



AWIS San Diego Newsletter

Spring 2018 Volume 26 Issue 2

Letter from the President

Dear AWIS-SD Members and Friends,

What a successful Spring AWIS-SD has had! As the new president of AWIS-SD, I would like to thank everyone for your warm welcome and all your hard work! We earned our Star Chapter Award again for 2017!

This hard work would also not be possible without the donations from our sponsors. Thank you to all AWIS-SD sponsors for making our events possible!

I would like to thank everyone for contributing their time with our committees and volunteering in the community. Everything we do would not be possible without all of you. Each committee works hard to make AWIS-SD so successful. This newsletter highlights all of our hard work put forth this Spring. Please read through to learn more about this great organization and the many events put on by AWIS-SD.

If you have not joined a committee or volunteered for an event with AWIS-SD, I highly encourage you to do so. So much can be gained by participating, such as growing your network and having a positive impact in the community. I participated in several events this year and was so proud and amazed by all the effort from everyone to create such successful events.

I look forward to meeting more members and growing our organization as a whole.

Sincerely,

Courtney

Courtney Benson
President AWIS-SD
president@awissd.org



Check out these AWIS-SD Outreach activities from this spring!

Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair EXPO day

by Mary Swinton

On Saturday, March 3, the Biocom Institute Festival of Science and Engineering kicked off their 10-day educational experience with Expo Day at Petco Park. The Outreach Committee of AWIS-SD once again took part. During this all-day event, many AWIS and non-AWIS volunteers introduced hundreds of festival attendees to the concept of the states of matter by teaching them about Oobleck.

Oobleck, a non-Newtonian fluid, is prepared by mixing two parts cornstarch and one part water. It behaves like a solid when exposed to a strong force, but stays in the liquid state otherwise. The Oobleck activity, organized by AWIS Outreach Committee members Mary Swinton and Kina Thackray, was a huge success and AWIS Outreach looks forward to participating in this event again next year.



Oobleck in the Grass-Logan Heights Library

by Chistina Grobin

This year, the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center is concentrating its efforts to promote science locally at 52 events in Logan Heights & Barrio Logan. On Wednesday, March 7, 2018, science play in Barrio Logan began. Many vendors and science aficionados were present to entice parents, teachers and students alike. AWIS volunteers Kina, Leana, Chistina, and Yessica, were stationed at outdoor tables and taught participants about Oobleck. Parents and grandparents squealed with fear and delight at the feeling of a substance that looked at first solid, but melted with the loss of mechanical pressure. Kids filled gloves with the Oobleck, resulting in an oddly human feeling purple “hand”. Several kids stayed at the AWIS table for the entirety of the event and smiles abounded. Leana and Chistina both left the event looking like seasoned painters with Oobleck spatters, and the grassy area was covered with cornstarch.



Outreach at Expanding Your Horizons Conference

by Prathima Garudadri

The AWIS-SD Outreach Committee organized a “crime scene” workshop for the March 10, 2018 Expanding Your Horizons (EYH) event at the University of San Diego. The EYH conference which draws over 600 female students between grades six through ten, offers an opportunity for them to take part in hands-on workshops to foster their enthusiasm for STEM, and encourage

them to continue their studies in science. Over the course of the day, three groups of 25 female students participated in the AWIS-SD “crime scene” workshop where they identified unknown solids, liquids, DNA samples, and fingerprints at each of four stations to determine who had committed the “crime”.

At each of the stations, AWIS-SD volunteers demonstrated the science behind crime scene analysis. At the solid analysis station, participants learned about the properties of solids and how to identify them by observing physical state, chemical structures, color, smell, pH, and the unknown solid’s reaction with various liquids. The students were fascinated to see how starch reacted with iodine to form a dark blue paste, while baking soda and vinegar form a bubbly fizzy reaction. At the liquid analysis station, participants identified an unknown liquid by observing viscosity, smell, pH, and by the unknown liquid’s reaction with baking soda.



At the DNA and fingerprint analysis stations, participants had great success in identifying subjects. They practiced in using pipettes and loading DNA into DNA gels. During the fingerprint activity, participants learned about the shapes found in fingerprints (whorls, arches, loops). In both stations, participants compared the sample found at the crime scene to the ‘suspect’ samples and identified which ‘suspect’ left the sample.

In addition to a fun exposure to science, participants also had the opportunity to interact with female scientists. Participants utilized any free moment to ask the volunteers what they do, why they like science, and how participants can continue working in the field. The students who participated in our workshop were very enthusiastic and curious. Their enthusiasm was matched by that of the fabulous group of women who volunteered their Saturday to mentor these girls, which really made this event a success!

AWIS-SD Outreach committee members Jessica Cassin and Prathima Garudadri were co-point persons for this event. Fellow AWIS-SD members and members of the science community, Alison Huang, Katherine Liu, Genevieve Ryan, Kina Thackray, Ana Armenta Vega, Victoria Shi and Kristin Bompiani volunteered at the event.

2018 Greater San Diego Science & Engineering Fair Poster Judging

by Alina Luk

This year's Greater San Diego Science & Engineering Fair (GSDSEF) was held on Wednesday, March 14, 2018 at the Balboa Activity Center Hall. GSDSEF was a welcoming new experience for many individuals who volunteered their time to represent AWIS-SD in judging science and engineering projects. Over 300 female student projects, from both junior (grades 6 to 8) and senior (grades 9 to 12) categories, were evaluated by 25 judges including AWIS-SD members and nonmembers with diverse scientific backgrounds and professions.



Upon entering the doors, it was immediately obvious that the event was flourishing, with projects filling the entire hall on rows and rows of tables. Judges were paired to explore a wide range of topics including Animal Sciences, Medicine and Health Sciences, Plant Sciences, Consumer Sciences, and many other topics in science and engineering fields. From research about 3D printing technology to creating codes analyzing the Hardy-Weinberg Equation, I was exposed to many topics and fields that I have little experience with, which made the judging experience even more fascinating. As a past AWIS-SD Science Fair winner, I was impressed by the creativity and complexity of this younger generation's projects. Attending and judging at GSDSEF reminded me of standing in that large hall on that nerve-racking day to present my project along with hundreds of other students from around San Diego County.

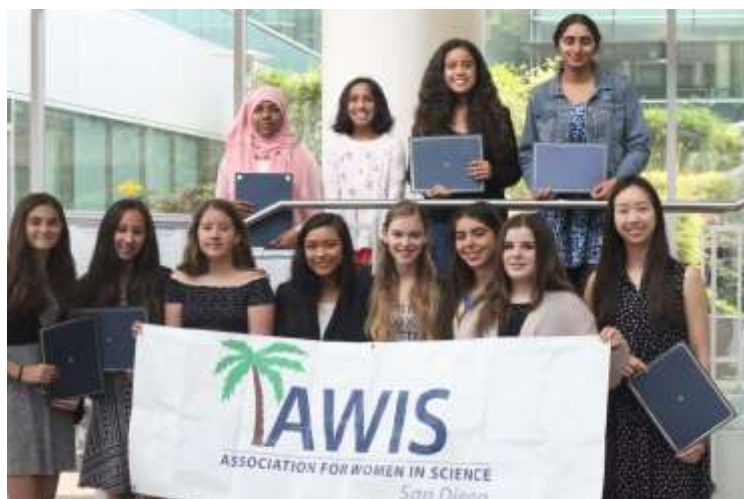
After two to three hours of judging, 14 winning projects were identified. These award winners, along with their families and advisors, were invited to join AWIS-SD volunteers and Outreach Committee members on Sunday, April 29, 2018 for an award and banquet celebration.

We would like to thank the volunteers, who gave their time and expertise to judge the projects; and all the young scientists, who participated in this year's Science and Engineering Fair. Congratulations to all the 2018 Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair AWIS-SD Award Winners!

AWIS-SD Science Poster Awards Dinner

by Varykina (Kina) Thackray

On April 29, 2018, the AWIS San Diego Outreach Committee hosted a dinner at the UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center. The event honored the award winners selected from over 300 female students who presented projects at the Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair in March. In total, five high school and 10 middle school students received awards for their projects in a range of disciplines including biochemistry, plant sciences, mathematical sciences, engineering, behavioral and social sciences, and health sciences. Congratulations to Mary Jasmine Lara, Ayleen Herrera, Natalia Sanchez, Emily Nguyen and Shreya Ranganath in the senior division as well as Isabel Bruce, Jasmine Elasaad, Eva Wilson, Alessia Demoreno, Olivia Hansen, Lou Fowler, Margarita Alfaro, Lakshmi Menon, Pascale Fung, and Noorah Dhamim in the junior division.



At the start of the awards dinner, the students presented their projects and discussed their results with other students, their families, mentors, and members of the AWIS-SD Outreach Committee. Following the poster session, the President of AWIS-SD, Dr. Courtney Benson, presented each winner with a certificate and a cash award recognizing her achievement. Then, students and their families had dinner with Dr. Benson and members of the AWIS-SD Outreach Committee.

The awards dinner was an excellent opportunity to recognize young female students for their scientific achievements and provide them with the opportunity to meet female STEM professionals and role models. Through presenting these awards, AWIS-SD hopes to encourage female students interested in science to pursue STEM careers. Thanks to the members of the Outreach Committee who organized this event: Alina Luk, Bridget Kohlnhofer, Chistina Grobin, Jane Smitham, Jessica Cassin, Laure Kayser, Mary Swinton, Prathima Garudadri, and Vanessa Langness.



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AWIS-SD Annual Speed Mentoring

by Raymond Seraydarian

On Tuesday, March 13, the AWIS Events Committee repeated one of its most popular events, Speed Mentoring, at National University in La Jolla. Upon registering, each of the nearly 40 participants chose three career-related mentoring topics from a list that included Industry Research, Academia, Consulting, Recruiting (applying, interviewing, negotiating), Entrepreneurship, Medical Writing, and Clinical Affairs. Mentors & mentees were matched in advance so that no more than five to six (and often fewer) mentees were at a table with a single mentor. At each 18-minute session, every participant received mentorship in one of her three chosen topics. At the conclusion, a buffet-style meal was provided consisting of salads, pasta dishes, and other fare as participants gathered for conversation and general networking.



The event was free for AWIS members, but 11 non-members paid \$15 to benefit from attending.

The AWIS Events Committee thanks National University and their staff for providing the venue and on-site assistance. We also thank our AWIS mentors: Anita Iyer, Barbara Preston, Kristina Henthorn, Leslie Crews, Mental Mazor, Michelle Kem, Miriam Cohen, and Teresa Henry for generously donating their time and expertise, without which the event could not happen at all. Also, thanks to all the other members of the Events Committee — Adina Gerson-Gurwitz, Ksenya Cohen-Katsenelson, Valeria Viscardi, Amy Thorne, and Jianhui Ma — for arranging the venue, food, contacting the mentors, and more.

April AWIS Strategy Sessions

by Sabrina Treadwell

How do you write a stellar resume that gets you an interview?

We all have been there; you have just found the job description for this job you always wanted. You know a well-written resume will hugely impact whether or not you will land an interview for that job. But how do you write a stellar resume to convince the busy hiring manager to call you?

We asked this question in our April Strategy Session when we invited Barbara Preston, Ph.D., senior executive recruiter for executives and scientists in the Life Sciences and co-founder of PharmaScouts, Inc. These are the key suggestions she gave to write a killer resume:

- An industry resume is not an academic CV.
- Before you start, define yourself. Are you an expert, knowledgeable or familiar?
- Determine your accomplishments.
- Describe how the company will benefit from hiring you.
- Keep it short. Present most relevant items on the first two pages.
- Make your resume visually appealing.
- Never use "I was responsible for". It does not tell anything.

With this good advice at hand, the group was sent home to write a stellar resume and encouraged to ask Barbara for individual feedback on their resumes.

[Check out these events organized by the Academia to Industry \(A2I\) coffee club!](#)

AWIS-SD Visit to Eli Lilly Biotechnology Center

by Takako Noguchi

Twenty three participants, mostly members of Academia to Industry (A2I) Coffee Club and other AWIS-SD members, visited the Eli Lilly and Company Biotechnology Center located at Campus Point Dr., San Diego, on February 23, 2018. Lilly opened this center in June 2017. Their brand new building has an impressive external art wall made by red and silver metal panels and the interior is spacious, with lots of sunlight. On the 1st floor past the reception, we could see large automated high throughput instrumentation that will be part of Lilly's new fully

automated synthesis-to-screening center by 2019. This will provide a remote platform for external collaboration to foster R&D at Eli Lilly.

The tour started with an introduction and overview of Lilly presented by Dr. Wolfgang Glaesner, Chief Scientific Officer (CSO) of the Applied Molecular Evolution Division. Lilly, founded by Colonel Eli Lilly in 1876, introduced the world's first commercially available insulin product in 1923. Current focus of Lilly includes oncology, immunology, neurodegeneration, diabetes, and pain. Drugs studied by Lilly are currently ~50% biologics (peptides, proteins, antibody, etc.) and ~50% small molecules. The Lilly Biotechnology center in San Diego focuses on immunology research, houses a large part of the Structural Biology team, and have just opened a Chemistry Department to support San Diego's research. Dr. Devon Thompson, CSO of the Structural Biology Department, highlighted their achievements in determining the crystal structures of more than 10,000 proteins. Finally Dr. Alison Budelsky, Senior Director of Immunology Research, explained the pathological mechanisms of autoimmune diseases, especially psoriasis, which is one of their main target diseases.



The second part of the tour was a panel discussion with Audrey McConnell, Melissa Crisp, Devon Thompson, Alison Budelsky, Carina Torres, Andrew Vendel, Jacqueline Wurst, Wolfgang Glaesner. They shared their opinions and answered all our questions in topics ranging from Lilly's science, hiring practices, and work culture. McConnell and Vendel started their industry careers as postdocs at smaller biotech/pharma companies, while Crisp gained her experience in high-throughput screening/automation during her postdoctoral training before transitioning as a scientist in an automation team. Glaesner emphasized that candidates interested in applying for positions at Lilly must be a good fit for the position and have the ability to learn and adapt. Thompson emphasized the importance of public speaking and presentation skills. As flow

cytometry specialist, Torres emphasized the importance of becoming an expert of specific technologies to pursue niche positions. Vendel took immunology courses to help him transition from neuroscience to the immunology field. In general, panelists are very satisfied with Lilly's intellectual environment and supportive culture.

After the panel discussion, we toured the laboratories. Dr. Donmienne Leung introduced us to the cellular and molecular biology labs, as well as the protein engineering research labs. Dr. Tom Cujec introduced the automation labs that consist of high-end robotics performing cell culture and screening. Drs. Michael Hickey and Kevin Bain showed us around the structural biology labs, where they produce proteins using various techniques including bacteria, baculovirus-infected insect cells, and mammalian cells as needed. They are also responsible for purifying and characterizing protein and generating crystals that are then shipped to Lilly's Chicago site (LRL-CAT), where x-ray crystallography elucidates protein structures.

After the tour, we were offered a delicious sandwich lunch and we enjoyed chatting with panelists and other Lilly's employees in a relaxing environment, where we were able to ask more questions about their experience in industry and science. Overall, the tour was very informative. We learned about biologic drug discovery processes and enjoyed the networking session.

We would like to thank Melissa Crisp, Audrey McConnell and Abbey Swhear, the main organizers of this tour, and all other Lilly employees for giving us a wonderful learning opportunity.



Academia to Industry (A2I) coffee club - A discussion with Dr. Jennifer Cohen

by Juliati Rahajeng, Takako Noguchi and Aime Lopez Aguilar

Our March coffee club was held Wednesday March 7th, 2018, returning to our usual location at the Bella Vista Social Club & Caffe. We had 12 attendees ranging from senior students to postdocs and industry scientists. Our guest speaker was Dr. Jennifer Cohen from Takeda.

Dr. Cohen's journey and life as a toxicologist

Dr. Cohen obtained her PhD at the University of Arizona in Pharmacology and Toxicology. She then completed an industry postdoctoral fellowship at Hoffmann-La Roche in the department of Investigative Toxicology and after its completion, she moved on to Takeda's San Diego research site in the department of Drug Safety Research and Evaluation Department, where she has been for the last 6.5 years. Dr. Cohen is a DABT certified Toxicologist and is a Principal Scientist at Takeda. She participates on various cross-functional drug project teams as lead toxicologist and has contributed to projects across pre-clinical and clinical stages. Her usual workload includes supporting ~5+ drug development teams, as well as a strategy lead for Neurotox, a position where she provides support to projects that have neurotoxicity liabilities and leads efforts in developing predictive neurotoxicity screening assays. This position has also allowed her to co-mentor a postdoc in a collaboration with academia.

Toxicology at a glance

As Dr. Cohen explained, toxicologists are involved at all stages of pharmaceutical development, from early target identification to post-market follow up. In general, there are different areas within toxicology:

- > Chemical toxicology - usually recruiting people with backgrounds in chemistry, and focusing in SAR analysis (Structure-activity relationships)
- > Discovery toxicology - focusing on understanding the target and potential liabilities of exaggerated pharmacology
- > Investigative toxicology - usually recruiting people with specific tissue/organ/technology backgrounds and/or a PhD in toxicology, focusing on addressing any adverse findings that pop-up in nonclinical safety studies or during clinical development
- > Developmental toxicology – lead toxicologist from candidate nomination thru clinical development and post marketing

General advice

Dr. Cohen also shared with us her experience in transitioning into industry. She mentioned that as a graduate student she joined the regional and national Society of Toxicology, and became the graduate student representative of a few specialty section committees. She leveraged this position as an opportunity to network with people in the field, which helped her find the postdoc position at Roche.

Dr. Cohen also mentioned that most entry positions in investigative toxicology recruit people with specific target organ expertise to complement their team. However, she mentioned that the scientific skills are only a small portion (~25%) of the characteristics people look at when hiring and promoting. Soft skills such as cross-function learning and support, strategic thinking, teamwork, flexibility and the ability to be a good fit for the team are some of the most important factors when hiring or moving forward on your career path. Finally she emphasized that women starting their careers should not limit themselves and explore possibilities and alternative paths because you never know where life will take you!



Erika Wells, Ph.D. AWIS-SD A2I Visit

by Juliati Rahajeng

On February 2, 2018, Erika Wells, Ph.D. came to AWIS-SD Academia to Industry (A2I) Coffee Club meeting to talk about her transition into her current position as a Scientist at Ionian Technologies, which was acquired by Abbott less than a year ago. The meeting took place at Copa Vida and was attended by more than 20 AWIS-SD members and nonmembers. Wells is also an active member of AWIS-UCR, in which she has been serving as a mentor for the past three years.

Wells, a California native, received her B.S. in Biology from California State University at San Bernardino with a minor in Criminal Justice. Then, she went to Yale University to obtain her

Ph.D. in Cellular and Molecular Physiology in the laboratory of Michael Caplan, M.D., Ph.D., where she studied gene expression of MDCK cysts. She was able to combine physiology with knowledge that she acquired from other labs, including immunology and oncology, to complete her Ph.D. project. During her graduate school training, she received an NIH National Research Service Award (NRSA) Pre-Doctoral Fellowship.

Wells received her Ph.D. in 2011. She knew that she did not want to go for postdoctoral training or stay in academia. She tirelessly searched for scientist positions in biotech companies. She had many interview opportunities, but unfortunately, not having an industrial experience was a big problem for her. She was unemployed for about one year before she landed a temporary position at EMD Millipore. Wells was working on SmartFlare™ live cell RNA detection probes with other team members within the company. After one year working as a contract employee, she became a permanent employee at EMD Millipore, in which she had increased responsibilities in designing the probes and communicating with different groups across the company.

In 2015, EMD Millipore acquired Sigma-Aldrich and merged into MilliporeSigma. A few months after that, the company laid off employees as it consolidated business efforts, including Wells. She was again unemployed for about six months. In October 2016, Wells obtained a Scientist position at Ionian Technologies (formerly, Alere). Her knowledge and skills that she acquired during graduate school as well as the experience gained at EMD Millipore helped her in landing this position. At Ionian Technologies, currently owned by Abbott, Wells is working on isothermal nucleic acid technology as a part of the technology development group.

Wells provided some advice to AWIS-SD A2I attendees who are still trying to transition into biotech or pharmaceutical industries:

1. Get out of your comfort zone and go to networking events.
 2. Become a member of a non-profit organization, such as AWIS, and volunteer for a committee.
 3. Bring your resumes to the networking events and conferences.
 4. Keep informed with the latest technologies in your field or areas of interest.
 5. Apply for jobs even if they don't ask for Ph.D.
 6. Apply for temporary/contract jobs.
 7. Read newsletters to get information about different companies and look at how they are doing in the stock market and business sectors.
 8. Don't forget to negotiate for your salary.
-

News Ticker

by Alyson Smith

- For the first time, an all-girls team competed in San Diego's FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) high school robotics competition. The 15 female students from the Academy of Our Lady of Peace worked together over six weeks to design, program, and build a robot capable of lifting and moving large blocks. The team earned the competition's Rookie All Star Award and hopes to see more all-girls teams next year.
- Sudan, the world's last male northern white rhino, died at the Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Kenya in March. While only two females of this subspecies remain (also at Ol Pejeta), the San Diego Zoo Institute for Conservation Research hosts cell and/or sperm samples from 12 of these animals in its Frozen Zoo. The Institute is actively developing technologies to use these samples to create fertilized northern white rhino embryos in culture and implant them into female southern white rhino surrogate mothers.
- This spring, University of California San Diego (UCSD) plans to begin testing two experimental self-driving golf carts to deliver mail. Initially, the vehicles will be limited to a maximum speed of 20 mph along a defined route during daylight hours, with two safety drivers to continuously monitor the road and vehicle performance. UCSD Contextual Robotics Institute hopes these initial tests will help make UCSD a key player in the self-driving vehicle industry.
- A team of UCSD researchers has discovered that a strain of *Staphylococcus epidermidis* bacteria commonly found on human skin may protect against skin cancer. The bacteria secrete 6-HAP, a compound that interferes with DNA synthesis, especially in rapidly dividing tumor cells that lack mechanisms to degrade the compound. The bacteria reduced skin cancer incidence in mice exposed to ultraviolet radiation.
- In collaboration with Thermo Fisher Scientific, Illumina has developed the iSeq 100, a low-cost next-generation sequencer meant for individual laboratory use. The machine costs \$20,000, and much of the complex technology present in higher-cost systems has been embedded in single-use cartridges sold with the iSeq 100. The machine could drastically reduce the amount of time researchers have to wait to get sequencing results.
- The Scripps Translational Science Institute has received a five-year, \$34 million grant from the National Institutes of Health Clinical and Translational Science Awards program. The Institute plans to use the award in a wide range of projects applying digital and genomic

technology to healthcare, including collaborations with the Institute for Genomic Medicine at Rady Children's Hospital and the nonprofit drug discovery institute Calibr.

- Fred Gage and colleagues at the Salk Institute have developed a new method for growing three-dimensional human brain tissue to study neurological diseases. The scientists differentiated human induced pluripotent stem cells into neurons and transplanted the neurons into brains of immune-compromised mice. Mouse blood vessels grew into the human brain tissue, supplying oxygen to support levels of growth and synapse formation not possible in culture.
- San Diego was one of hundreds of cities across the United States to participate in the second annual March for Science on April 14, 2018. While around 15,000 attended the inaugural San Diego March in 2017, only around 1,000 attended the march this year. However, those who did attend continued to advocate for supporting scientific research and implementing evidence-based public policies.

Member News

1. Dina Schneider, UCSD '18, will be joining a local company Nucleus Biologics as an application scientist following her PhD defense this April. She would be happy to share her experience transitioning into industry for those who are interested. dschneider@ucsd.edu
 2. Katherine Ruby, PhD, started a new position as a Medical Science Liaison, Biosimilars with Sandoz (a Novartis company). Her previous role was a Biomarker and Cytometry Specialist at MilliporeSigma.
 3. Aime Lopez is leaving her current postdoc position to become a Medical Science Liaison at Assurex Health in Florida.
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Upcoming Events

1. Scholars Celebration 2018

Saturday, May 19, 2018 11:00 AM - 02:00 PM

Leichtag Biomedical Research Building, UC San Diego

AWIS-SD is celebrating our 2018 scholarship recipients. We will be enjoying lunch, science career talks, networking, an opportunity drawing, and awarding of the scholarships.

<http://www.awissd.org/index.php/all-events/events-calendar/322-scholars-celebration-2018>

2. STRATEGY SESSIONS: Decoding the Elevator Pitch

Monday, June 04, 2018 06:00 PM - 08:00 PM

Hera Hub, 4010 Sorrento Valley Blvd, Suite 400, San Diego, CA 92121

<http://www.awissd.org/index.php/all-events/events-calendar/323-strategy-sessions-decoding-elevator-pitch>

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About the Authors



Mary Swinton is a research assistant in the Psychiatry department of UCSD Medical School, studying HIV associated Neurocognitive disorders. She recently received her B.S. in Biochemistry and Cell Biology from UCSD. She is currently working on her applications for graduate programs in the Biomedical Sciences. Mary has been involved with AWIS since the summer of 2017 as a member of the outreach committee.



Chistina Grobin was introduced to AWIS through the Back-to-Work Initiative and currently serves on the Outreach Committee. Chistina is an adjunct instructor of chemistry for Mesa College. She had a research career at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill but is seeking new opportunities in California hiking country.



Prathima Garudadri recently earned her B.S in Physiology and Neuroscience at the University of California, San Diego. She currently works as a Veterinary Assistant at Governor Animal Clinic and is an aspiring Veterinarian. Prathima is an active member of the AWIS outreach committee and looks forward to getting more involved in community outreach. In her free time, she loves traveling, cooking, volunteering and spending time with her puppy.



Alina Luk is a senior at Scripps Ranch High School who is interested in pursuing the pre-med/biomedical engineering track in college. She recently joined the AWIS Outreach Committee after becoming acquainted with the organization through GSDSEF in 2014, and participating/volunteering at several other AWIS activities.



Varykina Thackray (Kina) is an Associate Professor of Reproductive Medicine at UC San Diego. She has a comprehensive background in hormone signaling, regulation of gene expression in reproductive tissues and the role of the gut microbiome in polycystic ovary syndrome. She received her PhD at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center and completed her postdoctoral studies in reproductive endocrinology at UC San Diego. Her research accomplishments were recognized with the Endocrine Society Early Investigators Award and the Women in Endocrinology Young Investigator Award. She is an active member of the Endocrine Society, Women in Endocrinology and the AWIS-SD Outreach Committee.



Ray Seraydarian earned his BS and M. Eng. degrees in Engineering Physics from Cornell University, and has spent his entire professional career in San Diego working in visible spectroscopy and areas closely involved with nuclear fusion research at General Atomics (GA) and UCSD. He is currently employed by UCLA at GA working on a microwave instrument for the large ITER fusion experiment being built by an international consortium in southern France. Outside of work, Ray enjoys theater, movies, bicycling, downhill skiing, and small boat sailing. Ray is a long standing AWIS-SD member, and he currently serves as a co-chair of the Events Committee.



Sabrina Treadwell received her Ph.D. in Biological Sciences from the University of East Anglia and the Institute of Food Research in the UK in 2013. She joined UC San Diego as a postdoctoral researcher in 2014 to pursue her interest in Gastroenterology and Glycobiology. In early 2017, Sabrina transitioned into a new role as a project manager at UC San Diego leading an exploratory clinical research study. Sabrina joined AWIS-San Diego in 2015 and has since been an active member of the Strategy Sessions committee for which she currently serves as co-chair.



Takako Noguchi received her PhD in Biological Science from Osaka University. She is a Project Scientist at the Center for Circadian Biology at UCSD, studying cellular and neuronal mechanisms of circadian rhythm using innovative bioluminescence imaging technology. She joined AWIS-SD in 2017 and is currently serving as co-chair of Academia to Industry Coffee Club. She hopes to transition into the biotech and pharmaceutical industry.



Juliati Rahajeng received her PhD in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from the University of Nebraska, Medical Center in 2011. She joined UCSD School of Medicine as a postdoctoral researcher one month after her graduation. Juliati has been a member of AWIS-SD for the past 3 years. She is currently the co-chairs for the Newsletter committee and the Academia 2 Industry Coffee Club. She is also an active member of the Scholarship committee and she was a member of the AWIS-SD Open House 2015 committee.



Aime Lopez Aguilar is currently finishing a post-doctoral researcher position at The Scripps Research Institute in the Department of Molecular Medicine, where she focuses on developing chemoenzymatic tools for the detection and engineering of glycans in clinically-relevant environments. While originally from Mexico City, Aime obtained her BSc in Biotechnology from Brock University, Canada and later received her DPhil from Oxford University in the UK. Aime joined AWIS in 2017, and is currently a co-chair for the Academia to Industry Coffee Club.

Contribute to the Newsletter

If you are an AWIS-SD member, we encourage you to contribute to the newsletter. Please send articles, photographs, and member news as MS Word attachments to newsletter@awissd.org. News articles should not exceed 250 words, event summaries should not exceed 500 words, and feature articles (special-interest stories and profiles) should not exceed 1000 words. The submission deadline for the next issue is Jul 10, 2018.

AWIS-SD Newsletter Committee

Newsletter@awissd.org

Corine Lau (co-chair)

Juliati Rahajeng (co-chair)

Pat Rarus

Alyson Smith

Mai Khuong

Jean Spence

Joanna Redfern

2018 AWIS-SD Board Members

	<u>Name</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
President	Courtney Benson	president@awissd.org
Past President	DeeAnn Visk	pastpresident@awissd.org
Secretary	Kristin Bompiani-Myers	secretary@awissd.org
Treasurer	Ana Laura Guerrero	treasurer@awissd.org
Past Treasurer	Lori Yang	lyang@awissd.org
Members at Large	Kirsten Kirchsteiger	kkirchsteiger@awissd.org
	Alex Clark	aclark@awissd.org
	Leslie Crews-Robertson	lcrews@awissd.org

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