AWIS San Diego Newsletter

Summer 2018 Volume 26 Issue 3

Letter from the President

Dear AWIS-SD Members and Friends,

As we wind down the AWIS-SD events this summer, I would like to thank all of our hard-working board members, committee co-chairs and members, and volunteers. Without their time and efforts, we would not be successful in our outstanding accomplishments.

This hard work would also not be possible without the generous donations from our sponsors. Thank you to all AWIS-SD sponsors for aiding in the continued success of our local chapter!

Our committees are always expanding and looking for new members. If you are interested in joining a committee, please consider joining these committees: Corporate Sponsorship, Strategy Sessions, or Outreach Committee. You can expand upon your communication and leadership skills, as well as build your network. For more information about our committees, please visit: http://www.awissd.org/index.php/about/committees.

AWIS-SD will host our annual Open House in October this year. We are looking to form a committee of volunteers to organize this event, showcasing what our local chapter is all about. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact me at president@awissd.org.

As we begin this next year of events, consider joining AWIS-SD.

Sincerely,

Courtney

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

AWIS-SD 2018 Scholars Celebration

by Risa Broyer

The Association for Women in Science San Diego Chapter (AWIS-SD) held its biennial event to honor this year's scholarship recipients on May 19, 2018. At the Scholars Celebration, this year's seven 2018 AWIS-SD scholars were presented with their awards of $1000 plus a one year AWIS-SD membership. In addition, the event hosted a career panel of five women with varying career tracks, as well as provided a networking opportunity for the participants.

caption: 2018 AWIS-SD Scholars Celebration committee, scholarship recipients, and participants.

The Scholarship Committee selected the seven scholars from a total of 70 eligible applicants. The 2018 AWIS-SD scholarship recipients are: Charlene Andreason (California State University San Marcos), Olivia Pereira (UCSD), Julie Paxman (UCSD), Angela Szesciorka (UCSD), Elena Estrada (UCSD), Sarah Moore (UCSD), Emiliia Dyrenkova (MiraCosta Community College). For more information on the scholarship recipients, see the following article.

Between 40 and 50 people attended the luncheon for the Scholars Celebration. Among the attendees were the scholarship recipients, the recipients' families and friends, AWIS-SD members and volunteers, and invited panelists who shared their career stories in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) field. The panelists were Helen Mao, PhD (CSO/entrepreneur), Janise Deming, PhD (Scientist in industry), Ashley Pourazary (engineering consultant), Varykina Thackray, PhD (Associate Professor), and DeeAnn Visk, PhD. (science/medical writer).

The five panelists spoke about their backgrounds and provided insight into various career trajectories that are attainable with a STEM degree.

Dr. Helen Mao is the Chief Science Officer (CSO) and founder of Moradec, LLC, which provides reagents and services for antibody-drug conjugate research and discovery against cancer cells. Mao received her PhD in Biochemistry from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1998 and continued for her postdoctoral training at AbbVie. Since then, she has gained her industrial experience at various biotech companies, including GNF, Biosite, and several small biotech startup companies. With her own ideas and funding, she started her own biotech company six years ago. Mao also shared her own entrepreneur experiences as well as her thoughts about starting her company from scratch.

Dr. Janise Deming is a Scientist in the Immunology therapeutic area of the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson. Last year, she co-led the Janssen La Jolla Postdoctoral Association. Deming believes that understanding cell signaling pathways is key to identifying new drug targets and moving forward in preventative and therapeutic medicine. Since her graduate work, Deming has been working on understanding various aspects of cell signaling. Currently, she is researching mechanisms of immune regulation in the context of inflammatory bowel disease. Deming holds a BS in Biochemistry from Seattle University and a PhD in Genetic, Molecular, and Cell Biology from the University of Southern California, Keck School of Medicine.

Ms. Ashley Pourazary is an engineering consultant for Azzur Consulting in San Diego. She was an AWIS-SD Scholarship recipient in 2012 as an undergraduate student studying nano-chemical engineering at UC San Diego. Pourazary made the decision to switch from academia into industry in her senior year at UCSD. Over the last 4 years, she has worked for life science companies in manufacturing, process development, supply chain, and liaising. Her experiences include working in the clean room facilities of a vaccine manufacturer to macro scale production in a large fermentation facility. As a consultant, Pourazary works on shorter term projects throughout the San Diego region for both large and small life science companies.

Dr. Varykina Thackray is an Associate Professor of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences at UC San Diego. Thackray received a BA in biology at Middlebury College, Vermont. She worked as a lab technician at Cornell University and at Ribozyme Pharmaceuticals. She obtained her PhD in molecular biology at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center and completed her post-doctoral training in reproductive endocrinology at UC San Diego. She is passionate about advocating for the equal participation of women in STEM. Thackray has been a member of AWIS San Diego since 2005.

Dr. DeeAnn Visk assists clients with communicating information in peer-reviewed manuscripts or industry news articles. Customers from *Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology News* and the National Institutes of Health routinely employ Visk. She graduated from the Division of Biology at UC San Diego in 2011 with a doctorate in Biological Sciences. From 2016 to 2017, Visk served as President of the Association for Women in Science, San Diego chapter.

The career panelist session gave practical career advice for the attendees and provided a Q&A session.

The 2018 Scholars Celebration event was a huge success. The attendees enjoyed the reception and luncheon as well as the opportunity for networking. The event concluded with an opportunity drawing featuring gift certificates from local and online merchants generously donated through DonationMatch.com, as well as handcrafted pottery by our own AWIS-SD Past-president, Grace Nakamura.

2018 AWIS-SD Scholarship Recipients

by Juliati Rahajeng

Every year, AWIS-SD provides $1000 scholarship awards to female students enrolled in community colleges or universities within San Diego County. This year, seven students were awarded with the scholarships during the Scholarship Celebration event at the Leichtag building at UCSD campus on May 19, 2018. Members of AWIS-SD, invited speakers, and guests of scholarship recipients gathered to celebrate the event. The following are short biographies of this year's scholarship recipients.

caption: 2018 AWIS-SD Scholarship recipients with AWIS-SD president and past-president.

Emilia Dyrenkova

Emilia Dyrenkova is a student at MiraCosta College majoring in Computer Science. She is originally from Ukraine and immigrated to the United States in 2017. Dyrenkova is an active member of the Math Club, Computer Science Club, and Club IT. In the Computer Science club, she worked in a team with her fellow students in building sumo robots, which went into competition against another robotic team. She also organized the team for this year's LA Hackathon. Dyrenkova is also involved in student government at MiraCosta College, in which she acts as a senator at the Associated Student Government (ASG) to represent students of MiraCosta College. She applied to summer undergraduate research programs at UC Irvine and Carnegie Mellon University to assist with research and learn from faculty members about graduate school. Her long-term plan is to continue with her education by going to graduate school and using her knowledge to work on projects that are important to society. She dreams of working for NASA as a software engineer. Her short-term plan is to transfer to one of the University of California schools, preferably UC Berkeley in fall 2019.

Elena Estrada

Elena Estrada is a student in the BS/MS Program at University of California San Diego (UCSD) majoring in Molecular Biology. Estrada was admitted into the BioScholars program, an honors biology program that gave her a chance to participate in the Phage Genomics Research

Initiative under the direction of Drs. Joe and Kit Pogliano. Her research focused on characterizing the genome and antibiotic activity of bacteriophage. She also worked on a couple of other projects during her undergraduate years. She independently designed a chemotaxis study to characterize the role of neuroligins in planarian regeneration and movement using MATLAB software; and she identified protein domain interactions of potential *A. thaliana* transcriptional coactivators and characterized the molecular function of a novel gene family in association with PRC2.

During the summer of 2017, Estrada worked as an intern at Althea to optimize screens and formulations for the crystallization of monoclonal antibodies for highly concentrated subcutaneous injections. Currently, she is working at the laboratory of Dr. Daugherty researching host immunity genes and their evolution against pathogens. Daugherty praised Estrada in his recommendation letter, reminiscing about their first meeting when Estrada asked Daugherty if she could work in his lab, he wrote: “By far, this was the most impressive first meeting I’ve ever had with an undergraduate student, and exceeds most of my meetings with PhD and even postdoc candidates,” he said. “From this very first meeting, and now after several months of experience in the lab, it is obvious that Elena has a rare blend of drive and curiosity that will make her a very successful scientist.”

Charlene Anderson

Charlene Anderson is a Master of Science (MS) student at California State University San Marcos (CSUSM) majoring in Psychological Science. She received a BA from CSUSM in Human Development in 2016. Anderson has been heavily involved in many projects since she was an undergraduate student. The first project she worked on was a longitudinal, quasi-experimental research project aimed at understanding the underrepresentation of minority scientists in biomedical research careers.

For the second project, she collected pilot data for an Innovative Technology Experiences for students and teachers (iTest) grant at the CSUSM Women’s Hackathon. The goal was to study how the relationships among interest, competency, self-efficacy, identity, and values influenced commitment to pursue an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) career pathway for young women, especially Latinas.

For the third project, Anderson carried out an independent undergraduate research project that was accepted for presentation at the 2017 National Society and Social Psychology Conference. She received a travel award from the conference and won the CSUSM Empirical Research Library Award. As a MS student, she is currently assisting in managing Project ACCEPT (Aligning the Common Core for English learners, Parents, and Teachers), a longitudinal study funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The goal of the project is to improve the quality for instructions of English Language Learners. Anderson’s goals include completing her MS program and applying for a PhD program in Social or Developmental Psychology. She is specifically interested in social cognitive development, social influences in development, educational disparities, social belongings, and trust within adolescents and adult minority groups in school.

Sarah Moore

Sarah Moore is an undergraduate student at UCSD majoring in Biochemistry and Chemistry. Her first research experience came from Dr. Arun Wiita's lab at the University of California San Francisco. Wiita's research focuses on quantitative proteomics, technology development, and preclinical therapeutic validation related to blood cancers and genetic diseases. Moore assisted a postdoctoral researcher in Wiita's lab by working on genome engineering to model pediatric genetic disease using CRISPR-Cas9 technologies. The goal was to create models of syndromic DNA copy number variants in induced pluripotent stem cell models. Currently, Moore is working in the Laboratory of Cancer Genetics headed by Dr. Richard Kolodner in the San Diego Branch of the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research to investigate the role of Rad9 in suppressing the synthetic lethality of *sae2Δ sgs1Δ* double mutant strains of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. Her career goal is to obtain a Ph.D. in biochemistry and become a professor conducting research in cancer genetics.

Olivia Pereira

Olivia Pereira is currently a Master of Science (MS) student performing research on methane seeps influence on trophic dynamics of seep and background communities off the coast of Costa Rica. She is working in Dr. Lisa Levin's lab at the Scripps Institute of Oceanography (SIO) - UCSD. The aim is to understand how these ecosystems transition from active to inactive and how they interact with their surroundings in order to understand their resilience and ability to recover from disturbances and to manage impacts and predict consequences of climate change. Pereira is originally from Brazil.

While she was in Brazil, she studied crustacean's biodiversity from food falls implanted in the deep Southwest Atlantic Ocean. She received the Best Poster Award when she presented her research project at the 6th International Symposium on Chemosynthesis-Based Ecosystems in August 2017. In addition, Pereira published an article based on her undergraduate research project. Her goal is to become a scientist who is recognized for her work and to make a positive difference in her field.

Angela Szeciorka

Angela Szeciorka is a PhD student at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography (SIO) , UCSD, majoring in Biological Oceanography. She received her BA in Journalism from Duquesne University. Despite this non-science degree, she was very much interested in learning and writing about animals and their ecosystems. Therefore, she decided to apply to a MS program in Marine Science.

Because her undergraduate degree is in journalism, she needed to take mathematics, physics, chemistry, and biology classes to meet the admission requirements. In addition, Szeciorka volunteered for many scientific opportunities, such as tagging elephant seal pups for the University of California Santa Cruz, and collecting tunicates for San Francisco State University. Szeciorka also learned sophisticated statistical software and how to drive boats. To help her

accomplish her project, she received certification for scuba diving and helicopter survival training. For her master's thesis, Szeciorka studied humpback whale behavior and their response to close encounters with ships.

Upon earning her MS degree, she worked as a research biologist. In addition, Szecioka assisted with studies in examining response of blue and fin whales to ship noise and Navy sonar in Southern California, as well as grey whale foraging behavior in Puget Sound. Szecioka published her first article on the tags that she developed.

To become more competitive, she returned to school for her PhD. Currently, her project involves the use of acoustics and tagging to study blue whale behavioral ecology, including movement, habitat use, and anthropogenic threats. Her dream is to work for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration so that her research can be used to establish feasible management plans for endangered species.

Julie Paxman

Julie Paxman is a PhD student at UCSD majoring in Biology with specialization in Quantitative Biology. She is working in Dr. Nan Hao's laboratory that uses quantitative approaches to study dynamic cellular processes. Paxman is currently working with an interdisciplinary team of faculty to study cellular aging. The goal of her project is to understand how SIR2, one of the most well-studied pro-longevity genes, affects the expression of downstream genes during cellular aging. Paxman's long-term goals are to have a career in both research and teaching. Therefore, she has been taking classes to improve her skills as a teacher. In addition, she worked together with some of her peers to re-establish a biology outreach program at UCSD called Biology Education for Art and Science Innovation (BioEASI). The goal of the program was to teach the public, both young and old, about basic biology topics.

Furthermore, Paxman and her colleagues successfully developed several teaching modules that they used at workshops at the La Jolla Library and at K-12 STEM fairs, including the San Diego Festival for Science and the STEM Maker Fair.

AWIS-SD Member Profile: Dr. Dorothy Sears
by Alyson Smith


caption: Dr. Dorothy Sears

AWIS-San Diego member Dorothy Sears is an Associate Professor of Medicine at UC San Diego. Her research focuses on obesity-related diseases including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer. Her lab aims to identify and characterize genes, metabolites, and behaviors that signal disease risk and develop them as novel targets for diagnosis and therapy. To accomplish this, her research incorporates dietary and behavioral intervention, metabolomics and genetic analyses in humans and rodent models. Since starting her own lab, Dorothy has contributed to over 40 publications on a broad range of areas within her field, including five in 2018 thus far.

After completing Ph.D. in yeast genetics and molecular biology at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Dorothy moved to San Diego in 1995 to begin a postdoctoral position with UCSD endocrinology researcher Dr. Jerrold Olefsky, studying insulin signal transduction and

biological effects of diabetes medications. While in Dr. Olefsky's lab, Dorothy worked with several endocrinologists in training. This experience gave her a clinical perspective and motivation that shaped her research in the years to come.

Recently, Dorothy has been leading multidisciplinary basic science and clinical research efforts to understand and treat metabolic and cardiovascular outcomes in sedentary, overweight, post-menopausal women – an important but under-researched population at risk. Last year, her team published a pilot study suggesting that practical interventions (such as 10 minutes of standing every hour during prolonged bouts of sitting) may improve metabolic and vascular outcomes. The research team was recently awarded two large grants from the American Heart Association and the National Institutes of Health National Institute of Aging ($14 million in total) to expand on this initial trial and related research.

On top of running a productive research program and mentoring trainees at all career levels, Dorothy advocates for the advancement of women in STEM careers, both at UCSD and AWIS-San Diego. Dorothy began her AWIS-San Diego career in 2001 by attending the Women in Biosciences conference (the precursor to the Women in Science and Technology conference). A couple years later, she began attending Strategy Sessions and kept attending for the valuable career advice and delicious refreshments. She still references notes from previous Sessions today. She soon joined the Strategy Sessions Committee and became Co-Chair. She joined the Board in 2009, and then was President for 3.5 years (2010-2013), followed by a two-year term as Past President.

The more Dorothy advanced in her academic career, the more challenges she faced in obtaining funding and promotions, and she began advocating for other women facing similar obstacles. She helped to found the Women in Health Sciences Committee at UCSD. This networking group organizes two events each year and advocates for fair and equitable treatment, promotion, and award nominations of female faculty in UCSD Health Sciences. Dorothy has served as the Chair of the Spring Events Sub-Committee and as Chair-Elect of the full Committee.

Dorothy also helped start the AWIS-San Diego Leadership Network, a networking group for members in senior leadership roles in academia or industry. This group is specifically designed for women at the Associate Director or Associate Professor levels or above and focuses on the unique needs of this peer group. Through workshops, guest speakers, roundtable discussions, and other events, this group aims to help women thrive in their leadership positions and move forward in their careers. This group was featured in an AWIS national webinar.

Dorothy has collaborated with Cindy Simpson, the Chief Business Development Officer at AWIS National, to present two workshops at the Washington State University College of Medicine Faculty and Trainee Workshop on strategies for addressing biases and barriers in advancing to positions of leadership and the importance of mentoring relationships for sustained career success. This opportunity, along with her other work with AWIS, has allowed Dorothy to share the wisdom she has gained over the course of her career with other researchers.

Dorothy advises young scientists to find a niche where their research can thrive and to continually build a network of mentors and colleagues that they can trust. She advises having a flexible five-year plan, and finding strong collaborators with complementary expertise.

We look forward to Dorothy's research and advocacy in the years to come!

Academia to Industry (A2I) coffee club – An evening with Dr. Cynthia Sandoval Rubenstein

by Dieanira Erudaitius

Overview
A2I coffee club held its monthly meeting on Wednesday, May 9, 2018. There were seven attendees that comprised of professionals from industry and academia. Our guest speaker for this meeting was Dr. Cynthia Sandoval Rubenstein, PhD from a molecular diagnostic company located in Carlsbad.

Background and Career at a molecular diagnostic company
Rubenstein obtained the position as a Medical Science Liaison (MSL) not long after obtaining her Ph.D.; which was in the summer of 2017. She had been specifically searching for a MSL position and it took her approximately 6 - 7 months before she successfully obtained her position. Cynthia's PhD experience in confocal microscopy, which is an essential technique in cancer biology, as well as collaborations in IHC diagnostics with Ventana Medical Systems was crucial in landing her first job as a diagnostic MSL. The timing couldn't have been more perfect as her current employer recently broke off from Novartis. The division resulted in the majority of MSLs remaining with Novartis and only one MSL staying with the company. In dire need of an MSL and looking to hire immediately, her current employer was interested in Rubenstein's background and character. Rubenstein greatly enjoys working at the molecular diagnostic laboratory and says it fits her personality.

Transition in Industry: From University of Arizona to Medical Science Liaison
Rubenstein attended the University of Arizona, which had a unique joint program with Ventana Medical Systems, a member of Roche. The program allowed PhD students to also work as research scientists in industry. Cynthia explained that this collaborative environment gave her the opportunity to build her network in industry and gained an insight into how industry works. During her PhD, Rubenstein worked on a collaborative project with Ventana and she quickly realized that the industry environment better suited her attributes. Furthermore, Rubenstein thought that working as a researcher in the lab does not fit her outgoing personality. She realized that she enjoys communicating verbally with scientists by attending scientific conferences and conversing with various thought leaders. Knowing that her personality did not match with the academic environment, Rubenstein decided that she needed to transition into industry. She began learning about a career as an MSL early on in her graduate training. She realized that post-doctoral research experience was not required for the position and therefore, she immediately began applying for MSL positions. Despite recruiters telling her that it would be impossible for her to obtain an MSL position without any industry experience, she continued to pursue her goal.

The interview process
Rubenstein first had a phone interview with the human resources personnel, through which the company quickly assessed her interest in the position, personality and background. A few weeks later, she had a phone interview with the hiring manager. Following the phone interview, she had an in-person interview, which Cynthia described as being fairly thorough. The in-person visit comprised of 6 interviews with the executive team and was an all-day event. During her interview, Cynthia highlighted her communication and time management skills. In addition, she

emphasized her outgoing, self-driven, and motivated personality, along with her long list of contacts she already with various thought leaders in multiple disease states.

What her current position looks like

As an MSL she has the opportunity to continue incorporating her passion for science but at a larger scale, specifically she is able to work hand-in-hand with world renowned oncologists. She personally feels that as a MSL, she has a greater impact than working as a scientist behind the microscope, as she is able to see results from a clinical perspective. Rubenstein explained that her day-to-day activities are different and she travels about 50-75% of the time. Rubenstein is responsible for a variety of tasks, which include but are not limited to managing projects, submitting proposals used for clinical studies, attending conferences, attending continued education dinners, training the sales force, etc. She is assessed based on the number of clinical studies she initiated; publications and presentations; and the number of interactions had with various thought leaders. As an MSL at Genoptix, Rubenstein is able to work from her home office, is given access to the company's credit card, and is provided with a laptop, an iPad and a cell phone.

In terms of salary and benefits, an MSL with 0 – 1 years of experience will have an average starting salary around $120,000 (however, this is highly variable depending on location/background) and some compensations. In addition, 10-15 % additional bonuses are given for producing publications, attending dinners, and giving presentations. The transition to senior MSL occurs after 5 years and the base salary increases exponentially.

Rubenstein enjoys working on investigator initiated study proposals, as she is given the opportunity to work with oncologists in various disease states. Rubenstein greatly enjoys learning and has gained a tremendous amount of knowledge pertaining to the business aspect of industry. Rubenstein also appreciates the opportunity to network and considers this as a perfect position to constantly opening doors to future opportunities. Overall, Rubenstein is extremely enthusiastic and happy with her career choice.

Advice to A2I members

1. Remember that you can learn anything!!! That is the advantage of having a PhD training.

2. At every job, you will get trained. Companies understand you will not have experience in everything. It is imperative that you do all the research you can on the company. This will allow you to hold a conversation by the time you are being interviewed.

3. Don't get discouraged when applying for jobs, stay positive. You will get there.

4. Leverage experiences and all connection you have to industry.

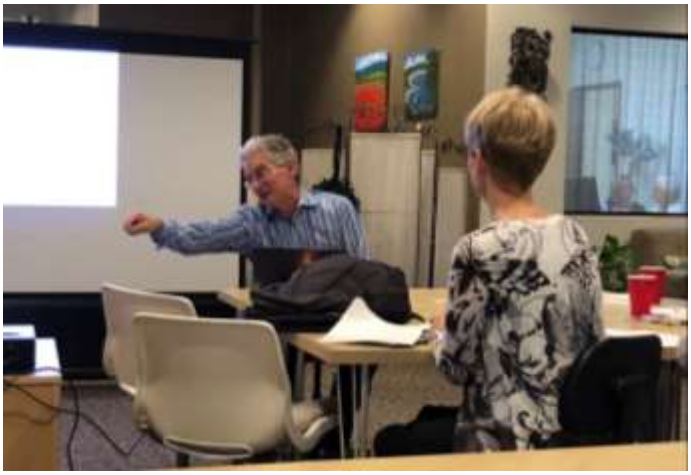
5. Make sure you ask a lot of questions.

6. Be wary of companies claiming to give you a MSL certification for completing their online courses. The MSL society often warns individuals when they post such certificates on LinkedIn to be careful of scams. UCSD extension does have classes/programs to help you become a stronger candidate (i.e. CCRP); but this isn't necessary as there is actually no official certification for MSL.

AWIS Strategy Session June event- Decoding the Elevator Pitch

by Alison Huang

In our June Strategy Session, we were excited to have Dr. Mark Title from Advanced Technology Leadership share with us tips on delivering an effective elevator pitch. An Elevator pitch is a 30- to 90-second statement of who you are and what you can do for a person or an organization. Honing one's elevator pitch is particularly helpful when attending networking events, conferences, meetups and almost everywhere else!



caption: Dr. Mark Title discussing the key elements of an elevator speech.

Here are Dr. Title's key suggestions:

- Include your name, what you do and specify at what level, your success and what you seek/offer.
- Leave out negative stories of past employers and anything complicated and irrelevant.
- Practice, practice and practice! Keep your elevator pitch authentic, positive and short.
- Have a pen and business card with you for adding notes. Most importantly, always arrange a follow-up phone call, e-mail message or meeting if the person you meet seems really interested in your skills!

Academia to Industry (A2I) coffee club – An evening with Dr. Rachel Weber

by Dieanira Erudaitius

Overview

A2I coffee club held its monthly meeting on Wednesday, June 6, 2018. There were seven attendees that comprised of professionals from industry and academia. Our guest speaker for this meeting was Dr. Rachel Weber, PhD from Neurocrine.

Transition to Industry: From Postdoctoral scholar to Medical Communications Specialist

Weber obtained her PhD in neuroscience with a focus on stroke (motor-recovery) and neuroplasticity following injury. She quickly learned that she did not enjoy the academia environment. Weber began attending many networking and career events at national scientific meetings and locally put on by her university to make her transition to industry smoother and obtain information about other career options. During the last six months of her PhD, Weber sent out lots of applications. Many of the positions she was applying for required previous industry experience. Having no experience, she found it difficult to not only find a position but to get responses from applications. Eventually, Weber decided to accept a one-year postdoctoral position at the same institution where her PhD was completed to gain additional skills while continuing to search for a desirable job in industry.

During her postdoctoral training, Weber became pregnant and nervous by the fact that an employer would not want to hire a pregnant woman, she began to question whether the timing was conducive for her to continue applying for jobs. Despite the pregnancy, Weber continued in her pursuit of obtaining a position in industry. Knowing that she enjoys social interactions, she decided to investigate roles that allow her to leverage her strong communication skills by applying to positions in Medical Affairs. Having several contacts that were MSLs, she was able to obtain feedback on her resume and get a better idea of how a Medical Affairs department worked. Weber explained that her PhD mentor was able to connect her with someone who was working at Neurocrine, who had an open position in Medical Communications. This connection helped Weber obtain an entry-level position that did not require any industry experience. The offer from Neurocrine came at an opportune time, as Weber was considering taking a second postdoctoral position at another university.

The interview

Weber first had a phone interview with the human resources personnel, through which the company quickly assessed her interest in the position, personality and background. A few weeks later, she had a phone interview with the hiring manager. Following the phone interview, she had an in-person interview. During the interview, Weber talked about an internship that she had while she was a postdoctoral fellow in Medical Communications in the Communications department at the university. Weber also highlighted her communication and time management skills. In addition, she emphasized her outgoing, self-driven, and motivated personality. Weber leveraged many of the skills that she gained during her internship, and connected it to the

medical communications specialist position at Neurocrine. Interestingly, although Weber was 37-weeks pregnant during her in-person interview, she was still offered the position. Weber concluded from this experience that “if the company culture is right, they will hire you!”. She was excited to know that her pregnancy did not interfere with obtaining the job.

What her current position looks like

As a medical communications specialist her job requires reviewing publications, managing the independent medical education and budget, and managing internal communications which includes informing other employees on emerging literature in relevant therapeutic areas. Weber explains that every company with a medical commercial product has a medical communications team or department. Remarkably, Weber is the only PhD on the medical communications team and all other members hold PharmD degrees. The medical communications department works on content development of the company’s presentations. This includes creating standard response documents and slide decks for the MSLs. In addition, the medical communications team is responsible for handling medical inquiries and working at the company’s booths at conferences. Attending conferences gives Weber the opportunity to present and discuss data from Neurocrine with other researchers. Weber also works with regulatory, compliance, commercial, clinical development and R&D departments, which allow her to learn about other departments in the company. Weber travels about 25% of the time. Her typical day is from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, creating a healthy work-life balance.

Weber’s future goals are to move into a manager role. Weber loves her career. She is happy that she does not have to work at the bench and she does not miss it at all. Weber enjoys traveling to conferences to give presentations or work at the booths in conferences. Weber greatly appreciates the culture of her company and recommends Neurocrine as a great place to work. Weber found the perfect work-life balance she was looking for.

Advice to A2I members

1. Apply to jobs you think you may be both over qualified for and under qualified for. It takes a while to get an offer but you will eventually obtain one.
2. If you are interested in medical communications, apply to positions with “specialist” or “associate” title. These are entry level positions.
3. While she did not negotiate her salary, looking back she wished she did a few things differently. She explains you can negotiate: your salary, bonus, stock options, vacation time, etc.
4. It never hurts to ask. If you are being re-located, try asking for a relocation package that you think is reasonable. Weber was surprised by Neurocrine’s generosity in helping her to relocate. So, don’t be shy to ask.
5. Use your connections in any way you can.
6. People are usually nice, so reach out to them. Also, people can get bonuses for referrals. Therefore, it also is beneficial to them.

AWIS Spring Happy Hour

by Ray Seraydarian

On Wednesday 18 April the Events Committee hosted a Happy Hour at Reckless Brewing Company, a craft brewery in Mira Mesa. In addition to the specialty beers brewed in house, light hors d'oeuvres were served. There were over two dozen attendees, including at least 9 non-AWIS members, and that made for lively conversation and networking. The crowd can be seen in the photos, but also notice the objects fixed to the walls in the background. These are components of a particularly elaborate Rube Goldberg machine, which they happily demonstrated for us. For readers who missed the Happy Hour and the opportunity for fellowship, networking, and a good beer or two, the working of the Rube Goldberg machine can be seen here: http://recklessbrewing.com/ru be-goldberg-machine/

caption: AWIS-SD Events Committee co-chairs and member.

We thank the members of the Events Committee, especially Valeria Viscadi and Ksenya Cohen-Katsenelson, for their work making the arrangements for this successful event.

News Ticker

by Alyson Smith

- A team of researchers led by Steven Steinhubl of the Scripps Translational Science Institute has shown that a wearable heart monitor can increase detection of atrial fibrillation compared to standard doctors' office visits. The devices can continuously monitor heart beat and other parameters, and are more likely to catch the intermittent abnormalities typical of atrial fibrillation. The devices can be mailed to at-risk patients, making monitoring more accessible for patients who have difficulty reaching a clinic.

- UC San Diego has opened a new Center for Anti-Parasitic Drug Discovery and Development to develop treatments for neglected tropical diseases – such as African sleeping sickness, giardiasis, and malaria – that affect more than one billion people in developing countries each year. This center, which now has 15 faculty members from diverse departments, was developed after the university received a grade of C+ from the Universities Allied for Essential Medicines for not devoting enough resources to this global health problem.

- In June, Biotech Vendor Services held a seminar in La Jolla focused on women in science navigating sexual discrimination and harassment in the workplace. At the event, many top female scientists from around San Diego shared their experiences, including: Beverly Emerson, formerly of the Salk Institute; Katherine Kantardjieff, Dean of the College of Science and Mathematics at CSU San Marcos; and Mary Canady, the founder of San Diego Biotechnology Network.

- The Scripps Research Institute and AbbVie have announced a major deal to bring a new version of chimeric antigen receptor T cell (CAR T) immune therapy for cancer. While financial details were not disclosed, the deal requires an antitrust review, indicating a value of at least $84 million. The new immune therapy combines CAR T cells with artificial antibodies that can be used to modulate the specificity and intensity of the immune

response, potentially making the treatment safer and more effective than previously developed versions.

- Researchers at Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute have discovered a method to induce regeneration of pancreatic beta cells in diabetic mice. The method involves inhibiting the production of insulin, which prevents beta cell regeneration, and treating with a drug to activate PAR2 receptors on alpha cells and promoting the formation of new beta cells. This method holds promise for the treatment of both type 1 and type 2 diabetes.

- Researchers at the Scripps Institute of Oceanography and the National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration (NOAA) have discovered the first known manta ray nursery in the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary about 70 miles south of Galveston, Texas. Much is known about these giant marine animals, which can have wingspans of up to 21 feet and regularly interact with divers. Still, how they spend the 4-5 years it takes them to reach adulthood has remained a mystery. The discovery of this nursery will allow researchers to study the behavior of adolescent rays.

- The United States Postal Service has posthumously honored Sally Ride, the first American woman in space and professor of physics at UC San Diego, by featuring her portrait on a new Forever Stamp. In addition to her career at NASA and UCSD, Ride is known for co-founding Sally Ride Science, a nonprofit that promotes STEM education, and co-authoring six children's books about science. The dedication of the stamp was celebrated by a ceremony at UCSD's Price Center.

Member News

- Adriana Bankston, PhD, has started a new position as the Associate Director of Fundraising and Strategic Initiatives at the Future of Research (FoR).

  FoR is a nonprofit organization with a mission to champion, engage and empower early career scientists with evidence-based resources to improve the scientific research endeavor. Adriana's position is focused on developing an overall fundraising strategy that will allow FoR to move forward in its mission. This includes developing fundraising and marketing materials, soliciting donations, preparation for grant applications, and other administrative duties.

- Aarti Narang will be starting a new job as a Technical Scientist at Absorption Systems later in August 2018.

Upcoming AWIS-SD events

1) Meet the Board
Date: Tuesday, September 18, 2018 06:15 PM
Venue: Hera Hub
Meet the Board is an opportunity to meet the leadership of AWIS-SD from the president to the the committee co-chairs. Find out who the board membership are. Hear about what each committee is doing. Find the right fit for you.
Light refreshments will be served.
RSVP here

2) Happy hour and tour at Green Flash Brewing
Date: Thursday, September 27, 2018 06:00 PM
Venue: Green Flash Brewing

Brewery Tour and Networking Event at Green Flash Brewing
Join us for an exciting happy hour and brewery tour at the Green Flash Brewing. Tour and tasters are on us! Polish your networking skills and meet new people. Bring friends and business cards!
RSVP here

3) Registration Deadline:
AWIS-SD Visit to Takeda
Date: Friday, September 28, 2018

Takeda has invited the Academia 2 Industry (A2I) Coffee Club and other AWIS members to tour their San Diego Facility (10410 Science Center Drive San Diego CA 92121) on **Friday October 12th, 2018** from 10:00am to 12:00pm.
Register for the tour here

4) STRATEGY SESSIONS:
Decoding Your Interpersonal Style
Date: Monday, October 01, 2018 06:00 PM-08:00 PM
Venue: Hera Hub, 4010 Sorrento Valley Blvd, Suite 400, San Diego, CA 92121
Networking – 6:00 pm
Workshop – 6:30 - 8:00 pm.
Light refreshments will be served.
Remember to bring your business cards!
Preregistration is essential!
Free for AWIS-San Diego members.
$25 for non-members.
RSVP here

Non-AWIS events

The International Society for Medical Publication Professionals (ISMPP) is offering a 10% registration discount to AWIS San Diego members for its first-ever ISMPP West 2018 meeting, Surfing the Waves: Start-up to Established Company Solutions, October 11-12, in San Diego, CA.

Meeting information is available at www.ismpp.org/ismpp-west-meeting.
Enter AWIS10 in the “Discount Code” field, off Early Bird pricing until July 11 and Standard pricing until September 12. Learn about ISMPP at www.ismpp.org.

About the authors

Risa Broyer is a postdoctoral fellow at UCSD in the Ophthalmology Department studying retinal development and small molecule based neuroprotective strategies where she uses patient-derived stem cells and CRISPR technology to integrate reporters and model neurodegenerative disease using “mini-retinas-in-a-dish”. Risa received her Ph.D. in Biological Sciences from UCSD and has been a member of AWIS-SD since 2010. She has been a co-chair of the Scholarship Committee since 2015.

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.

Dieanira Erudaitius obtained her PhD in Bioengineering from the University of California Riverside. The focus of her doctoral research was investigating the underlying mechanism behind selective cancer cell susceptibility to hydrogen peroxide generated during ascorbate therapy. Dieanira joined AWIS in 2016 and is currently serving as co-chair of Academia to Industry Coffee Club.

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.

Alison Yi-Jou Huang obtained her BS in Life Science at National Taiwan University, and currently she is a PhD candidate in Cancer Biology at UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center. The focus of her doctoral research is studying how different mutations contribute to leukemia development using genomic tools and murine models. Outside of work, Alison is an amateur photographer and barista. Alison joined AWIS in early 2018 and is currently serving in Public Relations and Strategy Session Committee.

Alyson Smith (not pictured)

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 Oct 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

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