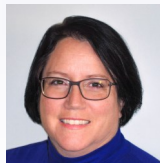




# Newsletter

*Mission Statement: The Association for Women in Science, Inc. (AWIS) champions the interests of women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics across all disciplines and employment sectors. Working for positive system transformation, AWIS strives to ensure that all women in these fields can achieve their full potential.*

## Letter From the President



Dear AWIS-SD members and friends:

Politics is a delicate subject. Unfortunately, it is present in everything we do, from policies that affect women at the national level to the dynamics within a family. Many have raised concerns about future policies on the national level that disproportionately affects women. Take, for example, the recent executive order prohibiting refugees from certain countries. Most of these refugees are women with children.

Living in a free country, political opinions can be expressed safely. On January 21<sup>st</sup>, people around the world marched to show support for women. In San Diego, organizers marched “to strengthen and continue our commitment to work for the protection of women’s rights. We stand firm in agreement that women’s rights are human rights.” (from the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/events/1684632678516753/> retrieved Sunday Feb5 8:35am PST).



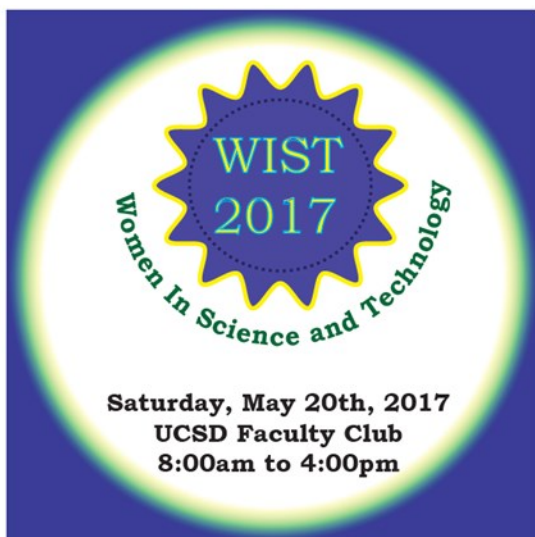
Attendees of the Women’s March of San Diego, Saturday January 27th, 2017.

Another event on the local level is the upcoming AWIS-SD 2017 Women in Science and Technology (WIST) conference. The date is Saturday, May 20th from 8am to 5pm at the UCSD Faculty Club. The theme for this year is: Explore, Encourage, and Evolve.

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## Letter From the President, Cont.



### *2017 WIST: Explore, Encourage, Evolve*

What is the WIST conference? In a nutshell, WIST is a one-day symposium focusing on career and personal development, as well as peer networking. Highlights of the symposium include keynote

speakers, concurrent breakout workshops, and AWIS-SD scholarship presentation, accompanied by breakfast, lunch and cocktail hours. As always, all genders are welcome at WIST!

Past workshop topics include negotiation and effective job search strategies, the business of science, end-to-end drug development, and bioinformatics to research and teaching in the academic setting. Our keynote speakers are Gillian Wilson, Interim Deputy Director, University of California Observatories and Professor, Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of California Riverside; and Homa Akbarian, PhD, Head of R&D, Acclarent, a Johnson and Johnson Company.

Our chapter has once again been recognized by the AWIS on the national level as a Star Chapter. This designation recognizes the achievements of our chapter in promoting and encouraging women to achieve the highest level of professional success. We accomplish this through our excellent programming done only with volunteers.

To all the AWIS-SD volunteers who made this possible, thank you.

Cordially,  
*DeeAnn*

DeeAnn Visk, President AWIS-SD  
[president@awissd.org](mailto:president@awissd.org)  
[WIST@awissd.org](mailto:WIST@awissd.org)



## Science Ticker

By Alyson Smith

- The Switzerland-based Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation has donated \$10.5 million to UCSD to endow a faculty chair and to provide seed grants for research in studying the composition of human breast milk. This donation, along with the 2014 creation of the Mommy's Milk Human Milk Research Biorepository, will help to further establish UCSD as a leading center for research in the various compounds found in human breast milk, and their relationship to maternal and infant health.
- The laboratory of Kim Janda at TSRI has developed vaccines designed to protect against overdose of the addictive opioids hydrocodone and oxycodone. The vaccines consist of a modified drug molecule conjugated to tetanus toxoid protein to elicit the production of antibodies against the drug molecule. In vaccinated mice given lethal doses of either drug, a smaller fraction die from overdose compared to unvaccinated mice. Janda and colleagues are forming a company to commercialize the vaccines and begin human clinical trials.
- Researchers at UCSD Moores Cancer Center are part of a collaborative clinical trial named DART, which aims to test the efficacy of immunotherapy in treating 50 rare cancers. The trial will use Opdivo and Yervoy, drugs developed by Bristol-Myers Squibb, which have already proved effective against melanoma and lung cancer. By grouping together 300 patients with rare cancers, the trial aims to test the efficacy of these drugs against diseases that normally don't make it into large-scale trials of common diseases.
- At the JP Morgan Healthcare Conference in San Francisco, Illumina announced the NovaSeq line of sequencers, which are capable of sequencing an entire human genome in about one hour. As opposed to the HiSeq line, institutes can purchase NovaSeq sequencers individually, making them available to a wider base of customers. Illumina aims to bring the cost of sequencing a genome on NovaSeq down from \$1000 to \$100 over the next few years.

## STEAM Maker Festival

by Kina Thackray and Anne Kornahrens

The AWIS-SD Outreach Committee participated in the STEAM Maker Festival at the Del Mar Fairgrounds on Saturday, December 3, 2016. AWIS-SD volunteers for this event included Liz Jacobs, Ping Xu, Emerson Alatorre, Charisee Winston, Kina Thackray, and Anne Kornahrens.

The STEAM Maker Festival is an annual San Diego event designed to bridge the gap between STEAM education and the MAKER movement. It is a unique festival for both kids and adults that combines science, tech, and engineering with art and crafts. This was the first year that AWIS-SD participated in this event, and we were impressed with the enthusiasm of the participants and the interesting exhibits.

The outreach committee offered attendees several hands-on activities related to "Invisible Ink". One activity illustrated how fluorescence works. Kids used yellow highlighters to write on yellow paper. The messages were difficult to see with the overhead lights, but became visible when exposed to UV light. The kids really enjoyed writing "secret" messages and then using the UV light to expose the message.



The Outreach Committee setting up the invisible ink experiments at the STEAM maker festival.

The other activities were focused on pH. One activity involved using acidic solutions like lemon juice to write messages on white paper. Once the paper dried, the messages were revealed by exposure to heat. The students were fascinated to learn that spies in the American Revolutionary war (including George Washington) used lime juice to write secret messages.

## STEAM Maker Festival, cont.

Turmeric is yellow when dissolved in a neutral solution like water, so you can't see it when it is applied onto yellow paper. However, when exposed to a basic solution like ammonia, it turns bright red! The kids really liked guessing what would happen to the message when exposed to ammonia and what would happen when the ammonia evaporated.

We had a fun time teaching the kids at the STEAM Maker Festival, and enjoyed spreading the word about AWIS-SD. As we embark on our busy spring outreach season, we look forward to performing more demonstrations and to supporting young scientists. Stay tuned for more details and please volunteer for our events: Expanding Your Horizons (March 4), Expo Day (March 4), and Science Fair Judging (March 15)!



## AWIS-SD Holiday Party

by Corine Lau

The Events Committee organized our first AWIS-SD social event of 2017 at the Koi Bar and Lounge on Convoy Street in the evening of January 17. More than 40 AWIS-SD members and non-members gathered in a cozy room next to Emerald Chinese Cuisine. Beer and wine were served at the bar, but the smell of Chinese food lured us to the other side of the room. I helped myself with a heaping serving of stir-fry veggies, beef and vegetables, sweet and sour pork, and fried rice with shrimp and BBQ pork. Although many were not familiar with the sweet red bean paste-filled sesame seed-coated mochi ball, it is one of my favorite desserts, especially when served warm! As we were munching away, we formed small groups around the tables. Many of us caught up with other members on their latest news and expanded our network, while others chatted with women who came to our event for the first time. Seasoned AWIS-SD members helped introduce the organization and our mission to the new faces. We hope to see these new faces becoming familiar faces! What a wonderful way to welcome 2017 for all who support women in STEM!

## Science Ticker, cont.

- Vera Rubin, a pioneering female astronomer, died in December at the age of 88. Rubin's work focused on the rotation of galaxies, and she was one of the first to find compelling evidence for the existence of dark matter. Throughout her career, she advocated for greater access for women in the male-dominated field of astronomy, and she became the first woman to use the main telescopes at Palomar Observatory in San Diego. She was elected to the National Academy of Sciences and received the National Medal of Science and the Royal Astronomical Society's gold medal.
- Researchers from the Scripps Institute of Oceanography have captured the first video footage of the ruby sea dragon off the coast of Western Australia. The researchers discovered this species in a collection of museum specimens in 2015, but it had not yet been seen in the wild. The video revealed that the ruby sea dragon does not have leafy spines like other related species, and that its long tail may be used to grasp objects.
- A team of researchers at UC Berkeley has developed a method of making totipotent mouse stem cells, capable of differentiating into any embryonic cell, as well as the extra-embryonic cells of the placenta and yolk sac. The researchers injected embryonic stem cells from mice with the microRNA miR-34a into normal embryonic blastocysts, where they were able to differentiate into embryonic and extra-embryonic cells (normal embryonic stem cells will only differentiate into embryonic cells). This model can be used to understand the molecular basis of totipotency.
- A 2015 trial of 11,841 people in Guinea suggests that a recently developed Ebola vaccine, rVSV-ZEBOV, may be 100% effective in preventing Ebola infection. None of those vaccinated contracted Ebola, while 23 individuals that were not vaccinated did. The technology used to develop this vaccine could be adapted for vaccines against other hemorrhagic fevers such as Lassa fever.
- San Diego-based Acadia Pharmaceuticals announced the results of a trial suggesting that a drug it developed to treat psychosis in Parkinson's patients may also be effective in reducing psychosis in Alzheimer's patients. Patients who took the drug for six weeks reported greater improvements on a clinical scale measuring hallucinations and delusions compared to a placebo group. However, the benefits of the drug beyond six weeks remain unclear.

## December Strategy Session- Projecting your inner diplomat

by Jennifer Kuo

The Strategy Session held on December 5, 2016, at Hera Hub was an informative workshop presented by guest speaker, Dr. Debra Dupree. Dupree holds a doctorate degree in psychology and is a professional therapist, conflict mediator, and an engaging speaker on enhancing relationships in the workplace. She shared her knowledge on how to strategically communicate effectively, and provided techniques on working through difficult situations. Here are four takeaways from the event!

### 1. Leverage your position by maximizing your persuasiveness

Research from Dr. Robert Cialdini shows these six factors of influence have the power to persuade others:

- Reciprocity- People tend to do something for you when you do something for them.
- Scarcity- People are more likely to agree when they know what they stand to lose.
- Authority- People are more likely to follow if they see a sign of authority.
- Consistency- People are more likely to follow through if they have made a prior commitment.
- Social Proof- People are more likely to follow if others are doing so.
- Likeability- People are more likely to agree with someone they get along with.

### 2. Listen, PAUSE, then act

Oftentimes, pausing and even restating what you hear give you time to process and respond. It prevents you from unleashing words or actions you may regret that are spurred on by emotions.

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## December Strategy Session, cont.

Dupree offered some other techniques for dealing with conflict in the workplace.

- Listen carefully to the other party.
- Paraphrase what you hear in order to pause and process.
- Be confident in your response.
- Keep your answer simple.
- Be diplomatic when handling negativity.
- Don't exclude others in the group conversation.
- Say "thank you" to curtail hostile comments or acknowledge suggestions.

### 3. Empathize and engage with different perspectives

When in conflict, phrases such as "help me understand how you see it" show concern and can change the direction from a hostile situation into a conversation. Explain your reasons and invite the other party to consider alternatives and work together to find agreement. Don't assume how they will act but ask how they would like to have the problem solved.

### 4. Understand how gender differences can affect communication

There are innate differences in the structure, chemistry, and processing of the brain between men and women. How this plays out in the workplace can affect how men and women listen to each other, converse, interpret the words and body language of one another, and even acknowledge that there is conflict.

Here are some key differences between women and men in communication:

- Women tend to seek out relationships whereas men tend to seek position.
- Women express themselves more in private whereas men express themselves more in public.
- Women tend to focus on details of emotion whereas men tend to focus on details of fact.
- Women tend to want to understand the problem first whereas men tend to be problem solvers.

Understanding that situations can be processed differently by men and women may help in reducing the frequency of conflicts in the workplace based on misinterpretation and miscommunication.

For more information on Debra Dupree, visit her website at <http://relationships-at-work.com/>



Dr. Debra Dupree engaging the audience during her presentation.  
photo credit: Elizabeth Jacobs.



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## Academia to Industry (A2I) Coffee Club - A Visit with Joanne McNelis, PhD

by Joanna Redfern

On September 2, 2016, Dr. Joanne McNelis came to the A2I coffee club's monthly meeting to share her experience transitioning from academia to a regulatory affairs (RA) position in industry.

McNelis' academic research background was in endocrinology. She focused on polycystic ovarian syndrome as a graduate student, and she worked on Type 2 diabetes as a post-doctorate. She enjoyed participating in clinical studies while in academia, but did not want to pursue an MD. McNelis also wanted to do more than bench work, and realized that industry might be more accommodating for her career interests. Toward the end of her post-doctorate, McNelis began attending meetings for the San Diego Regulatory Affairs Network (SD-RAN). Joining this organization was instrumental to her transition into regulatory affairs. She joined the SD-RAN mentoring program and met with a mentor every 2 weeks to review her CV and read through job postings for suitable positions.

McNelis ultimately joined a contract research organization (CRO)\* as a research fellow for one year. The Fellows program at this CRO gives recent graduates on the job training for careers in clinical research and drug development. During this year of training, McNelis had on-the-job training focusing on regulatory affairs, and she also took 3 hours of classes a week. Her duties included writing medical protocols, informed consents, and reports for the FDA. McNelis took on more project management and product strategy roles (helping clients determine how to get a drug to market) after six months in the program. A year after joining Fellowship Program, the CRO offered McNelis a full-time position where she currently works as a Clinical Strategy Scientist.

McNelis outlined what clinical regulatory affairs is, and what her position entailed. Both regulatory operations and regulatory strategy (taking a drug from development to market) are important facets of clinical regulatory affairs.

## A Visit with McNelis, cont.

Meetings comprise 2 to 4 hours of her work day, and about half of those are internal and half are with clients. She typically works on more than one project at a time (was working on four at the time she visited with the group!), and the number varies depending on how involved the projects are.

To be successful in regulatory affairs for drug development, you need good analytical skills, project management experience, the ability to learn quickly, and the ability to effectively communicate scientific information. Clinical development also requires reading literature related to the drug treatment or device utility, and communicating with the drug or product developer.

The position also requires one to be able to take over someone else's project. It is also useful to know how clinical trials are conducted and have good writing skills, especially related to RA. To that end, she suggested for anyone interested in RA as a career to consider taking RAPS an RA writing program.

McNelis' CRO takes promising drugs and products through clinical studies to get them ready for market. At a CRO, salaries may be less than at a larger pharmaceutical company, but the job stability is higher. This is likely due to there being less pressure than at a large company. McNelis also mentioned that working at a CRO feels more like collaboration with the customers, since they are there to help the drug/product manufacturers get their products to market. She said that some employees remain with the company for a long time whereas others move on quickly.

McNelis' advice for women applying to jobs in biotech included:

- Only apply to jobs you are qualified for. This means, if you have a Ph.D., only apply to Ph.D. level jobs. She only got interviews for jobs that required a Ph.D.
- Research the people who will interview you.
- A clinical research background is not required to get into RA.
- Experience in animal research is not necessary to get into RA. About 50% of the people in the Fellowship program were not from an animal research background.

People interested in clinical studies or drug and medical device development may want to explore these areas:

Medical writing – these positions allow the flexibility to work from home, and can be a good cross-over position into regulatory affairs.

Medical science liaison– these positions also require a PhD, and you get to do lots of traveling.

\* Please check LinkedIn for McNelis' page to see the CRO she works at (due to confidentiality)

*“As a woman in science, I sincerely hope that my receiving a Nobel Prize will send a message to young women everywhere that the doors are open to them and that they should follow their dreams.” – Linda B. Buck, 2004 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine*



## Academia to Industry (A2I) coffee club - A Visit with Alessandra Blasina, PhD

by Juliati Rahajeng

On October 7, 2016, Dr. Alessandra Blasina came to the AWIS-SD Academia to Industry Coffee Club at the Bella Vista Cafe to share her experience in transitioning into biotech industry. Blasina received her PhD from the University of Sassari in Italy. She did her postdoctoral training at the University of California San Diego (UCSD), followed by a Research Associate position at The Scripps Research Institute (TSRI).

Blasina's work at TSRI focused on targets of signal transduction pathways. In early 2000, Pfizer was interested in similar pathways that Blasina was working on, which led to her appointment as a principal scientist in May 2000. At Pfizer, she worked for the R&D unit where she performed biochemical and cell-based assays to screen for compounds that may ultimately be used for cancer treatment. Although her project advanced to clinical trials, it was eventually terminated.



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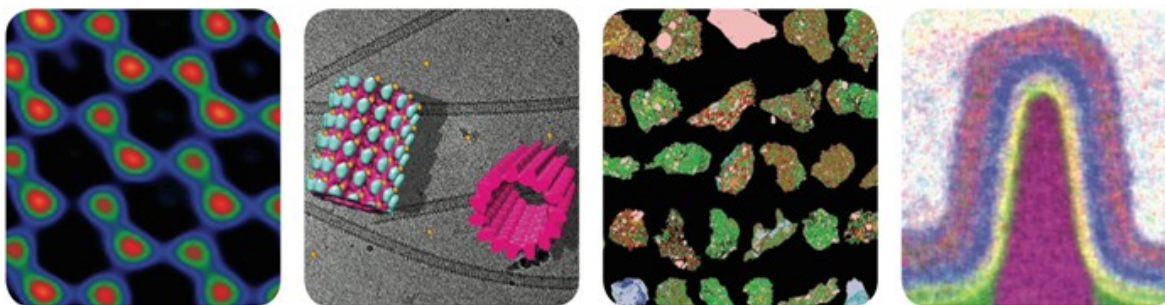


After her employment at Pfizer, Blasina worked as a senior scientist at the Research Process Development of Shire Pharmaceuticals. Unfortunately, changes in the company structure led to the group being laid off. In 2014, she accepted a position as principal investigator at the small biotech company called COI Pharmaceuticals. At COI, the groups consist of 2-3 people, which means that her group had to outsource some of the in vivo studies to contract research organizations (CROs). At COI, Blasina was responsible for an antibody program aiming to develop treatments for colorectal cancer.

While working for COI, Blasina became interested in transitioning to the field of regulatory affairs. She is currently enrolled in the Regulatory Affairs Essentials Certificate Program and Regulatory Affairs Certificate Program offered by UCSD Extension and Regulatory Affairs Professionals Society, respectively. She is also a member of San Diego Regulatory Affairs Network (SDRAN) and Orange County Regulatory Affairs (OCRA). Additionally, she was enrolled in the Regulatory Affairs Certificate Exam Study Group organized by SDRAN in summer 2016. Earlier this month, Blasina successfully made her transition by joining Agility Clinical, Inc as a Regulatory Affairs Associate.

## A Visit with Blasina, cont.

She gave coffee club attendees some advice on how to successfully transition into biotech industry and/or regulatory affairs field. Networking is key. It is not only about what you know, but also about who you know. Blasina found out about her current position from her former colleague. She encourages people who want to transition into regulatory affairs by applying for positions in biotech companies that have regulatory affairs programs/groups. She also recommends having a resume that matches your LinkedIn profile and updating both regularly. Last, but not least, she recommends writing your profile on the back of your business card, so people who receive your cards can remember you.



(From left to right) Atomic resolution phase image of graphene. Sample courtesy of N. Alem and A. Zettl, University of California, Berkeley. Images Joerg Jinschek and Emrah Yucelen, FEI, Hector Calderon, IPN, Mexico, and C. Kisielowski, NCEM, USA. Exit wave reconstruction by Joerg Jinschek. Helical reconstruction of microtubules decorated by an Eg5-metallothionein-gold complex. Image: Cedric Bouchet-Marquis. Drill cuttings from a CO<sub>2</sub> injection well. Image: CO2CRC, Australia. 22 nm PMOS transistor structure. Image: FEI NanoPort.

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### 2016 AWIS-SD Scholarship Recipient News

Jayd Blankenship, psychology graduate student from California State University San Marcos, was accepted into the Psychology doctoral program at Brown University and she will start her PhD studies in Fall 2017. She also submitted her master's thesis as a paper for publication.

"I want to thank you so much for this scholarship. It has raised my self-esteem and was definitely a step towards helping me achieve my dream."

## Academia to Industry (A2I) coffee club - A Visit with Melissa Crisp, PhD

by Joanna Redfern

On December 2<sup>nd</sup>, Dr. Melissa Crisp attended the A2I coffee club meet-up to share her experience transitioning from academia to a research scientist position at Eli Lilly and Company.

Melissa's academic research background is in molecular/cellular biology. As a post-doc at Scripps Florida, she worked in a translational science lab where she collaborated with people from other labs like a business relationship. That was a good experience for eventually moving into industry. Her first job in industry was with a small start-up company that offered genomic services, such as microRNA and multiplex protein profiling. The position included a lot of bench work, as well as work in sales, marketing, and recruiting potential investors for the company. This experience provided Melissa with a solid understanding of how companies are organized and how products are commercialized.

Melissa began working at Lilly 5 years ago as an entry-level research scientist (she found the job posting through LinkedIn), and currently works in the automation group as a Senior Research Scientist. She works with the group on liquid handlers, automated systems and assays. Her duties focus on optimizing and implementing automated systems to support drug discovery, assay development and supervision of other scientists. Melissa is also a liaison between the automation group and the scientists developing products in other groups including the antibody engineering groups. While Melissa was familiar with automation from her post-doc, she learned considerably more on the job.

Thoughts on working at a small vs. large company:

At the smaller company, Melissa worked long days and "wore many hats".

Employees at large companies tend to be more focused and rely heavily on collaborations to accomplish project goals. In any industry setting, small or large, , capitalize on harnessing your skills and knowledge broadly across multiple projects and applications.

At larger companies there is more resource availability. This means you may have opportunities to work on side projects and pitch ideas to management. As you progress, there may be a shift away from the lab toward strategic thinking and taking on supervisory responsibilities.

Questions/Answers about hiring:

Is it important to have a post-doc if you already have a PhD?

This depends on the company and your research experience. Companies will typically ask for more requirements/skills in a posting than one person may have, but don't let this deter you from applying.

- Be sure to have a summary section at the top of your resume/CV that highlights the skills for the job you are applying for
- In larger companies, resumes may go to recruiters first to be sorted through before sending them onto hiring managers – they will check your publication record as well
- Knowing someone at the company who can refer you can also help with the hiring process
- Skills and personality matter – employers want to know that they are hiring someone capable who they can trust
- Teamwork is very important in large organizations, so emphasize examples that illustrate your ability to work well with people in different areas
- If you apply to a position that requires a PhD, you will be asked to come in for a formal interview and give a job talk (presentation) on your research area – this talk can include old research as long as it is relevant to the job

## Upcoming AWIS-SD Events

- Speed Mentoring Event on March 2, 2017 at 5.30 pm at National University in Torrey Pines.
- <http://www.awissd.org/index.php/all-events/events-calendar/215-awis-sd-annual-speed-mentoring-event-at-national-university>
- Academia 2 Industry Coffee Club on March 3, 2017 at 4:30 pm at Bella Vista Café  
<http://www.awissd.org/index.php/all-events/events-calendar/250-academia-2-industry-coffee-club?date=2017-03-03-00-00>
- Strategy Sessions: Creating a Professional Image on Monday, April 3, 2017 at 6 pm at Hera Hub  
<http://www.awissd.org/index.php/all-events/events-calendar/253-Creating-a-Professional-Image>
- Women In Science and Technology 2017 on May 20, 2017 from 8 am to 4 pm at UCSD Faculty Club. Follow us at <https://wist2017.org/>

See more AWIS-SD events [here](#).

## Upcoming Non AWIS-SD Events

- UCSD Postdoctoral Association STEM Career Symposium on March 25, 2017 from 8 am until 5.30 pm at Bella Vista Café



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## About the Authors



**Anne Kornahrens** moved to San Diego to complete graduate studies at The Scripps Research Institute. She is a part of a joint program with the University of Oxford. Her field of study is organic chemistry, and her current work is focused on developing electrophiles to be used as new probes to investigate previously underexplored families of hydrolases. Since moving to town in 2014, she has been involved with the Network for Women in Science (NWIS) at TSRI as well as AWIS, and she is excited to contribute to the outreach initiatives through her co-chair role. After completing her PhD she hopes to pursue a career in science policy.



**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 an active member of the Scholarship and the Newsletter committees. She was also a member of the AWIS-SD Open House 2015 committee.



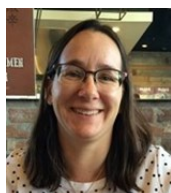
**Varykina Thackray** (Kina) is an Associate Professor of Reproductive Medicine at UC San Diego. She has a comprehensive background in hormone signaling, regulation of gene expression in reproductive tissues and the role of the gut microbiome in polycystic ovary syndrome. She received her PhD at the 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.



**Jennifer Kuo** is a graduate student in the Biomedical Sciences program at UCSD studying mechanisms of neurodegeneration. She has been an active member of the Strategy Session Committee since 2015 and is currently serving as co-chair. In her free time, she can be found training for triathlons, hiking, or watching Big Bang Theory. After completing her PhD, she hopes to pursue a career in the biotech industry.



**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 cancer genomics scientist 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.



**Joanna Redfern** studied molecular evolution of Ocotillo plants and their relatives during her doctoral studies at the University of New Mexico (UNM). As a post-doc at UNM, she employed next-generation sequencing of soil samples to search for novel ligase enzymes with potential applications in biofuels. Presently, she teaches Introductory Biology at both Miramar and Cuyamaca Colleges. Joanna also started the AWIS-SD Academia 2 Industry Coffee Club in January 2016.

**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](mailto: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 [April 10, 2017](#)

**Important Contacts**

<b>AWIS Board</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>E-mail</b>
President	DeeAnn Visk	<a href="mailto:president@awissd.org">president@awissd.org</a>
Secretary	Nellie Shaul	<a href="mailto:secretary@awissd.org">secretary@awissd.org</a>
Treasurer	Lori Yang	<a href="mailto:treasurer@awissd.org">treasurer@awissd.org</a>
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	Kristina Bompiani-Myers	<a href="mailto:kmyers@awissd.org">kmyers@awissd.org</a>
	Alex Clark	-
	Leslie Crews-Robertson	-
Past Treasurer	Christina Niemeyer	<a href="mailto:cniemeyer@awissd.org">cniemeyer@awissd.org</a>

To contact the board, visit the following website: <http://www.awissd.org/>

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