



# AWIS NEWSLETTER

ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN IN SCIENCE

*San Diego*

*Mission Statement: The Association for Women in Science, Inc. (AWIS) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the achievement of equity and full participation of women in all areas of science and technology.*

## Letter from the President



Dear AWIS-SD Members & Friends,

Wow! What a terrific Open House in October; our largest ever. This was an amazing event to introduce AWIS San Diego to the greater community, highlight our committees and activities, and recognize the volunteers who contribute to our chapter. The room was buzzing with excitement all evening. I was delighted to have the opportunity to catch up with longtime friends and make new contacts. Many thanks to Qualcomm for generously hosting this special event in its spacious facility.

My favorite part of the Open House was presenting the annual Volunteer Awards to deserving members. This year's recipients exemplify how active volunteers can positively impact AWIS-SD. I want to highlight these extraordinary women and thank them for their contributions to our chapter.

All three **Rookies of the Year** joined AWIS-SD in the past year and have become active and committed volunteers. As newbies, Jenya Antonova-Koch and Li-Ting Su stepped up to become co-chairs of the Public Relations and Events Committees, respectively. Yashashree Joshi joined the Public Relations and Corporate Sponsorship committees and designed posters and displays for AWIS-SD.

The Board recognizes the Newsletter Committee for **Achievement in Innovation**. The three co-chairs, Afshawn Chakamian, DeeAnn Visk, and Nurith Amitai have consistently published a high quality, relevant newsletter for our members. They continue to add new features to improve its readability and content.

The **Achievement in Outreach or Community Service** award goes to three members. **Nellie Shaul chairs the Outreach Committee**, which organizes and participates in community Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) events that

benefit the next generation. April Cresse and DeeAnn Visk prepared an extensive AWIS-SD online portrait for the San Diego Foundation, which will increase our chapter's visibility to the community at large.

Open House co-chairs, Radhika Gopal and Kerstin Kirchsteiger, are recipients of the **Leadership Service Award**. Since May, they led the Open House Committee to meet every challenge on the road to a very successful event. Through DonationMatch.com, they found items for the Silent Auction to raise money for the AWIS-SD Scholarship program.

The newly created **Board Special Award** is given to the Chapter member(s) whom the AWIS-SD Board recognizes as exemplifying the AWIS-SD mission through excellence in leadership, community service, innovation, and promoting AWIS-SD. Maha Gebara-Lamb, Ellen Dunn, and April Cresse are recognized for their service as co-chairs of the Back to Work Initiative. In 2014, they secured a partnership with UC San Diego Extension which has included a career workshop in April and the inaugural AWIS-SD/UCSD Extension Continuing Education scholarships. The latter were presented to Jean Spence and Aniko Hastings at the Open House. The co-chairs continue their efforts to increase opportunities for all women in science.

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The **Outstanding Volunteer Award** is presented to Gloria Kuo-Lefkowitz, co-chair of the Public Relations Committee. She and the PR committee keep AWIS-SD active and present with regards to social media, including informing the chapter of upcoming events through frequent updates on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

Last but not least, the **President's Award** recognizes Tamera Weisser for demonstrating continued service and enthusiasm and for making immeasurable contributions to the San Diego Chapter. Tamera has been actively involved with our chapter throughout the years, with service on the Strategy Sessions Committee, Speakers co-chair for WIST 2013, AWIS-SD Executive Board, and AWIS-SD Leadership Network.

In other news, please check out the newly revamped website, [www.awissd.org](http://www.awissd.org). The Website Committee, led by Kristina Henthorn and Maki Kaneko, has worked hard to create a website that meets the growing needs of our members and the local STEM community.

Finally, I hope you and your family have a wonderful holiday season. Thank you all for supporting AWIS-SD and our mission.

Most sincerely,

*Grace*

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

### Focus Session Review – “Build Your Own Business”

By Leslie Robertson

Running your own business is an exciting and challenging prospect. Whether you are doing consulting work, founding a company to complete specific experiments for clients, or launching your own biotech start-up, you always need more information on what this process entails, and how to best prepare yourself for the challenges of working for yourself. On September 8, AWIS members were treated to an insightful panel discussion addressing how to “Build Your own Business.” Panelists coming from various science and service-oriented fields discussed many basic considerations of being your own boss. They also shared inspiring anecdotes that revealed how different women have overcome numerous obstacles to succeed in their business endeavors.

Panelist Felena Hanson, founder of Hera Hub (a co-working space for female entrepreneurs and professionals which generously hosts the AWIS Strategy Sessions events), shared the startling prediction: based on current trends, in just 20 years, 80% of knowledge workers will be consultants hired to complete specific tasks. She also confided to participants that when you start your own business, you don't always know what you're doing every step of the way – but the ones who figure it out and stick to it are the ones who succeed. She and other panel members also gave valuable advice on how to handle the variety of tasks involved in starting a business. You will find yourself acting as an administrator, an accountant,

and a web designer, among other duties. The key to juggling these different tasks, all the panelists agreed, is to manage your time effectively – know how much time you want to dedicate to the actual business product, but know that a significant amount of your effort should also be dedicated to other organizational tasks.

Although some members in attendance may not have specifically considered starting their own businesses, all surely benefited from learning how to “think like a CEO.” As a lab-based academic researcher myself, Ms. Hanson's point about handling many diverse tasks you may never have anticipated (or been trained for) gave me a new perspective. It occurred to me that I really am an “academic entrepreneur,” and not all that different from a prospective independent business leader or owner. As an aspiring professor, I will one day have to function essentially as an independent businesswoman. From managing administrative tasks, navigating complex bureaucratic red tape, budgeting and “marketing,” it seems that even for the principal investigator of a research lab, the science and grant-writing duties may often take the back burner in favor of other equally necessary, but less inspiring, tasks. Regardless of whether an academically inclined researcher considers starting a business or not, all of us can benefit by thinking like entrepreneurs.

### October 2104 Strategy Session: “Build On Your Idea”

By Safak Yalcin

Dorothy Sears and Beth Cisar were the speakers at the October 2014 Strategy Session titled “Build on your Idea.” Sears, ex-president of AWIS-SD and an Associate Professor at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), was the first presenter. Sears showed the critical steps that should be followed from the generation of ideas to their implementation. Ideas are hypotheses that can generate enthusiasm when they are novel and the source of progress in any field of human life. Generating a good idea is just the start of the innovation process. The idea has to be implemented in order to hold a value or to solve a problem. The first step of implementation process involves analytically evaluating key aspects of assessments such as setting goals, making business plans, and identifying and connecting with a target audience. Sears also described how effective communication strategies can convey the idea to the audience of interest. Briefly, an enthusiastic story explaining the feasibility of an idea and justifying the use of resources is critical for engaging and also convincing the audience of the urgency of the idea.

Beth Cisar, a chemistry technical writer, patent agent at Isis Pharmaceuticals, and AWIS-SD member, presented the second section of the session on “Disclosing Present Information while Retaining Ownership of your Idea.” Cisar talked about what should be taken into consideration before

sharing a business idea or invention. During the idea implementation process, a description of the idea or invention should not be shown, disclosed, or demonstrated to anyone before a patent application. Cisar provided us with suggestions on how much information about the original idea should be kept confidential until obtaining the patent.

The speakers finalized the session by providing some of their ideas to the audience, so that small groups of people could brainstorm and practice together on how to build an idea. Overall, the event was well-structured, informative, and also enjoyable. Thanks to the host of our Strategy Session, Hera Hub, a woman's co-working space, with locations in San Diego County and a prospective one in Washington DC, for providing the venue.

### **My Time With The United Nations: Science Policy In Action**

By Georgina To'a Salazar

On March 11, 2011, following an earthquake and tsunami of unanticipated magnitude, the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station experienced severe damage, triggering a nuclear emergency. Then an assistant professor in Japan, I began independent work investigating the effects of environmental radiation on human stem cells following a nuclear disaster. I quickly came to understand the limitations of pure science to study subtle environmental influences. The large populations and long periods of time needed to conduct effective research on issues like these requires scientists to engage in processes of multilateral research and international science policy – placing them in the sphere of international diplomacy.

After this event, I set a long-term personal career goal to transition from research into science policy and diplomacy. Science policy can be defined as government action concerned with the allocation of resources for scientific research and development, the use of scientific knowledge to enhance response to societal challenges, and education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.<sup>1</sup> Relatedly, government use of international scientific collaborations to address common problems is known as science diplomacy.

Making a transition into these fields from my previous position in academic scientific research has been difficult, and has taken longer than expected. While waiting to hear back from several policy fellowships to which I applied, I took advantage of the Advisors Program of Islands First. This program places qualified individuals in small island state Permanent Missions, which are delegations posted near the United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York City. I became an intern adviser with the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Palau to the UN.

### *Entering the UN*

During my five-month internship, one of my principal responsibilities was to attend and summarize UN meetings for my Ambassador. One of the crucial meetings involved negotiations to establish [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), a set of action-oriented, concise, and easy-to-communicate future international development goals to help drive the implementation of sustainable development. At the third UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012, the international community agreed to set these goals to focus efforts on building a desirable future world between 2015 and 2030. The SDGs span an ambitiously comprehensive breadth – from eliminating poverty to reducing maternal mortality to conserving marine environments. Throughout my time at the UN, I kept my eyes open and found many instances in which scientists might be able to play a role. For example, they could contribute to long-term forecasting – scientific assessment of current and likely future developments in a range of fields will clearly be critical in defining specific, attainable and relevant targets for SDGs set to be achieved over 15 years.

### *Science Policy and the UN*

Achieving progress in UN work, such as negotiations to articulate the SDGs, requires consensus among all member states. Information from the scientific and engineering community is one factor in the decision-making process, but cultural, economic, and other values, along with political or diplomatic alliances, also contribute to outcomes of negotiations. Scientific and technical evidence generally enters processes when diplomats consult reviews compiled by UN-associated bodies, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN).

Arriving at the end of my internship with the Mission of Palau, still looking to build experience in science policy and diplomacy, I sought out opportunities for working with these organizations. One of the most recently created entities in the UN is its Scientific Advisory Board. The Board had its inaugural meeting in Berlin at the end of January 2014. Currently, I am working as part of a Board initiative that studies institutions connecting science and policy around the world. For the long term, I plan to again target fellowships and US federal agencies, but also to expand my search to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and UN-associated agencies, including WHO's disease surveillance program and the IAEA research laboratory in Monaco.

My experience working within the UN system has helped me better understand what is necessary to draw worldwide attention to global challenges. The many science policy discussions I observed at the UN were almost exclusively science for policy, in which policy decision-makers consult scientists for evidence on which to base decisions. For the





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future, there is great opportunity in global policy for science, in which development and implementation of policy enables scientific research to better address global problems. I persist in pursuing a better understanding of how platforms for international collaborations in scientific research could be built – and how those with advanced degrees in science can best contribute to such work.

<sup>1</sup> Deborah D. Stine, "Science and Technology Policymaking: A Primer." 2009. <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL34454.pdf>

## Informational Interviews

By Melanie R. Nelson

*An excerpt from the new eBook "Navigating the Path to Industry: A Hiring Manager's Advice for Academics Looking for a Job in Industry," by AWIS-SD member Melanie R. Nelson. While the writing style differs from the AWIS-SD Newsletter standards, the editors have decided to print the passage without editing the author's published work. More information on the book, and links to purchase it at Amazon, BN.com, iBooks, and Kobo available here:*

<http://annorlundaenterprises.com/books/navigating-the-path-to-industry/>

Networking is incredibly important for any nonacademic job search. Most job searchers recognize this, but still fail to take advantage of one of the most powerful forms of networking, the informational interview.

An informational interview is an interview where you ask someone who's working in a job that sounds interesting to you a lot of questions and try to figure out if you'd like the job and how you might get such a job. You do not contact someone and ask for a job, even if that person has a job you want posted. You contact her and ask if you can ask some general questions about her field and how she got to where she is today.

This is the step where many of your peers will drop out. It is intimidating to reach out to people you do not know and ask them to meet you to answer your questions. Why in the world would they agree to do this? Amazingly, most people will say yes. They remember how hard it was to make the transition out of academia and are willing to help out. Also, people generally like to talk about themselves and to feel like an expert giving advice.

Once you've scheduled an informational interview, spend some time preparing. Do background research online so that you know the basic jargon of the field, and can ask intelligent questions. Prepare a list of questions and take it with you to the interview. You don't need an extensive list, just a few to get the conversation started. You can also always ask someone to tell you about his career path, and to describe a day in the life of someone in his job. Then let the conversation evolve. You'll probably come up with more questions as the conversation proceeds.

*You absolutely must be prepared to give your research summary and the summary of what sorts of industry jobs you're considering. If you can't give a good research summary, your interviewee is unlikely to want to stick her neck out and tell a potential hiring manager that she thinks you are sharp. If you can't describe the information and advice you're looking for, she can't search her network for someone who can help you.*

After the interview is over, follow up with a thank you email. If the interviewee offered to put you in touch with some other people, this is a good chance to say something like "I look forward to talking to your friends Joe Jackson and Annie Anderson about opportunities in industrial underwater basketweaving." Usually, this is enough of a reminder to prompt someone to follow through on their offer of help. If a couple of weeks pass and you never get that introduction, though, you can reach out again with a gentle reminder, saying something like "I know you're very busy. I just wanted to check if you've had a chance to contact Joe Jackson, in case I missed an email." Only remind someone once unless they have specifically told you to pester them until they follow through. If they don't follow through, heave a big sigh and move on to the next contact. You still learned from your conversation and made a new connection with someone who might be able to help you in the future.

## Science News Ticker

William E. Moerner, who served on the University of California San Diego (UCSD) faculty from 1995-1998, will share the 2014 Nobel Prize in Chemistry with two other researchers. The three have developed means to see into the nano world of cells past the previous limit of 0.2 micrometers. This prize marks the 20th time a scientist with ties to California has won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in the last 30 years. While at UCSD, Moerner held the titled of Distinguished Chair in Physical Chemistry in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. He currently works at Stanford University. \*\*\* Two San Diego companies were included in Fierce Biotech's 2014 "Fierce 15" list. Fierce Biotech, a prominent life sciences industry publication, publishes the list every year to highlight promising U.S. biotech companies to watch. Mapp Biopharmaceutical, makers of the experimental Ebola drug ZMapp, was included as a 16th extra honoree. Also listed was Cidara Therapeutics, which works to develop small molecule immunotherapies to treat fungal infections that complicate cancer and transplant treatments, as well as other illnesses exacerbated by deficiencies of the human immune system. \*\*\* In September, the second annual Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Symposium was held at the San Diego Convention Center. Three- thousand participants attended over 350 workshops, student showcases, round-table discussions, speakers, and hands-on instruction. This event provides resources for schools and teachers as they strive to

increase student participation in subjects essential for college admissions and many careers. \*\*\* The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine has named Sanford Stem Cell Clinical Center at UCSD Health System one of three "alpha clinics," which will receive an \$8 million grant each. The grant's principal investigator is Catriona Jamieson, M.D., Ph.D., associate professor of medicine at UCSD School of Medicine, deputy director of the Sanford Stem Cell Clinical Center, and director of the UCSD Moores Cancer Center stem cell program. UCSD Researchers have recently initiated three first-in-human clinical trials investigating stem cell-based treatments for spinal cord injuries, type 1 diabetes, and chronic lymphocytic leukemia. Other trials for heart failure, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's disease), and blindness are in planning stages. \*\*\* As of October 31, 2014, San Diego will have reached a warmer-than-normal weather streak of 12 straight months. October 2014 has been San Diego's second warmest October since 1983. There have been 61 days where the weather has been 80+ degrees Fahrenheit – almost twice as many as 2013. Warmer than normal sea-surface temperatures as well as California's three-year drought are both contributing factors to the higher temperatures. . \*\*\* The National Institutes of Health have granted \$6.6 million to a laboratory at The Scripps Research Institute in San Diego to study Lassa fever virus. Lassa fever is a hemorrhagic fever, a group of diseases that also includes Ebola. While Lassa fever is less deadly than Ebola (though it still it kills 10-15% of those infected), it is far more common; 30,000 to 40,000 people in Africa die of the disease every year. \*\*\* Last month, 60 women participated in the 2014 International Women's Hackathon at California State University San Marcos. The challenge: to create a website, app, or video to address disaster response or climate change in one day. The third such event to be held in the U.S., the goal is to provide opportunities for young women to design and create code in a safe, nurturing environment. \*\*\* Genalyte, a San Diego-based clinical and life science company, has developed an Ebola diagnostic that produces results in as little as 10 minutes. The test uses one drop of blood from a finger prick and can detect Ebola proteins at an early stage of infection, before the person exhibits obvious symptoms. The company expects validation of the test in the next few weeks. \*\*\* New math Common Core courses have been implemented in many local school districts, while others choose to wait. The goal of the Common Core math programming is to have a deeper understanding of math using critical thinking skills, as opposed to rote memorization. Math lessons are taught using the Socratic method; students ask questions and debate answers.

### Upcoming AWIS Events

#### Speed Networking Event at Rough Draft Brewing Company

Tuesday, November 18, 2014, 5:30pm – 8:00pm  
 Rough Draft Brewing Company, 8830 Recho Road, Suite D,  
 San Diego, CA 92121  
 Free for AWIS Members, \$15 for non-members

Our November Speed Networking event is an excellent opportunity to meet as many local biotech, life science, and engineering professionals as possible in as little as 2 hours. Interested? Prepare your 30 second elevator pitch, bring plenty of business cards, and join us for some quality networking! AWIS will provide light refreshments.

Space is limited, so register [here](#)

#### UCSD Bioengineering Breakfast with Industry

Tuesday, November 18, 2014, 7:00am – 9:30am  
 UCSD Price Center East Ballroom

This is a special 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary event by UC San Diego Jacobs School of Engineering. It is an excellent opportunity for local women in the biological science fields interested in interacting with our Bioengineering graduate students and world-class faculty in a more intimate setting. There will be two keynote speakers: Dr. Ann Lee-Karlon (Genetech) and Dr. Walt Baxter (Medtronic). Ann is the national president of AWIS, and therefore this is a great opportunity for our members to talk to her.

For more information, go [here](#).

#### Mid Career Coffee Club

Thursday, November 20, 2014, 7:45am to 9:00am  
 Inside the UTC food court, 4505 La Jolla Village Drive

Informal peer networking forum for AWIS-SD members in leadership and/or management positions to openly discuss issues faced on a daily basis.

Register [here](#)

#### Strategy Session: Build Your Career Using the Newest Technology

Monday, December 1, 2014, 6:00pm to 8:00pm  
 Hera Hub, Sorrento Mesa, 9710 Scranton Road #160, San Diego, CA 92121

Networking 6:00pm  
 Workshop 6:30pm – 8:00pm  
 Additional details TBD.

Light refreshments will be served. [Pre-registration](#) is essential for this members only event. Remember to bring your business cards! This is an AWIS San Diego Members Only Event.

### Local Events of Interest

#### San Diego Clinical Research Network: HOW IS THE CLOUD TRANSFORMING THE LIFE SCIENCES AND CLINICAL TRIALS? PERSPECTIVES FROM THREE LEADING COMPANIES

Tuesday, December 9, 2014, 5:30pm – 8:00pm  
 Sheppard Mullin Attorneys at Law, 12275 El Camino Real,



Suite 200, San Diego, CA 92130

Every six months, the amount of data generated by the pharmaceutical industry doubles. Using the Cloud to store and analyze data can handle the exponentially greater information flow in the life sciences. Cloud Computing – the practice of using a distributed network of servers hosted on the Internet to store, manage, and process data and run applications remotely, rather than a local server or a personal computer – has helped to transform other industries, and is now transforming the life science industry and will change how clinical trials are run.

Cloud computing is a commonly known revolution in IT, but few people are aware of the nuances and the potential behind this. Here, speakers from life science companies that are leaders in the application of cloud technologies will provide insights on how their organizations are addressing the latest cloud topics, and their visions of the potential of leveraging cloud computing in their industry.

#### Speakers

- The Digital Revolution...Increasingly Coming to the Lab, Carlos M. Herrera. Senior Product and Program Manager, Thermo Fisher Scientific
- How Biotech Companies Can Get Started with Cloud for Clinical Trials, Marc Desgrousilliers. Chief Technology Officer, Clinovo
- Seeing Through the Clouds: Case Study of a Cloud-Based EDC Implementation, Maryanne Nicosia. Director, Clinical Data Management, Neurocrine Biosciences

To register and learn more about the program, go [here](#)

#### Member News

**Erika Olson** recently published a paper in ACS Chemical Biology as co-first author. The article reports on the development and structural analysis of an antagonist for the EphA4 receptor, which has been implicated in neural repair and neurodegeneration, as well as cancer progression. It can be found here:

<http://pubs.acs.org/doi/abs/10.1021/cb500677x>.

Western University Assistant Professor **Manal Swairjo**, Ph.D., received a National Institutes of Health Research Project Grant (RO1) for the project "RNA Modifications: Structure and Mechanism." The project focuses on analyzing four newly characterized bacterial proteins that are crucial in bacterial RNA synthesis. This research aims to identify targets for new antibacterial agents to combat antibiotic-resistant infections.

#### About the AWIS Newsletter

The AWIS-SD Newsletter is published six times per year and provides AWIS members and supporters with information on Chapter activities, career development, and issues related to women in science.

*Newsletter staff for November/December:*

Nurith Amitai, Afshawn Chakamian, Madhu Ramaiah, Pat Rarus, Robina Shaheen, and DeeAnn Visk

#### Contribute to the Newsletter

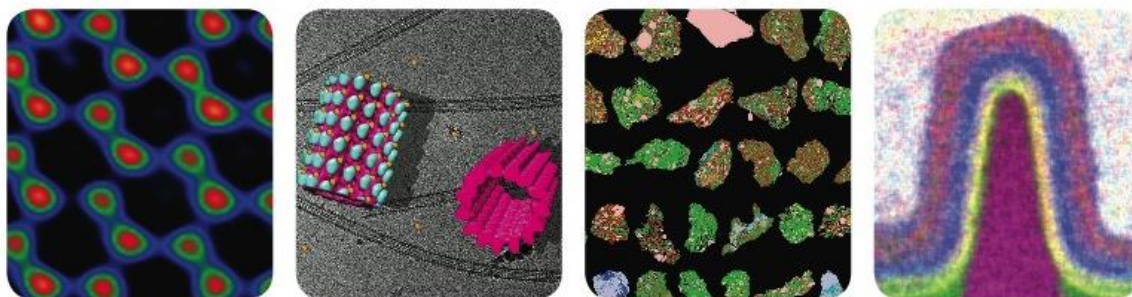
If you are an AWIS-SD member, we encourage you to contribute to the newsletter. Please send articles, photographs, and member news as MS Word attachments to <mailto:newsletter@awissd.org>. News articles should not exceed 250 words, event summaries should not exceed 500 words, and feature articles (special-interest stories and profiles) should not exceed 1000 words. The submission deadline for the next issue is December 10, 2014

#### About the Authors

**Leslie Crews Robertson**, Ph.D., is a third-generation native San Diegan and cancer researcher at UCSD. As an aspiring professor of stem cell biology, she has a passion for all things stem cell. When she's not in the lab trying to figure out how stem cells work, Leslie also enjoys traveling, cooking, Scottish Highland dancing, and spending time with her family and three fluffy cats.

**Georgina To'a Salazar**, Ph. D., currently serves as an intern advisor for the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Palau to the United Nations. She did a postdoc at the Singapore Eye Research Institute. An Assistant Professor at the University of Tsukuba in Japan at the time of the Fukushima nuclear incident, she initiated a project to study the effects of low-dose radiation on human stem cells. Her dream work is science policy and science diplomacy.

*Remaining author information was not available at press time.*



(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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### Important Contacts

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Past Treasurer	Corine Lau	<a href="mailto:clau@awissd.org">clau@awissd.org</a>

To contact the Board, visit the following website: <http://sdawis.org/about-awis-san-diego/board-members-awis>

### Committee Contacts

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Back to Work Initiative	April Cresse Ellen Dunn Maha Gebara-Lamb	<a href="mailto:backtoworkinitiative@awissd.org">backtoworkinitiative@awissd.org</a>
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Events	Barbara Davids Sonia Feau	<a href="mailto:events@awissd.org">events@awissd.org</a>
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