
[P2] Systematic Street View Sampling for Accurate Urban Population Estimation Data Day 5.0 (Carleton University)	May 2018 📍 Ottawa, ON
[P1] Structural insights into the DNA Binding Activity of the Ferric Uptake Regulator in <i>Campylobacter jejuni</i> Honours Project Poster Day (University of Ottawa)	Apr 2015 📍 Ottawa, ON

Awards and honours

Carleton University Medal nomination , Carleton University Nominated by my Ph.D. examination committee for the University Medal awarded to graduate students for outstanding academic achievement	Sep 2025
Gabriel Warshaw Scholarship , Carleton University (1,700 CAD) Awarded to a graduate engineering students aspiring to a career based on the peaceful and environmentally respectful applications of engineering	Sep 2023
Queen Elizabeth II Scholarship in Science and Technology , Government of Ontario (15,000 CAD)	Sep 2022
American Peptide Symposium Travel Award , American Peptide Society (600 USD)	Jun 2022

Douglas Millar Scholarship , Dean of the FGPA (Carleton) (3,200 CAD) Awarded yearly to an outstanding graduate student in engineering	Jun 2020
Carleton University Senate Medal , Carleton University Awarded for outstanding academic achievement at the graduate level (1 medal/faculty awarded)	Aug 2019
Ontario Graduate Scholarship , Carleton University/Government of Ontario (15,000 CAD) Declined in favour of NSERC PGS-D award	May 2019
Postgraduate Scholarship-Doctoral (PGS-D) , NSERC (63,000 CAD, over 3 years) Awarded to high potential researchers to pursue doctoral studies	May 2019
Ph.D entrance scholarship , Carleton University (2,000 CAD)	Jan 2019
Engage/VIP-I Grant , NSERC/OCE (50,000 CAD) Co-authored the proposal for the grant awarded to Prof. James R. Green	Sep 2017
CREATE-BEST Scholarship , NSERC (5,000 CAD)	Sep 2017

Research mentoring

I have had the great pleasure to mentor the following students:

Tadesse Gessese , B.Sc. Project: <i>Prediction of cell-penetrating peptides</i>	Jan 2024 - Apr 2024
Abhinav Yalamanchili , M.Eng. Project: <i>Machine vision to digitize audiogram images (with WSIB Ontario)</i>	May 2020 - Aug 2020
Ahmed Abdelrazik , B.A.Sc. Project: <i>Development of an ergonomic audiogram digitization tool (with WSIB Ontario)</i>	May 2020 - Aug 2020
Siddharth Chadha , B.A.Sc. Project: <i>Digitization of audiograms with template matching</i>	May 2019 - Aug 2019
Pratyush Singh , M.Eng. Project: <i>Machine vision to digitize audiogram images</i>	May 2018 - Aug 2018
Ashlynn Steeves , B.A.Sc. Project: <i>Using kNN to impute values in incomplete audiograms</i>	Jan 2018 - Apr 2018

Academic service

Reviewer (Strategic Master's Awards) Canadian Institutes of Health Research	Feb 2026 - Mar 2026
---	---------------------

Peer reviews

I have reviewed submissions for the following peer-reviewed journals or conferences:

- Scientific Reports (6)
- Computational and Structural Biotechnology Journal (1)
- International Conference on Learning Representations (ICLR) (1)
- Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS) (1)
- IEEE International Symposium on Medical Measurements and Applications (MeMeA) (2)
- IEEE International Conference on Collaborative Advances in Software and Computing (CASCON) (1)
- The Laryngoscope (1)

- Drug Discovery Today (1)
- Genomics, Proteomics & Bioinformatics (1)
- STAR Protocols (1)
- Bioinformatics (1)
- PLOS ONE (1)

Other relevant roles

Executive Member Carleton University Biology Graduate Student Association	Sep 2023 - Apr 2024
Judge Ottawa Regional Science Fair	Apr 2019 - present
Communications Officer Carleton University Engineering in Medicine and Biology Society	Sep 2018 - May 2020
Judge Canada-Wide Science Fair	May 2018 - present

Languages

Natural languages: French (native), English (full professional proficiency), Moroccan Arabic (elementary proficiency)

Programming languages: Python, Rust, C/C++, JavaScript, Java, HTML/CSS