

AWIS San Diego Newsletter



Summer 2019 Volume 27 Issue 3

Letter from the President

Dear AWIS-SD Members and Friends,

I hope everyone is having a great summer so far. Save the date! We are hosting our Women in Science and Technology conference (WIST) on October 19, 2019. If you are interested in helping plan this conference, we could still use some volunteers; please email wist@awissd.org. WIST is a one-day symposium that focuses on career and personal development. There will be a prominent keynote speaker and lots of peer networking. The conference will include workshops, roundtables, and seminars for individuals at all stages of their careers in both academia and industry.



AWIS-SD is offering two \$1000 scholarships for credit towards UCSD Extension classes. Applications are due August 18, 2019. Please see awissd.org homepage for details on the scholarships.

If you are interested in looking into leadership roles or learning more about what we do, please consider joining a committee. We are always looking for new co-chairs and committee members for our committees, including Strategy Sessions, Public Relations, and Events. Please visit awissd.org for more information.

Best wishes,

Courtney

Courtney Benson
President, AWIS-SD
president@awissd.org



Meet Juliati Rahajeng: A Smooth Transition From Academia to Industry

by Pat Rarus

MEMBERS



Transitioning from academia to industry can be challenging because the work environment is quite different between these two worlds, with other priorities, expectations and cultures. Perhaps most importantly, in academia, one might work on a project for many years with deadlines that can be extended. In industry, on the other hand, projects come with hard deadlines that workers must meet. Despite this cultural change, Juliati Rahajeng, Ph.D., is thriving as a clinical strategy scientist at Cato Research in San Diego, an

international contract research organization (CRO). Rahajeng is delighted with the number of projects that she works on, the opportunity to work from home when unexpected situations arise, and the chances for advancement. She credits AWIS-SD with her smooth transition. Here is how she did it.

In her fourth year as a post-doc research fellow at UCSD, Rahajeng was working in a lab that specialized in endocytic trafficking pathways; specifically, a focus on the EHD protein family and their interacting partners. Although she was happy with her work, Rahajeng began wondering if her ultimate career choice would be a faculty position— something she had assumed for years. Her former postdoc colleague (they worked in the same lab) introduced her to AWIS-SD and encouraged her to hone her writing skills. “That’s when I decided to volunteer for the AWIS-SD

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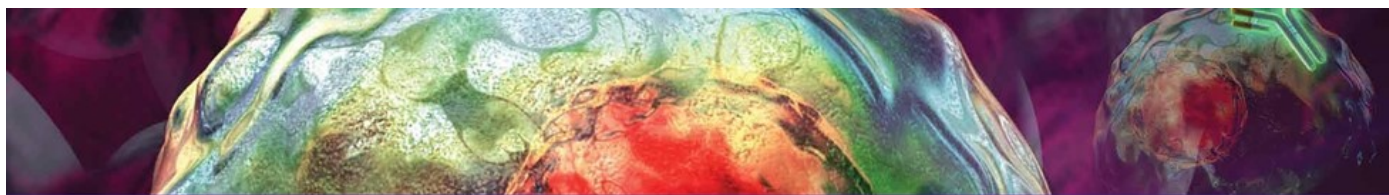
Newsletter Committee,” Rahajeng recalled with a grin. Volunteering and networking at AWIS-SD led to yet another pivotal opportunity: “The same former postdoc colleague told me about SDRAN (San Diego Regulatory Affairs Network). Well, I attended a SDRAN monthly meeting and learned about summer classes that would teach me about the regulatory world.”

Rahajeng learned her lessons well and quickly, too. She joined SDRAN and eventually took 12 classes –two hours each – about various facets of U.S. regulatory affairs. “The classes were reasonably priced and well worth my time and effort,” she explained. Although Rahajeng learned a lot about drug development/regulatory affairs by attending these classes, she still did not have any real work experience in the field.” Fortunately, Cato Research was looking for an entry-level scientist and was

willing to train the right person. That opportunity provided Rahajeng with a first-class ticket for her transition to industry. “I got promoted to Clinical Strategy Scientist position after one year working for Cato Research,” said Rahajeng proudly. Now, after a little more than two years, she is growing in her new career with each new milestone. “I’m dealing with different therapeutic indications, and I’m learning so much,” she said enthusiastically.

In her spare time, Rahajeng works out at the gym, spends time with her friends, and plays with her cats. If AWIS members are thinking about transitioning from academia to industry, she is most welcome to advise them how to make the change.

p.s. Rahajeng just passed her US Regulatory Affairs Certification (RAC) exam. Congratulations, Juliati Rahajeng, PhD, RAC!



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Second Annual SoCal Science Writing Symposium

by Jean Spence

On May 18, 2019, I attended the second Annual SoCal Science Writing Symposium on the University of Southern California campus. For an organization that began in 2018, I was extremely impressed with the quality of the program and with the attendees.

The meeting began with USC Dornsife Divisional Dean Stephen Bradforth and USC Viterbi Director of Research Initiatives Mahta Moghaddam welcoming us and thanking science writers for their role in bringing scientific discoveries to the public. This was followed by the plenary session on Science Videos featuring four dynamic panelists: Dr. Derek Muller, Jess Phoenix, Megan Chao and Kyle McLary. Muller set up a YouTube Channel called Veritasium which has over six million viewers. His advice for creating a viral video was to find the intersection between the ordinary and the bizarre. His example was his video of a falling Slinky. Most of us have played with a Slinky but slow motion video of a falling Slinky shows that the bottom magically hovers in space until the falling top catches up with it. Phoenix studies volcanoes and she said that she has to walk the fine line between relaying the excitement, beauty of an exploding volcano, and the terror of the devastation and potential loss of life that could accompany this type of natural disaster. Chao works as a documentary producer and she had many useful hints for being successful in this field. McLary, a PhD candidate in the USC Department of Chemistry, created a niche for himself by cofounding Bridge Art and Science Alliance which connects scientists with artists who help to animate their discoveries.

Following the plenary session, there were sessions on Investigative Journalism, Climate Change, and Data Journalism. For participants who wanted to enhance their careers, there was a session on Science Reporting Fellowships and a Freelancer-Editor Meet 'n' Greet. The editors at the Meet 'n' Greet were from UCLA Health, Link TV and KCET, Radiant Health Magazine, Trojan Family Magazine,

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Mercury Magazine, and last but not least, Playboy! There was also a choice of USC lab tours with research interests including socially assistive robotics (Maja Mataric's lab), cancer (Peter Kuhn's lab), and devices to fight diseases (Andrea Armani's lab).

The modest cost of the meeting (\$35) included breakfast, lunch and happy hour. The food was exceptional, an additional perk. Although I was looking forward to learning about squid research at the Wrigley Institute for Environmental Studies, the optional Sunday trip to Catalina was canceled due to inclement weather.

A similar local organization, the San Diego Science Writers Association, can be found at <https://sandswa.org/>. In addition to networking opportunities, they host interesting events like a Palomar Observatory tour on July 20, and an upcoming Wikipedia Edit-a-Thon at Salk on September 7.

AWIS-SD Happy Hour

by Ray Seraydarian

On Monday, June 3, 2019, AWIS San Diego chapter enjoyed a happy hour at craft beer purveyors New English Brewing in Sorrento Valley. This casual social event was sponsored by Synthego, a California genome engineering company, whose local rep is Rita Rozmarynowycz. Synthego graciously provided salads and sushi rolls from Ahi Sushi of UTC. About 15 people enjoyed food, beverages, and lively conversation in a private room.

We thank members of the Events Committee, especially Tiffany Chow, Adina Gerson-Gurwitz, Ruth Kabeche, and Valeria Viscardi for their work in making the arrangements for this successful event.

Strategy Sessions: How to achieve financial health

by Myan Do

The Strategy Sessions committee hosted Jennifer “JJ” Jank on June 6, 2019, for a workshop on learning basic finance for everyday life. JJ is a Certified Financial Planner™ and a Certified Divorce Financial Analyst® professional. For more information on JJ and the services she offers, visit:

www.divorcenest.com
www.fabfemfinance.com
<http://www.linkedin.com/jenniferjank>

JJ focuses on women and their financial needs, and her goal is to empower women through financial education, including unforeseen situations such as divorce financial analysis. Below are some highlights from her talk. If you would like access to JJ’s presentation, contact StrategySessions@awissd.org.



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- Different people have different financial goals, whether it is early retirement, buying a home, or taking a vacation every so often. As a result, there is no one-size-fits-all financial plan.
- JJ recommends going to a professional financial planner to give you a “road map” of how to achieve your financial goals. For example, determining the amount and the number of years you need to earn/ save in order to retire at a certain age.
- JJ also recommends finding financial planners from the Garrett Planning Network (garrettplanningnetwork.com).
- A good basic budgeting strategy is the 50/30/20 rule; allocating your after-tax income for spending 50% on needs, 30% on wants, and 20% to savings.
- Invest your money for retirement! Put the maximum amount of money into your employer-provided retirement plan, then as much as you are able into IRA, Roth IRA, and taxable brokerage accounts.
- If you are interested in long-term, aggressive investments (10+ years), consider stocks like index funds and exchange-traded funds (ETF).
- JJ recommends creating a trust to protect your assets and having the trust drawn up by an estate planner.

Meet the 2019 AWIS-SD Scholars

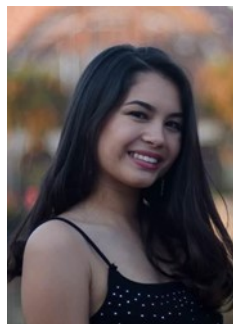
The AWIS-San Diego Scholarship Program, now in its 19th year, strives to encourage and reward outstanding women pursuing degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields at San Diego colleges and universities.

On April 6th, 2019, the Scholarship Committee met for several hours to choose the 2019 Scholars. Out of 67 outstanding applications, the committee selected five for the \$1000 award and seven for Honorable Mentions and one-year San Diego chapter membership.

Congratulations to these remarkable students!

2019 Awardees

Kim Kelley, MiraCosta College



Kim Kelly is a second year student at MiraCosta College and will be transferring to UCI or UCSD this fall. Her major is Human Biology and she wants to become an Optometrist after earning her B.S. She is currently interning at an optometry clinic in Carlsbad and enjoys working with patients as an optometrist technician. At school she is a Student Ambassador and is also a member of the Chemistry Club and Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. She also enjoys music and is a piano teacher, an organist, and volunteers for her church's choir.

Desirae Mellor, UCSD



Desirae Mellor attended California State University San Marcos where she earned a B.S. in Biochemistry. She is currently working towards a PhD in Biochemistry at the University of California San Diego where she studies fatty acid biosynthesis in *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. Desirae is a military spouse whose husband is currently serving as a United States Marine stationed on Camp

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Pendleton. She has two children, ages 4 and 7. She is currently also involved in local outreach programs. This year she led the development of a Science Olympiad program for the middle school students in her neighborhood on base. She hopes to obtain an academic position after earning her PhD and conduct research in the field of drug discovery.

Barbara Perez, Mesa College



Barbara Sade Perez Escareno has always been enchanted by how living things work, but her absolute delight is learning about genetics. She developed a major interest in genetic disorders through her exposure to the hardships of cystic fibrosis, by following the journey of

various social media influencers battling the disorder, and by taking a human heredity honors class in community college that allowed her to develop a research paper on hemophilia and a presentation on the CRISPR-Cas9 technique. She believes that what you do with knowledge is what matters; one is not supposed to simply absorb information, but instead work towards its expansion and application, which is why she decided to pursue a career in bioengineering and plans on obtaining a PhD that will allow her to perform research on genetic disorders. Currently she is a STEM tutor at her community college, from which she will transfer this fall, who strives to be a mentor to the students that she helps through tutoring, especially to Hispanic women in STEM.

2019 Awardees, continued

Sofia Sanchez, USD



Born and raised in San Diego, California, Sofia Sanchez currently attends the University of San Diego where she is studying mathematics and Spanish. Passionate about exploring ways in which she can help students who struggle with math overcome their fears

and struggles, Sofia is also obtaining her single-subject teaching credential. In general, Sofia is interested in working with historically underrepresented communities to help foster change and growth, and to shift this misconceived mindset many seem to have on these communities with respect to the STEM subjects. Upon becoming a teacher, Sofia is looking forward to being a changemaker and innovative math teacher in secondary educational mathematics.

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My Tran, SDSU



My Tran received her Bachelor's Degrees in Speech, Language and Hearing Science & Psychology from San Diego State University in May 2019. She is an aspiring physician-scientist and plans to pursue a joint MD/PhD degree following her undergraduate education. She hopes to continue

her research work in elucidating the underlying mechanisms of various neurodegenerative diseases (e.g., Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases), while simultaneously working in the medical field to directly help and support these patients.

Honorable Mentions

Anamika Agrawal, UCSD



Anamika Agrawal is a 3rd year PhD student in Physics at the University of California, San Diego. Her research in the Koslover group at UCSD focuses on using physical and computational models to study how brain cells regulate their metabolism to ensure their proper

functioning. Along with the Pekkurnaz group at UCSD Neurobiology, her work discovered the physical limits and relevance of glucose-dependent mitochondrial motility in metabolic regulation in a neuron. In the future, she hopes to make use of her training in Physics and Quantitative Biology in developing methods and techniques for the study of neurological disorders. Apart from her research pursuits, she has also been involved in outreach activities like the Tech Trek program and the Young Physicists Program to make Physics accessible to all.

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Honorable Mentions, continued

Cecilia Barnhill, USD



Cecilia Barnhill is a junior at the University of San Diego. She is earning a B.S in Computer Science and a B.A. in Music. She holds a 3.94 GPA and is a member of the Honors program. She works at Cubic Transportation Systems and volunteers teaching children and engaging with the unsheltered. Cecilia is the President of the Engineering Exchange for Social Justice and Eta Kappa Nu, and holds leadership positions in Mortar Board, Global Engineering Brigades, Mu Phi Epsilon, and Theta Tau. She was selected as a member of Cohort II of the Industry Scholars as well as the 2018 Knapp Scholars. Cecilia wants to combine humanitarian work and computer science to create technology that benefits the world.

Jeongin Choi, San Diego City College



Jeongin Choi was born and raised in South Korea where she lived until she turned twenty-one. Thereafter, she moved to San Diego in 2016 for her college studies. In her youth, she had a passionate curiosity about the natural phenomena in the world around her. Her interest in science intensified as she grew older. In 2017, she enrolled into San Diego City College as a biology major. The coursework alone was challenging, but on top of that she was learning in a second language. However, she was undeterred and the language barrier would not stop her from pursuing her passion and dream. Jeongin's effort and enthusiasm led to participation in various activities including the IRACDA SURF Program at UCSD and volunteering at the UCSD hospital and college. She loves learning and experiencing various activities, and is excited about her future career in the biological sciences!

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Claudia Palomino La-torre, UCSD



Claudia Palomino is an undergraduate at UCSD majoring in Biochemistry and Cell Biology. Four years ago, she moved from Chile to the U.S. to start her research career. Currently, she works in Dr. Skowronska-Krawczyk's laboratory at UCSD studying the molecular mechanisms of age-related diseases by using the eye as a model system. During her two years working in Dr. Skowronska-Krawczyk's lab, she has worked on several projects and contributed to research papers and a grant proposal. Palomino assisted a postdoc in studying the potential use of nanoparticles as gene therapy in eye diseases. As a Genentech scholar, Palomino conducted her research project studying the therapeutic effects of novel drugs to treat primary open-angle glaucoma. She presented her research findings at the Summer Research Conference 2018 at UCSD. Her goal is to conduct research and collaborate with scientists to develop treatments for patients with neurodegenerative and age-related diseases.

Hannah Rutledge, UCSD



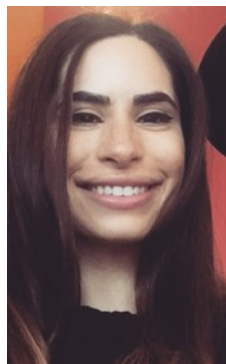
Hannah Rutledge received her BS in chemistry from Rice University and is currently a graduate student at the University of California, San Diego where she is working toward a PhD in chemistry. She studies bioinorganic chemistry and is conducting research in Dr. Tezcan's lab on the complex enzyme nitrogenase. In addition to performing experiments in the lab, she also enjoys mentoring undergraduate students in chemistry and guiding them on their own independent research projects.

Aurian Saleh, UCSD



Aurian Saleh is a first generation Masters student at UCSD with a degree in Biochemistry and Cell Biology. Her current research focuses on the contribution of transposable elements to the developing brain. She plans on pursuing an dual MD-PhD degree to become a future physician-scientist, helping to bridge the gap between medicine and science research. In her free time, she enjoys playing ultimate frisbee and practicing yoga.

Sabrina Younan, SDSU



Sabrina Younan specializes in semiconductor surface morphology and catalysis of two-dimensional materials in photoelectrochemical water splitting. Currently a master's student in Dr. Jing Gu's research group at San Diego State University, next fall she will begin her PhD studies in

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San Diego State University's Joint PhD program with the University of California, San Diego. As her passions lie within renewable energy conversion and storage, her PhD thesis will dissect the role electrocatalysts play in biomass degradation and hydrogen energy storage. Upon completion of her PhD and post-doctoral fellowship, Sabrina intends to establish a company focused on developing cost-effective methods of hydrogen generation and administer free educational programs to public schools to provide hands-on experience researching renewable energy topics to society's youth. Ultimately, Sabrina's goals are to contribute to global scientific intelligence, furnish economical methods of clean energy production for societal gain, and develop free educational programs in clean energy generation for our future generations.

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Annual Family Event at Cool Creations

by Corine Lau

This year's AWIS San Diego annual family event took place on July 27, 2019, at Cool Creations, a paint-your-own pottery cafe. About 20 AWIS-SD members, family, and friends gathered at this quaint studio. Our host Kicki gave a brief introduction on how to handle and paint our pottery pieces. We each picked out a 'greenware', an unpainted white clay piece. There was a variety of mugs, bowls, plates, statues, and piggy banks to choose from. Then, we selected the colors we wanted from a wall of painted sample tiles displayed with >50 different colors, each with a unique number matching the paint bottles.

We all had different ideas on how to decorate our pieces. While some used tracing paper to draw out the design first, and some used stencils and stamps, others just let their imagination run wild and free handed various patterns and drawings. While we were painting away, AWIS SD members networked and exchanged professional experiences. AWIS-SD also provided snacks and drinks to fuel our creative energy.

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We had to wait a week for the painted pieces to be fired in the kiln and glaze added. This process is what makes these ceramic pieces come to life with vibrant colors and shiny finishing. Let's give a big shout out to Adina Gerson-Gurwitz, Valeria Viscardi, and Ray Seraydarian of the Events Committee for organizing this cool and fun event for all ages to enjoy on a hot summer day!



Upcoming AWIS-SD Events

Women in Science and Technology (WIST) conference 2019

Saturday, October 19th, 2019

- A one-day symposium focusing on career and personal development, as well as peer networking
- Inspiring, prominent keynote speaker and informative workshops, round-tables, and seminars for STEM professionals at all career stages
- An excellent opportunity to network, develop new skills, and explore career opportunities with 200 attendees from the scientific community

For more information or to volunteer for the WIST 2019 planning committee, please contact WIST@awissd.org

Check our website for conference registration including early bird specials!

Science News

- As part of the Salk Institute's Harnessing Plants Initiative, researchers have discovered a gene that controls root growth in *Arabidopsis thaliana*, a plant used in genetics research. By mutating this gene, researchers produced plants with roots that grow two times deeper. This discovery will aid efforts to engineer resilient crops that sequester atmospheric carbon in their roots.
- The National Institutes of Health have awarded \$129 million over seven years to an international HIV vaccine collaboration directed by Dennis Burton of Scripps Research. The project aims to develop a multi-stage vaccine that would direct the immune system to make broadly neutralizing antibodies that target multiple HIV strains and prevent HIV infection.
- Victoria, a southern white rhino at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park, has given birth to a healthy calf, the first southern white rhino conceived by artificial insemination. Victoria and the five other female rhinos at the park could become surrogate mothers for northern white rhino embryos and save this species from extinction.
- The Simons Foundation has gifted \$20 million to UCSD to build and operate an astrophysics observatory in Chile. The observatory, directed by UCSD astrophysicist Brian Keating, will include four telescopes and will aim to detect radiation emitted after the big bang and answer questions about the origin of the universe. The observatory will begin operating in the fall of 2022.
- Rob Edwards of SDSU led a collaboration that found a unique type of bacteria-killing virus in sewage systems around the world. The virus targets Bacteroidetes, a genus of gut bacteria with roles in Crohn's disease, obesity, and diabetes. Edwards plans to develop strategies using this virus to manipulate the human microbiome and treat these diseases.

NEWS TICKER

by Alyson Smith

- Researchers at General Atomics have developed a new nuclear fusion strategy termed the Super-H Mode. Super-H Mode heats plasma (confined ionized particles) to temperatures hotter than the core of the sun. It can increase fusion energy output up to four-fold over previous strategies, making it an important step towards commercial nuclear fusion power plants.
- A team of researchers at SDSU has developed a fast and accurate DNA sequencing method termed genome skipping. Paired with MinION, a handheld sequencing device, genome skipping can be used by researchers and wildlife officials to quickly identify species in the field.
- Stemson Therapeutics, a startup founded by Alexey Terskikh at Sanford Burnham Prebys, has received a multi-million dollar investment to develop treatments for baldness using human induced pluripotent stem cells. Stemson aims to create a biodegradable implant that will direct stem cells to produce the multiple cell types humans need to grow hair.

Member News

- Juliati Rahajeng, AWIS SD Secretary, published her first-author article in *Developmental Cell*. Title: Efficient Golgi Forward Trafficking Requires GOLPH3-Driven, PI4P-Dependent Membrane Curvature. *Dev Cell*. 2019 Jun 7. pii: S1534-5807(19)30451-4. doi: 10.1016/j.devcel.2019.05.038. [Epub ahead of print]
- Radhika Gopal, WIST venue liaison and Corporate Sponsorship committee member, has successfully transitioned from Technical Application Specialist II to Associate Product Manager for cell biology within Thermo Fisher Scientific.

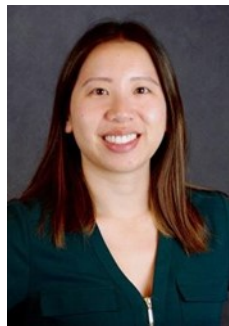
About the Authors



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.

Myan Do is pursuing her PhD in Biomedical Sciences at UC San Diego, specializing in Wnt signaling in cancer and stem cell biology. She joined AWIS and the Strategy Sessions committee in 2017, and became co-chair of Strategy Sessions in 2018. Outside of the lab, she enjoys boxing, hiking, traveling, and trying new restaurants.



Corine Lau received her Ph.D. in Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology from the University of Colorado, Boulder, and her B.S. in Biochemistry from the University of Washington, Seattle. She pursued her post-doctoral training at the University of California, San Diego. She is currently a clinical oncology lead at Human Longevity Inc. Corine has been involved with AWIS-SD since 2006, and held various AWIS-SD leadership roles including Treasurer, Board member, and Website Committee co-chair. She currently serves as Newsletter co-chair and WIST planning committee.



Pat Rarus is a long-term contributor of the Newsletter committee. As the owner-founder of Marcom Consulting Group, Pat has assisted clients with marketing communications projects. The goal: increase visibility, market share and ultimately sales for profit-making companies. Increase visibility and donors for non-profits. Pat specializes in writing and editing a wide variety of online and print marketing materials: Website copy, including SEO, press releases, blogs, social media, biographies, marketing plans, speeches, ad/brochure copy, taglines/slogans, PowerPoint presentations and much more.



Jean Spence earned a Ph.D. from the University of Utah in microbial genetics. Subsequently, she did several post-doctoral fellowships at M.I.T., Harvard Medical School, UCSD and the University of Rochester. She pursued her interest in systems biology by developing a novel platform and publishing 3 manuscripts and a book chapter as communicating author. She has been a reviewer for the AWIS-SD newsletter since 2014 and became a co-chair this year. She was also a co-chair of the former Back to Work group in AWIS-SD.

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 October 10, 2019.

AWIS-SD Newsletter Committee

Co-chairs: Alyson Smith, Jean Spence, and Corine Lau

Members: Pat Rarus, Juliati Rahajeng, Emily Bentley, and Swathi Hullugundi

Newsletter@awissd.org

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