

SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
WINTER & SPRING 2023 EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION NEWSLETTER

WHAT'S NEW?

We hope this message finds you well. Given the recent Supreme Court rulings, we remain steadfast in our commitment to inclusivity, diversity, and support for our students, faculty, and staff. We are excited to share some recent updates and inspirational stories that demonstrate our progress and commitment to these principles.

Congratulations to 2023 New England Biolabs Postdoctoral Fellowship, Grisel Cruz-Becerra!

Dr. Cruz-Becerra's research delves into the realm of chromatin dynamics. She scrutinizes the complex regulation of chromatin, a nucleosome-composed substrate vital for eukaryotic nuclear DNA processes, such as replication, transcription, and repair. Her scientific inquiry is twofold: to comprehend chromatin's influence on nuclear DNA-based processes, and to unearth the factors and mechanisms that modulate chromatin functions. Currently, her studies focus on the interconnection between the tardigrade damage suppressor protein and the vertebrate-specific high mobility group N family of proteins. Through her investigations, she endeavors to uncover these proteins' roles in maintaining genome integrity, facilitating gene expression, and driving chromatin dynamics, as their alteration is frequently implicated in disease states. She is also a valued member of the BioSci EDI committee and has made significant contributions to diversity.



Neurobiology Professor Gentry Patrick Named to Endowed Chair
Prof. Patrick now holds the Kavli and Dr. William and Marisa Rastetter Chancellor's Endowed Chair in Neurobiology, established to support the research of a neurobiology faculty member who is committed to furthering equity, diversity, and inclusion.



School of Biological Sciences Director of Diversity Initiatives

We are very excited to announce that we now reviewing applications for a new position, the School of Biological Sciences Director of Diversity Initiatives (BDDI). The BDDI provides leadership, strategic planning, and counsel to the Dean of the School of Biological Sciences. The BDDI is a cabinet-level member of the Dean's leadership team and serves as a key strategist and subject matter expert in all EDI-related matters. The BDDI's portfolio includes faculty, staff, and student EDI and climate improvement; mediation and conflict resolution; and consultation.

Connections

Congratulations on a great Connections event! The May event focused on the topic of **"The Hidden Curriculum" in science**, and featured a conversation between Dr. Gustavo Silva (Duke University) and Jocelyn Olvera, a second-year Ph.D. student in the Biological Sciences. Dr. Gustavo Silva and Jocelyn Olvera discussed the hidden curriculums uncovered from their scientific journeys and identified ways we can make science more equitable. Connections is an informal gathering of students, postdocs, faculty, and staff, where we can all get to know one another better and promote a stronger sense of community within the School. Every day, we all work hard to learn, experiment, discover, and publish. We share the

pride and enjoyment of making contributions and celebrating our achievements. However, one of our greatest assets is our collective family of colleagues. While you may know some with whom you interact regularly, you probably still don't know many others who share the School of Biological Sciences as their home base. A goal of the School is to promote a stronger sense of community among students, postdocs, faculty and staff. Every day, we all work hard to learn, experiment, discover, and publish. We share the pride and enjoyment of making contributions and celebrating our achievements. However, one of our greatest assets is our collective family of colleagues.



MicroMBA Scholarships

We are excited to announce that 19 students will be awarded scholarships to participate in the MicroMBA program, with awards focusing on adversities that students need to overcome to take part in this program. Over the last two years, 36 students have been given scholarships. This opportunity is part of our commitment to nurturing leaders who blend academic rigor with real-world business skills. To learn more, please see this website:

<https://rady.ucsd.edu/programs/executive-education/micro-mba.html>.

BioSci Co-op program

The School of Biological Sciences at UCSD offers a unique Cooperative Education (Co-Op) Program, providing undergraduates of all disciplines an opportunity to gain paid work experience for up to



a year with partner companies. Unlike typical internship programs, the Co-Op scheme includes a longer commitment time, enhancing the quality and quantity of acquired skills and professional relationships. The Co-Op program's uniqueness lies in its provision of professional development training via a required course (BISP 182 Cooperative Education and Analysis), for which students earn academic credit. This initiative is among the country's first life sciences co-ops. Participants obtain paid work experience, academic credit, professional development training, mentorship from industry leaders, and an expanded professional network. They will also enhance soft skills and technical knowledge while receiving personalized career support from faculty and staff. To join, students can apply for listed positions year-round. Once hired, they can then enroll in the program. Companies interested in becoming partners can contact the program director, Melissa Hoon (mhoon@ucsd.edu). For the second consecutive year, 75% of students in the Co-Op Program identified as female.

Promotion of Dr. Susan E. Cohen

We celebrate the success of Dr. Susan E. Cohen, a former postdoc in the Susan Golden lab and University of California President's Postdoctoral Fellow (2011-2012), who has now been promoted to Associate Professor with tenure at Cal State LA. The President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program of the University of California, established in 1984, encourages women and minority Ph.D. recipients to further their academic careers within the University. The program offers postdoctoral fellowships, professional development, and mentoring to exceptional scholars across all fields, with an emphasis on advancing diversity and equal opportunity. A significant part of its mission includes improving equitable access in fields with underrepresentation of women and minorities, and focusing on research that addresses inequalities related to race, gender, disability, or LGBT issues. The program has had considerable success, with roughly 75% of fellows securing tenure track faculty positions and over 100 past fellows receiving faculty appointments at UC campuses since 2003. To learn more about the PFP program, please see this website: <https://ppfp.ucop.edu/info/>

BUMMP Support & Expansion

Last academic year, the Biological Unifying and Multidisciplinary Mentorship Program (BUMMP) supported 600 students. They are now expanding industry mentorships, increasing funding, and partnering with BioCAP to enhance career development programming and industry connections.



<https://www.bummpucsd.org/about>

Eureka! Scholars

We are excited to announce the Summer 2023 Eureka! Scholarship Program cohort started at the end of June and will include 26 student scholars this year. The Eureka! Scholars Program offers a highly competitive ten-week summer research experience for undergraduate Biology students. Under the guidance of a faculty mentor, Eureka! Scholars conduct leading-edge research in life science labs. This impactful, hands-on summer experience greatly complements students' academic learning and jumpstarts their role as budding scientists and future leaders.

Inclusive teaching

The EDI committee hosted two "Mobiles" workshops centered on promoting equity, inclusion, and access in teaching and mentoring. Participants did a hands-on activity, discussed ways in which our current teaching and mentoring environments might be inequitable or non-inclusive, and concrete ways to

promote inclusion and equity. Both workshops were well-attended with a mix of grad students, postdocs, staff, lecturers, and faculty. The committee will run this event at the annual Biology-Salk Retreat and hope to run this event again in the future.

EDI calendar

Please remember to check out EDI calendar for great events! (<https://biology.ucsd.edu/equity-diversity-inclusion/events-calendar.html>). In addition, major holidays and observances are now shown in this website. We hope that people will consider these dates when scheduling events.

VERSA Program

Melinda Owens (Neurobiology) and Thom Bussey (Chemistry) have launched their new NSF-funded REU (Research Experience for Undergraduates) program, VERSA (Virtual Education Research in STEM Academy). This innovative program accommodates students who cannot or prefer not to leave their homes for the entire summer, further extending the reach of our educational impact. The photo attached features the VERSA fellows and their mentors.



In all endeavors, they strive to foster an inclusive and supportive community, committed to the success of every individual. They appreciate your continued commitment and contributions to their shared goals.

Caption: Bottom row: VERSA fellows Lia Sanchez (U. Georgia), Joana Fang (UCLA), Alfonso Godinez Aguilar (Harvard), Ruqshana Amiri (Sac. State); Top row: VERSA mentors and staff Thom Bussey (Chem), Mia Minnes (CSE), Nkechi Iroanusi (Bio Ed Master's student, pod mentor), Adam Burgasser (Physics), Melinda Owens (Neurobio), Claire Meaders (CDB), Lilyan Mendez (Meaders research group)

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

The Division of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs (GEPA) provides infrastructure for summer research experiences at UC San Diego. The Summer Training Academy for Research Success (STARS) is an 8-week residential summer research and graduate school preparation program targeting non-UC San Diego students. They partner with UC San Diego faculty interested in hosting students in summer research, with a desire to have GEPA manage the logistics of activities outside of the research experience. Some of these may include logistics of transporting students from their home institution to UC San Diego, on-campus housing, campus onboarding, allocating stipends to students, grad prep activities, graduate student mentorship, building community with student researchers, campus tours, activities in the City of San Diego, learning about campus admissions processes, fee waiver to a UC San Diego graduate application, etc. In the last three summers, STARS has had a cohort of about 70-80 students primarily from the University of California System, California State Universities, and Historically Black Colleges and Universities. They have had small cohorts of Community College students, and master's students as well.

Faculty interested in writing grants, and or creating proof of concept opportunities may use the infrastructure of STARS to provide out-of-research experiences for their students. Please feel free to contact STARS to connect about opportunities to partner on future grant proposals, proof of concept opportunities for grant proposals, GEPA Letters of Support etc.

- Please see [NIGMS Administrative Supplements to Support Undergraduate Summer Research](#) for any questions about the [NIGMS Administrative Supplements](#)
- Please contact STARS Director Betty Ramirez b1ramirez@ucsd.edu to learn more about hosting students in STARS.

We encourage faculty to seek out funds to support undergraduates working in their labs and to help undergraduates find funding. For example, NSF provides supplemental funding for undergraduates seeking research experiences on NSF funded research. Similarly, **NIH RO1's** provide diversity supplements.



We also have a **general list of all undergraduate funding opportunities** (<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1nX0ZSiG97msXUn8Q8zVuqS8aPM9pTyo-LYqyYOjuwDs/edit?usp=sharing>).

In addition, please check out this **one-stop website**, the Undergraduate Research Hub for undergraduate research and funding opportunities at UC San Diego. (<https://ugresearch.ucsd.edu>).

INTERESTED IN EDI? HAVE AN IDEA? TELL US WHAT YOU ARE UP TO!

The **Get Involved** page on our Diversity Website has a webform (<https://biology.ucsd.edu/diversity/get-involved.html>) that links directly to the Diversity Committee and is a permanent repository for all this information.

GET FUNDING TO IMPROVE BIOSCI EDI

The School of Biological Sciences welcomes applications for funding projects aimed at addressing equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) issues in the School of Biological Sciences. Proposals could include any activity that you feel could have a positive impact to improving EDI in our School and the campus as relevant to the School. For more information: <https://biology.ucsd.edu/equity-diversity-inclusion/resources/edi-funds.html>

***Thank you for your commitment to equity and inclusion.
"In diversity there is beauty and there is strength." Maya Angelou***



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