

### LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello, AWIS-SD members, Friends, and Supporters,



This year has been full of exciting developments for our chapter. In the spring, we awarded scholarships to five women researchers, all with bright scientific futures ahead of them. This fall, our open house was a huge success with 200 registrants and more than 100 attendees, allowing us to reach and exceed our goal of 20 new members by the end of the year. Based on our October roster, our chapter has officially grown to 128 members. We are beginning to have several in-person events, such as the Academia to Industry & Corporate Sponsorship joint happy hour and the recent workshop hosted by Career Advancement on recognizing career opportunities and how to take advantage of them.

The upcoming year brings with it a new website, which the website committee has been working very hard on (you rock!), a New Year's party and AWIS-SD retreat, both planned by our re-established events committee (welcome back!) and our biannual Women in Science and Technology (WIST) conference. For those new members, the purpose of the WIST conference is "To empower women in STEM at all levels to enhance their careers through networking, discussion of relevant career development topics, and exposure to a wide range of specialties within STEM" ([more info found here](#)). Please keep an eye out in the coming months for volunteer opportunities in related to planning and hosting this event.

If you are interested in becoming more involved in the activities of our chapter, check out the description of all our committees [here](#). All are actively recruiting new members and the chapter, overall, would love to get more people involved. Meetings and any upcoming events can be found on our [website calendar](#).

I feel so privileged to have been a part in our chapter's growth this year and look forward to everything planned for the upcoming one. As a newer member of our AWIS-SD chapter, I want to thank you all for making this such a warm and inviting community. As your new chapter President, I look forward to working with you all in the years to come.

Best,

*Rose*

Rose Presby, PhD  
President, AWIS-SD  
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## AWIS-SD Open House- A networking and Socializing Event By Sameera Bilgrami



The Fall Open House is an annual networking event organized by the San Diego Chapter of the Association of Women in Science (AWIS-SD) in October. This event is free and open to anyone in the STEM field and is a great opportunity to meet AWIS leadership, board members, old friends, and professionals in academia and industry. This is also an occasion for AWIS-SD to raise awareness among the scientific community about the various programs it runs and engage the participation of local scientific professionals in our noble cause.

This year's Open House was held on Wednesday, October 12 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at 11545 Sorrento Valley Road. It was an in-person event

organized at the SOVA Science District (North) on the patio just outside the New English Brewery. The area is spacious and bright with both covered and outdoor areas. The covered space contains a table, chairs and lounge furniture for both semi-formal meetings and casual chats. In addition, the outdoor space is adorned with a turf aesthetically outlined with drought resistant shrubs and flowering plants. As a plus, this area offers Adirondack and basket chairs for guests to sit on.



The outside space was further arranged by AWIS-SD into 5 areas with tables and chairs to represent the welcome/sign-in desk and our different committees, namely Academia to Industry (A2I), Career Advancement, AWIS leadership network (ALN), Outreach, Scholarship, Events, Public Relations (PR), and Corporate Sponsorship (CS) committees. The committees were seeking volunteers and many participants signed up. If you are interested in volunteering or what to know more, please check out our website at

<https://www.awissd.org/index.php/about/committees/committee-chairs>. Guests, after signing in, received a sticker with their name and affiliation, a food and drink ticket as well as a ticket for the raffle. Raffle prizes consisted of coupons for swim lessons, appointment with an attorney for family estate planning, self-defense, and interior redesign and staging classes. Attendees spent time at the various committee tables learning about the programs they can be involved in. They also patiently waited for delicious tacos from The Craft Taco Truck. They ate as they socialized with their neighbors in line and enjoyed drinks from New English Brewery. In addition, some baseball fans viewed the Padres vs Dodgers' game on the big screen.

In summary, the Fall Open House was a very well attended event with more than 100 attendees from UCSD, Scripps and the biotech industry including undergraduate and graduate students, postdocs, professors, and professionals. Because the pandemic had restricted meetings to online versions only, many AWIS members met their peers for the first time in three years. The event ended with a welcome from President Varykina Thackray and Monica Gonzalez honoring two of our 2022 scholarship winners who could attend the event. Lastly, came the raffle drawing, which was fun and interesting.







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## Intellectual Property with Dr. Paige Chandler

By Rose Presby

April's Academia to Industry (A2I) Coffee Club featured Dr. Paige Chandler discussing her decision not to pursue a career in academia but rather in intellectual property. Dr. Chandler received her PhD in 2017 from Penn State University in Integrative and Biomedical Physiology. She quickly realized during her graduate training that an academic career was not for her, citing job security as a major concern. She began attending numerous seminars highlighting various careers within industry, like the A2I committee's coffee clubs. It was at one of these seminars where she learned about patent law and how she could put her scientific skills to use in a career one would not usually consider. Eight people attended this coffee club, in addition to Dr. Chandler, who was extremely enthusiastic about her work and generated a lot of excitement about future careers in intellectual property (IP).

At the time of her talk, Dr. Chandler was a patent agent at Jones Day but has since moved into a new position with Morrison & Foerster LLP. An individual working in IP serves as an interface for the scientist and the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. She works with scientists to get their work patented and protected. The skills required for this particular field include having highly developed people-person skills with the ability to be a team player, extensive scientific training, and willingness to develop high quality

writing skills. She stated all one needs to get started in this line of work is a scientific background and the ability to work as a US Patent Agent by passing the patent bar exam.

Dr. Chandler was overall positive about working in IP. She finds the work to be highly stimulating. Although the day-to-day tasks may be similar to other law specialties, the science she works with is always exciting. The downside for her is that at a certain point one becomes competent enough to do the work of a patent lawyer but will not get the benefits of one. Therefore, it becomes necessary to decide to either continue as a patent agent or return to school to become a lawyer. Dr. Chandler decided to attend law school, and her employer paid her tuition. It was clear that Dr. Chandler thoroughly loves working in IP. In fact, she encourages anyone with a scientific background interested in an alternate career to consider IP as a good career move. She was open to sharing her contact information and willing to discuss more with anyone interested.

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## Salk Women & Science meeting “A Discussion on Diversity and Mentorship”

By Jean Spence

Salk Women & Science presented an in-person and virtual meeting entitled “A Discussion on Diversity and Mentorship” on November 2, 2022. The keynote speaker was Lola M. Adeyemo, TEDx speaker, founder and CEO of EQI Mindset LLC, co-founder and COO of Sapient Logic LLC and author of *Thriving in Intersectionality: Immigrants, Belonging, and Corporate America*. In addition, to explain the ways that the Salk Institute is promoting diversity and mentorship and supporting women in science, talks were presented by the following speakers:

- Bryan Robinson, Salk Vice President of External Relations
- Mallory Zaslav, Salk Vice President of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Monika Wert-Parkinson, Salk Director of Public Programs
- Susan Kaech, Salk Professor and Director of the NOMIS Center for Immunobiology and Microbial Pathogenesis, NOMIS Chai
- Rusty Gage, President of the Salk Institute.

The Salk Institute supports diversity in various ways. Zaslav is part of a six member Salk Diversity and Equity and Inclusion Team. Although the team is all women, the advisory board has men and women from multiple ethnic backgrounds. In addition to Salk Women & Science, Salk has a professional chapter of the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science as well as grass roots affinity groups for Asian Pacific Islanders, LGBTQIA+, Blacks and other underrepresented minorities. To support diversity, Salk offers paid internship opportunities sponsored by NCI, American Heart Association, and AAAS to local high school students with a focus on minorities. In addition, Salk offers faculty mentoring programs to teach and support staff who are mentoring students.

Mentorship was a common theme throughout the meeting. Kaech and Adeyemo explained how anyone, such as Ph.D. advisors, family members, co-workers, spouses, etc., can be a mentor. Both also stressed that mentors should be approachable and “around.”. Mentors can also encourage diversity by promoting gender and racial diversity in the lab, at conferences and in the job-hiring process. In summary, a mentor is someone who teaches but is not an expert in everything. Adeyemo stated “Being mentored and being a mentor can have a huge impact on performance and health of our colleagues”.

Kaech averred that trying to coordinate a career and starting a family was the number one factor preventing women from achieving career goals. The problem is twofold. There is a perception that it is impossible to achieve both so women with children are less likely to get needed support and balancing career and family really is difficult. When Kaech was approached by a colleague who asked what she should do to support a talented postdoc with children, Kaech said that the person needed money for child care and/or lab assistants. As for women who want to engage in a high-level career path while having children, she advised finding an enthusiastic spouse who will do his share of housework and chores. She also recommended building a strong support network.

The meeting concluded with an awards ceremony where Gage presented Women & Science Research Awards to eight female graduate students and postdocs. To learn more about the awardees, go to [https://www.salk.edu/engage/women-science/award-recipients/?utm\\_source=cc&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=221104\\_ws\\_221102&utm\\_content=te xtlink](https://www.salk.edu/engage/women-science/award-recipients/?utm_source=cc&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=221104_ws_221102&utm_content=te xtlink).

While Salk Women & Science is not affiliated with the national Association of Women in Science, both organizations support the same goals of promoting and supporting women in science. By following the Salk Women & Science, AWIS-SD members can obtain ideas for improving our objectives. For example, AWIS-SD could consider offering network opportunities and financial (scholarship) support to women with young children or more intensive mentorship for high school students.



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## Upcoming Events

Check our [events calendar](#) for most up-to-date information.

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## About the Authors



**Sameera Bilgrami** was recently appointed to be member at large on the AWIS-SD board, and currently serves as the interim President. Sameera is a senior scientist at Aethlon Medical, a company that captures pathological disease targets using medical devices as adjuncts to traditional drug therapies. Her career as a researcher started in India at the National Centre for Biological Sciences, TIFR Bangalore, where she studied protein-lipid interactions in live cell membranes. She was a postdoctoral fellow in the late Dr. Gary Bokoch's lab at Scripps Research before moving to UCSD. Her research focused on organelle movement, angiogenesis, and cancer cell movement. Sameera has a strong background in cell biology and expertise in imaging techniques, image analysis and programming. She likes to spend time with kids, hike, and volunteer at AWIS-SD.



**Rose Presby** is a recent transplant to sunny San Diego from the snowy Northeast. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Maine in Biology with a minor in Psychology. She went on to work for a few years as an animal care tech turned Lab technician at the Jackson Laboratory. In the fall of 2016, she started her graduate school career in the lab of Dr. John Salamone at the University of Connecticut where she received both her master's and PhD studying the motivational aspects and pharmacological manipulation of a rodent model of binge like eating. She, her husband and their two cats Salem (guess what color he is...) and George, moved to San Diego in August for her postdoc position at the Scintillon Institute in the lab of Dr. Albert Chen studying neural circuits of food intake. She is a member of the Outreach, Corporate Sponsorship and A2I committees, along with one of the new Co-chairs of the Scholarship committee. She is an avid sewist, hiker and chocolate lover. Feel free to reach her at [rpresby@scintillon.org](mailto:rpresby@scintillon.org) or on her LinkedIn profile <https://www.linkedin.com/in/rose-presby-07021088/>.



**Jean Spence** earned a Ph.D. from the University of Utah in microbial genetics. Subsequently, she did several postdoctoral 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.

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### 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 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 Mar 15, 2023.

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### AWIS San Diego Communications Committee - Newsletter

Co-chairs: Jean Spence and Corine Lau  
Member: Pat Rarus

[Newsletter@awissd.org](mailto:Newsletter@awissd.org)

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## AWIS San Diego Sponsors

AWIS-SD thanks our corporate sponsors for their generous support. Donations from corporate sponsors help us fund scholarship awards, monthly events, career development workshops, community outreach efforts, the Newsletter and the website.

For more information about how your company can support AWIS-SD, send email to [CorporateSponsorship@awissd.org](mailto:CorporateSponsorship@awissd.org)

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## AWIS-SD Board Members

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