



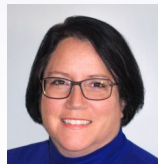
Newsletter

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

Letter From the President

Dear AWIS-SD Members and Friends,

I hope you have all been able to take some well-deserved time off this summer to relax. Unplugging and unwinding can be very renewing given the hectic pace of life in the modern world.



Happy Family Event participants.

We had a wonderful family event on July 23rd at the Museum of Natural History in Balboa Park. Delicious food at the pot-luck and cool marine clouds from the ocean kept us content and comfortable. Kudos to the Events Committee for putting on such a wonderful event.

Also, a big thanks to the Scholarship and Scholars Celebration Committees that put on a fantastic high-tea event in May. AWIS-SD awarded nine scholarships to deserving young women. A panel of three female scientists in industry and academia shared their stories, wisdom, and insights to the challenges

faced by women and answered questions from the audience. The event was enjoyed by all.

Looking ahead to the fall, we have a [Happy Hour](#) on Wednesday, September 14th, at 5:30pm at Saint Archer Brewery with beer tasting and a tour.

You can also join us for another networking opportunity at the [Meet the Board Event](#) on Monday, September 19th, 2016 at 6:00pm at Hera Hub in Sorrento Valley. This is a great place to come and meet the leadership of AWIS-SD. Additionally, there will be brief presentations by each AWIS-SD Committee, so you can see how our wonderful volunteers work together to provide all of the AWIS-SD programming. If you have not joined a committee yet, I urge you to do so to get the most out of your membership.

At the end of October, we will have our annual Open House. Recruitment for the organizing committee is now open. Please send an email to OpenHouse@awissd.org if you are interested.



Some members of the Scholarship and Scholars Celebration Committees along with scholarship recipients at the Scholars Celebration in May 2016.

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Finally, we are also ready to gear up for our flagship event, the 2017 Women in Science and Technology (WIST) conference. This event will be held on May 20, 2017 at the UCSD Faculty Club. We can use your talents in the design and planning of this day-long event. Please send an email to WIST@awissd.org if you are interested.

I look forward to seeing you at upcoming AWIS-SD events.

All the best,

DeeAnn

DeeAnn Visk

president@awissd.org

AWIS Speed Mentoring

By Melissa Scrnton

This past spring, AWIS-SD members joined in a night of mentorship and community at National University in Torrey Pines for the Annual Speed Mentoring Event. Mentors from various fields in academia and industry shared their insights and gave advice to AWIS-SD members looking to advance their careers. Topics of discussion included surviving grad school and how to transition to academic or industry careers.

Participants gathered in small groups of three to five mentees with a mentor for a Q&A session on a specific topic of interest. Each speed mentoring session consisted of a 20-minute block. A total of three sessions were completed in the evening. The night ended with an open networking session to exchange contact information and follow up with further questions. It was a great opportunity for all participants to interact with individuals with diverse background throughout the night. Some mentors even swapped places to become mentees in topics outside of their areas of expertise during different sessions, allowing them to benefit from both roles.

Both mentees and mentors found the experience very rewarding. Attendees enjoyed having honest conversations in a more personal setting. Mentees and mentors were also able to make meaningful connections with peers in the San Diego science community.

The next AWIS-SD Speed Networking Event is coming in March 2017 at National University. If you are interested in the 2017 Peer Mentoring Workshop, please take this [5 minute survey](#). Whether you would like to be a mentor, a mentee, or both, all AWIS-SD members can benefit and contribute to this enriching event.

AWIS-SD Member News

- ◆ Dorothy Sears, PhD (Associate Professor of Medicine, Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism, UCSD) recently gave a presentation for the Doris Howell Foundation luncheon on May 20, 2016. The title of the presentation is "Simple Lifestyle Changes for Improving Women's Health". The event was featured in the La Jolla Light newspaper. Here is the link to the article: <http://www.lajollalight.com/news/2016/jun/01/howell-speaker-touts-lifestyle-changes/>
- ◆ Hanne Hoffman, PhD (Past co-chair of AWIS-SD Strategy Session and postdoc in Reproductive Medicine, UCSD) recently received the Pathway to Independence Award (K99/R00) from NICHD to study how disrupted rhythm generation in the brain affects reproductive function.
- ◆ Miriam Cohen, Ph.D (co-chair of AWIS-SD Outreach Committee) recently accepted a medical writer position at Arbor Scientia Group

Vertex Tour

By Anne Kornahrens

The Corporate Sponsorship and Outreach Committees collaborated with one of AWIS-SD's sponsors to provide an exciting new opportunity: A tour of Vertex Pharmaceuticals. This bronze-level sponsor has a prominent presence in the San Diego STEM community as an innovator creating new therapies for diseases such as cystic fibrosis and as a community partner offering internships, fellowships and participating in fundraising events.

Thanks to the help of the Vertex STEM and community outreach coordinator, Tracy Bychowski, and the scientists working at the La Jolla site, we were able to offer a tour to young women who attended some of the AWIS-SD outreach spring events. The tour was held on a nice June afternoon and involved an introduction of the company and facilities, a tour of the site including the cell core, biology, and chemistry centers and lots of insight and fascinating stories about the work performed by the scientists and engineers at Vertex. The core facility was a hit – an automated center containing a library of millions of chemicals, and robots that dispense precise amounts of compounds of interest through ultrasonic technology and send the plates to be tested by scientists on site or around the world! Talking with Vertex scientists and learning about their different career paths was inspiring to both the young and old(er) attendees. This helps to fulfill the AWIS-SD Outreach Committee's mission of supporting young women as they expand their horizons and imagine their future in STEM.

It was a great experience that the Outreach Committee definitely hopes to repeat. We are also excited that the Back to Work committee will be utilizing this great sponsor resource – keep an eye out for details of their tour in the fall!



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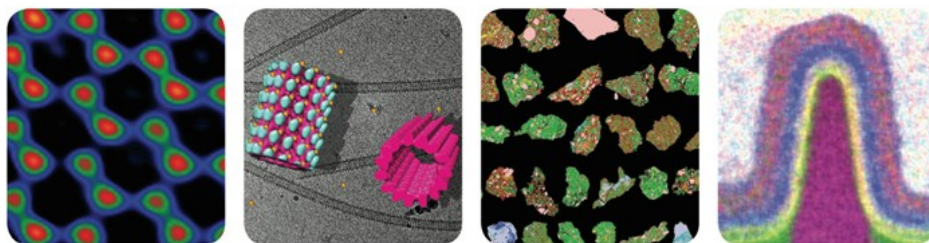
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Science Ticker

- The FDA has recently approved Absorb, a plastic, biodegradable cardiovascular stent developed by Abbott Vascular and tested at several San Diego medical centers. Unlike traditional metal stents, Absorb dissolves about three years after implantation, allowing for greater freedom of vessel movement and making it easier to re-treat affected areas. However, Absorb has not been as thoroughly tested as metal stents and may not be safe for certain patients.
- Scientists at the Scripps Institute of Oceanography have developed a new underwater microscope that can be operated by divers to observe microscopic marine organisms in their natural habitat. The researchers used the microscope, which is operated by an underwater, handheld computer, to capture micrometer-scale images of coral polyps, both in healthy and bleached reefs.
- In an effort to foster collaborations and partnerships with Japan's life science industry, UC San Diego will open an office in Tokyo on July 26. The office will represent the entire campus and focus on digital health, bioengineering, computer



(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 CO₂ injection well. Image: CO2CRC, Australia. 22 nm PMOS transistor structure. Image: FEI NanoPort.

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Science Ticker

- A study conducted by BestColleges.com found that 33% of female students at UC San Diego choose majors related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), the highest percentage of the 100 schools included in the study. UCSD also has a relatively high number of student majoring in STEM fields overall, with 22% studying biology, 11% studying economics, and 9% studying computer engineering. UCSD admits more female than male students, but men outnumber women on campus 52 to 48 percent.
- Scientists at Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute, UCSD, and Stanford have identified the protein RBPJ as a master regulator of genes that control blood vessel growth in the adult heart. As a negative regulator of blood vessel growth, RBPJ could be a potential therapeutic target for drugs treating patients with cardiovascular disease. Having more blood vessels in the heart could help reduce the tissue damage from vessel blockage during a heart attack.

AWIS-SD Strategy Session: Projecting Your Inner Businesswoman

By Ksenya Cohen Katsenelson

June's AWIS-SD Strategy Session was presented by a special guest, Gioia Messinger. Gioia is the founder and CEO of LinkedObjects, Inc., a new firm specializing in wireless internet-enabled devices. She is a remarkable businesswoman who is both an entrepreneur and executive. Gioia's passion is to create new things from just an idea into life-changing products. Behind her is a remarkable career that supports this premise.

She was the founder and CEO of Avaak, Inc., the leader in wire-free video home monitoring products, which was acquired by NETGEAR. Gioia was also a principal investigator and project manager for a program under a Defense Advanced Research Projects (DARPA) grant. In addition, she was a major contributor in the development of PillCam™, a wireless endoscopic capsule for medical diagnostics. The products she created won numerous awards.

After graduating from UCSD with a BS/MS in electrical and computer engineering she worked as the only woman in a startup company as a project lead. This later became her first customer as she became an independent consultant. The startup company not only gave her an opportunity to shine, but also a lot of freedom to create new ideas.

Gioia's career path was fascinating, and she gave us some insights into her success.

"Always maintain good relationships with your current and former bosses because they can help you significantly in future career endeavors."

"An important thing to remember is marketing. When becoming a lone consultant, if you don't market yourself enough, you won't get enough customers, and that is very important. Therefore, hiring more people and delegating some of your tasks to them helps you a lot. Sometimes you need to take risks."

"Sometimes you need to take risks."

"Surround yourself with people that are in a similar situation as you, they might not always be helpful but at least they will be willing to listen."

"Get out of the house every day and have lunch with a different person, do a lot of networking and talk about what you want to do. Most importantly, ask people to refer you." All Gioia's first customers were from word-of-mouth and extensive networking. In order to become a successful individual consultant you will need to be self-motivated, self-disciplined and focused.

"Put yourself in situations where you are uncomfortable because that will make you think the best and will challenge you the most."

Commit to doing the best work possible. Recognize the patterns that occur in your life. Develop mutually beneficial relationships with leaders in your field, and you will eventually climb to the top of your profession!

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¹Lichtenberg FR, NBER Working Paper No. 18235. Pharmaceutical innovation and longevity growth in 30 developing and high-income countries, 2000-2009. Available at <http://www.nber.org/papers/w18235>. Accessed May 2014.

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Science Ticker

- Select San Diego schools have been testing new standards for K-12 science education known as the Next Generation Science Standards. These guidelines emphasize core ideas, practical applications, research practices, and relationships between disciplines. They suggest organizing courses around interdisciplinary concepts rather than discrete subjects such as biology and physics. The draft guidelines for California schools will be available for public comment until August 29.
- As part of the Obama administration's Precision Medicine Initiative, the NIH has awarded \$120 million to Dr. Eric Topol of the Scripps Translational Science Institute (STSI). STSI will be responsible for recruiting 350,000 of the one million volunteers for the study. Participants will use a mobile app to record health information such as blood pressure, heart rate, glucose levels, sleep, and exercise. They will also be asked for blood and urine samples for genomics, proteomics, and *microbiome* studies.



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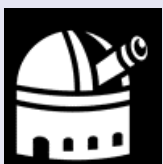
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Science Ticker

- The Center for the Advancement of Science in Space (CASIS) will soon open an office in San Diego to foster collaborations with local scientists. CASIS, a nonprofit group that manages the US National Laboratory, is helping NASA to commercialize parts of the laboratory run by astronauts on the International Space Station. This will be the first CASIS office to open on the west coast.
- Astronomers from San Diego State helped identify the largest planet to orbit two stars identified to date, Kepler-1647b. This planet, a gas giant with similar mass and radius to Jupiter, takes three years to orbit its two stars, which made it difficult to identify. Current astrophysics theory suggests many more planets similar to Kepler-1647b exist.



Inspiring and Connecting NextGen STEM Enthusiasts—AWIS Outreach Spring 2016 Career Panel

By Sigrid Katz

What inspired you to follow a career in a STEM field? What does a physical oceanographer do? If I'm not good at math, can I still become a scientist?

What better way to find answers to these questions than to talk to someone who has been in the same shoes? The Spring 2016 AWIS Career Panel in April provided such an opportunity. The AWIS Outreach Committee-run event was held at the School of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at San Diego Mesa College, thanks to the generous support of Dean Saeid Eidgahy. We welcomed twelve exceptional women who held fascinating careers in STEM fields and 30 young women and guests from various San Diego County high schools, colleges and STEM organizations.

At check-in, our young women participants were able to pick up resource booklets (sponsored by Celgene, designed by Outreach Committee co-chair Robyn Wygal), a career information packet (donated by Gloria Banuelos, Deputy Sector Navigator Life Sciences/Biotechnology San Diego and Imperial County Region), and a tasty breakfast provided by Expanding Your Horizons. The morning session opened with a mini-talk by a representative from our sponsor, Celgene: Laure Escoubet, Head of Epigenetic Drug Discovery at Celgene. Laure took us on a quick tour of epigenetics and her role as scientist at Celgene. This was followed by a whirlwind session of inspiring stories and life-lessons from our panelists who covered topics ranging from koalas to sea turtles, jumping continents for field work in Africa, deploying instruments to study ocean waves, and the highs and lows, the challenges and benefits of being a woman in STEM. Our panelists this spring were Camryn Allen, Biologist, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Kristin Bompiani-Myers, Postdoctoral Fellow UCSD Moores Cancer Center; Jennifer Carmichael, Associate Professor of Biology, San Diego Mesa College; Karyl Carmignani, Science Writer, San Diego Zoo Global; Sharon Hughes, Associate Professor of Mathematics San Diego Mesa College; Kamala Janiyani, Intellectual Property & Licensing Consultant, UCSD; Liza Porterfield, Quality Engineer, Solar Turbines Inc.; Victoria Raymond, Director of Medical and Scientific Affairs at Trovagene, Inc.; Kelly Spoon, Assistant Professor Mathematics Miramar College; Iren Stojimirovic, Astronomer San Diego Mesa College; Lisa Tsai, Scientist, NAT Diagnostics; Amy Waterhouse, physical oceanographer at Scripps Institution of Oceanography.



AWIS Outreach 2016, cont.

Though some panelists expressed concern over being able to talk for six minutes about her career path, this apprehension quickly dissipated. The opposite; namely, how to possibly fit all the events and influences shaping her career into the given time slot, became the true challenge. The morning session flew by as all present were immersed in twelve inspiring and entertaining stories. Each woman had her individual story, however, some common themes emerged:

- Find what interests you - it can take a while to find out what you are truly interested in and it can also change – and that’s OK!
- Communicate – with your peers, fellow STEM-nerds and friends with different interests and careers. Talking with your friends with the same interests will solidify your knowledge, inspire you and create opportunities in the future. This will expand your horizon and will keep you grounded.
- Choose a good mentor.
- Work with people you like. You will dedicate many hours to your career and spend many hours working with other people, whether you pursue a job in industry or in academia. While a love and passion for a subject are essential, working with people you get along with is probably equally essential. Nothing can take the fun out of work as quickly as difficult colleagues and an unsupportive environment.

During the well-deserved lunch break, the girls from Dragons 5229, a robotics team from The Boys and Girls Club of Greater San Diego, had a chance to demonstrate their solar-powered robot to the other attendees. The lunch break was also an opportunity for panelists to connect and network with each other before heading into the afternoon student mentoring session. Debra Kimberling, a mechanical engineer at Solar Turbines Inc., long-time



member of the Society of Women Engineers San Diego, and a passionate advocate for empowering girls and for the creation of inclusive learning environments, kicked off the afternoon with an enthusiastic motivational speech. Her address to the girls on courageously defying the “good girl” stereotype and diligently pursuing their STEM interests resonated with all present, including the panelists, volunteers, and organizers, and sparked discussions which extended beyond the allotted time for the event. During the student mentoring session, girls had the chance to rotate through two rooms and speak to each of the panelists, with time keeping by Anne Kornahrens, Outreach Committee Co-chair. The girls also spoke to volunteers, organizers and representatives from EYH about additional opportunities and how to carry their passions forward from the event.



A busy day came to an end with a STEM prize drawing for gifts including tickets to the San Diego Zoo, a pass to join a turtle scientist in the field, and an invitation to a Star Night with a Mesa College professor. Thanks to the helping hands of volunteers Lorah Bodie, Liz Ferguson, Elizabeth Jacobs, and Charisse Winston, another successful AWIS Outreach Career Panel is in the books and many of those pressing questions were answered. Of course, we STEM enthusiasts always leave with more questions, but our young women left with a sense of belonging, feeling inspired, and ready to take on their own STEM career paths.

AAAS Forum

By Anne Kornahrens

Last spring, I excitedly boarded my flight out of San Diego, leaving the bench behind to head to Washington, DC and entered the world of science policy for a few days. I attended the AAAS Forum on Science and Technology Policy on April 14th-16th and left inspired to share what I had learned about the issues currently being debated, the great effort of scientists engaging in advocacy, and the exciting work that advocacy groups such as AWIS perform to advocate on scientists' behalf on a national level. What is advocacy and what can it achieve? How are scientists involved in policy making on a national level? What can I do to contribute? These questions churned in my mind as I headed to DC to find the answers.

Before the forum, I was able to arrange an informal meeting with the wonderful AWIS National Intern who helped me to understand what our parent non-profit can do as an advocacy group to inform and shape the decision-makers in DC and support more inclusion in STEM careers. AWIS National shapes legislation about grant funding or pay equity, executes and disseminates analysis of relevant current statistics and provides workshops on unconscious bias for organizations and companies. Unlike lobby groups, AWIS does not directly fund or influence the outcome of policy through donations, but instead uses their research and analysis, public engagement, and advocacy to champion the interests of women in STEM. One theme I took from this meeting, and found repeated throughout my foray into science policy, was that change is not pursued during head-to-head, polarized fights, even though this is how some debates are reduced from a distance. Instead, working through allies who are willing to engage in scientific discourse and utilizing a quality network again and again allow for a step-by-step positive transformation.

The AAAS Forum held many more lessons. Speakers provided summaries of recent efforts, including a report of successful NIH and NSF budget increases and a review of the Obama administration pre-

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sented by John Holdren from the White House's Office of Science and Technology (OSTP). Other sessions discussed pressing policy questions such as the use of big data, the Moonshot cancer project and the increasing role of artificial intelligence in our communities. Many conversations revolved around the continued challenges – a desire to keep scientists in the debate at their current levels, regardless of the outcome of the next election, a continued push for increases in funding to return to pre-sequestration levels, and an awareness that predictions and preparations will be required to meet future science policy challenges.

AAAS Forum cont.

One breakout session at the forum discussed whether advocacy could ever hurt the credibility of science. Discussions of how to get scientists involve always seem to balance the objectivity of the science and the difficulty of the true nuances of many of the problems and policies. A powerful example of this was debated in an engaging roundtable on gun violence research. Mark Rosenberg, a gun violence expert and former head of the CDC's Injury Prevention Program, and Former Rep. Jay Dickey of Arkansas have formed an unlikely team to discuss the need for increasing levels of gun violence research. The former member of the House of Representatives was behind a measure in 1996 forbidding the CDC to spend funds "to advocate or promote gun control." In the 20 years since, CDC directors have chosen to disengage from the entire field leading to a dearth in the understanding of the causes, effects and possible preventative measures of gun violence. It was amazing to hear that Former Rep. Dickey regrets part of the role he played in eliminating this research, and the lessons Mark Rosenberg says he learned from Rep. Dickey and from his involvement in this debate. Dickey claimed that "smart people aren't always practical, but policy is about making science practical". The live interplay between these two characters showed a lot of the excitement and the difficulty of creating results that support both the science and the desired policy.

We need to keep "making science matter,"

I had immersed myself in this world and had seen some of the ways the government approaches issues related to science, and how scientists working at the federal level were shaping policy decisions. I still wondered: how can I help to promote evidence-based policy? How can I shape the policy that enables scientific research and the continued education of great scientists? How can I help others in San Diego to recognize their power to influence these issues? I turn to the lessons I learned from AWIS National and understanding the power we have as an organization on a national

level to enact change. I think of the strength of the AWIS-SD chapter and our ability to start conversations, connect scientists and advocate for positive change.

Regardless of how each individual scientist feels about politics, we can agree that many specific *policies* are hugely influential. We need to keep "making science matter," as keynote speaker Dr. Kathryn D. Sullivan (NOAA Administrator) emphasized, and keep scientists in the conversation. When we think of the next wave of progress and innovation, discussed by Steve Case (AOL co-founder and former CEO), we recognize that we need broad awareness, representatives from many backgrounds, and vibrant conversations to solve the complex problems of tomorrow. This requires the participation of scientists in policy, the involvement of innovators and researchers from all STEM fields in scientific conversations, and the increased inclusion of women in the STEM pipeline. Increasing the voice of science in our society requires us to include and raise the voices of all scientists. I am more aware than ever before that the advocacy of AWIS and the support of AWIS-SD helps me to raise mine.

If you would like to learn more or engage in advocacy, I would recommend the great resources at www.awis.org including fact sheets sharing their data on the state of women in STEM, and their advocacy tool kit allowing scientists to call for members of congress to support funding for science research.



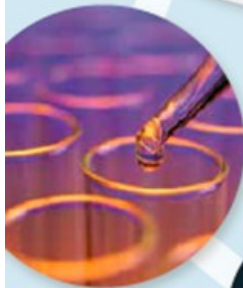
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About the Newsletter

The AWIS-SD Newsletter is published four 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 this issue:

Corine Lau, Linda Manza, Gabriela David-Morrison, Juliati Rahajeng, Madhuvanathi Ramaiah, Pat Rarus, Alyson Smith, Jean Spence, Alyson Smith, and DeeAnn Visk



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AWIS-SD 2016 Scholars Celebration

By Juliati Rahajeng

Association for Women in Science San Diego Chapter (AWIS-SD) held its biennial event to honor this year's scholarship recipients on May 21, 2016. The Scholarship Committee selected nine scholars from a total of 93 eligible applicants. The 2016 AWIS-SD scholarship recipients are Alexia Consuelo Gee (Palomar College), Katya Echazarreta (San Diego Community College), Anika Ullah (UCSD), Anachristina Morino (San Diego State University), Vera Smirnova (UCSD), Jay Blankenship (CSUSM), Tristin McHugh (SDSU), Michelle Dow (UCSD), and Jessica McCurley (SDSU/UCSD).

More than 40 people attended the high-tea style 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 success stories in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) field. The panelists were Anna-Maria Hays Putnam, Ph.D. (Director of Analytics and Formulations at Halozyme), Alison Coil, P.h.D. (Associate Professor of Physics Ingrid and Joseph W. Hibben Chair at UCSD), and Rebecca Broyer, Ph.D. (Assistant Professor of Chemistry at University of Southern California).



All three panelists have interesting paths throughout their careers. Putnam started hers as a joint postdoc in crystallography at The Scripps Research Institute and California Institute of Technology after receiving her PhD in Biochemistry from the University of California Riverside in 1999. She worked for Ambrx for nine years as the Associate Director for Analytical and Formulation Development. Then, she joined Halozyme in 2012 as the Director of Quality Control and Product Development. She advised us to always network and develop new skills. For example, through volun-

teering at AWIS-SD, one can build a viable network and develop communication and leadership skills.

Coil was a Hubble Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Arizona after receiving her PhD in astrophysics in 2004 from the University of California at Berkeley. During her doctoral program, Coil served as a mentor to younger graduate students in her lab when her advisor had a stroke and had to find another professor to be her mentor. Coil said that we should not be afraid to ask for help when we need it. In addition, she said we should be tenacious in achieving your goals.

After receiving her BS in Biochemistry at UCSD, Broyer went to work for the biotechnology industry for several years before going for her Ph.D. at the University of California at Los Angeles. She was then awarded with an Andrew Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, where she developed polymeric materials to preserve modern art works. Broyer learned the importance of acquiring communication skills while working for the museum, since she had to communicate with curators and art collectors. She also developed her communication skills through teaching organic chemistry at Glendale Community College. Broyer encourages young scientists to be persistent in reaching their goals and to think outside the box. For example, she called the Chair of the Chemistry Department at University of Southern California for an informal interview and as a result, she was hired as a teaching faculty in the department.

The 2016 Scholars Celebration event overall was a huge success. The attendants enjoyed the luncheon as well as the opportunity for networking. Nighat Ullah, Anika Ullah's mother and a clinician at Stanford University, suggested inviting panelists from underrepresented minority groups to the next Scholars Celebration in two years. Her rationale was that they may face bigger challenges in their careers.



Meet Our Scholars

By Juliati Rahajeng

This year, Association for Women In Science San Diego Chapter (AWIS-SD) Scholarship Committee received 93 eligible applications for a total of 112 applications received competing for nine \$1000 scholarships available for female students majoring in STEM field in San Diego County. The scholarships were divided into four major categories, Community College, Undergraduate, Masters, and PhD categories. On May 21, the scholarships were awarded during the Scholarship Celebrations Event that took place at the University of California San Diego (UCSD) Faculty Club. Each one of the recipients shows amazing achievements in her field.

Alexia Consuelo Gee is an AWIS-SD 2016 scholarship recipient for the community college student category. She majors in Biology at Palomar College. Alexia has great passion for wildlife and conservation biology. She is working in Dr. Thomas Spady laboratory at California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM) studying polar bears behavior that is crucial for its captive breeding program in collaboration with the Milwaukee Zoo in Wisconsin. Alexia is will transfer to CSUSM in the fall of 2016 to finish her BS in Ecology. She hopes that she will receive her PhD and become a research scientist in Wildlife Conservation.

Katya Echazarreta is another community college student scholarship recipient. She is majoring in Electrical Engineering at San Diego Community College. Katya is currently working with a Senior Engineer at Raytheon Company that specializes in defense, civil government, and cyber security solutions. Additionally, she has been involved in various activities, such as volunteering as the Commissioner of Academics and Scholarships and the Vice President of the Society of Women Engineers, and hosting demonstration labs at the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center to teach both children and adults about basic circuits, optics, friction, etc. Katya is going to begin her PhD program in Electrical Engineering at the University of California, Berkeley in the fall of 2016.

Jayd Blankenship is AWIS-SD 2016 scholarship recipient in the Masters program category. She is majoring in Psychology at CSUSM. For her thesis, she is looking at children's

ability to distinguish sources, and whether children allocate resources according to sources' different traits. She is planning to use AWIS-SD scholarship to support her current project. Jayd has had numerous experiences working as research assistant. These included working at a military sexual trauma clinic and at the UCSD Social, Cognitive, and Developmental Neuroscience Laboratory. She also volunteers at a Children Discovery Museum to promote education and wellness in underprivileged populations. She wants to pursue her PhD in Developmental Psychology.

Another recipient in the MS category is Tristin McHugh. She is studying Marine Science at SDSU. For her MS thesis, she is characterizing the pre- and post-disturbance conditions of kelp forest communities to better understand how changes in temperature and irradiance alter species composition. Upon starting her graduate study, Tristin launched a community outreach program called the "Hometown Heroes." This innovative program allows alumni to share their education and research experiences with high school students when they go back home for their winter or summer vacations. This program is useful not only in helping high school students in transitioning to college life, but also in inspiring them to pursue their future in STEM fields. For her PhD, Tristin is planning to study on how climate patterns affect species interactions in coastal ecosystems.

In the PhD category, Michelle Dow was selected as one of AWIS-SD 2016 scholarship recipients. She is currently working on her PhD at UCSD in Biomedical Informatics. Her passion for bioinformatics was developed while working as an intern in the Laboratory of Personalized Medicine at Harvard Medical School. She conducted comparative analysis of copy number variation detection methods from breast cancer patients. Additionally, she was involved in many volunteer activities. These included hosting bi-weekly lunch discussions on current research projects at the Focus on Women in Computing Society, volunteering as a physical therapist at the Vancouver Coastal Health, and hosting guest lectures for the Graduate Women in Science and Engineering.

Meet Our Scholars, cont.

Jessica McCurley is a PhD student in Clinical Psychology at SDSU/UCSD Joint Doctoral Program. For her dissertation, she is examining risk factors for type-2 diabetes in immigrants, deportees, and other low-income individuals on the US-Mexico border, where the prevalence of type-2 diabetes is 2-3 times higher than the Mexican or American national average. As a PhD student, Jessica has been involved in epidemiological study of Hispanics/Latinos' health across the US to study the psychosocial and socioeconomic influences on Hispanic health. She also has worked for her doctoral program's community mental health clinic and in the Integrated Primary Care Mental Health and Behavioral Medicine services at the Veterans Affairs Hospital. Jessica also volunteered for the

United Women of East Africa Support Team to develop brief and culturally appropriate psychosocial interventions for refugee women. Additionally, she collaborated with the UCSD student-run free medical clinic program, where Jessica provided mental health evaluation and treatment services for two years to immigrants, deportees, sex-workers, and other individuals living in resource-poor areas of Tijuana's Zona Norte. Jessica is planning to apply for postdoctoral fellowship at an academic institution to conduct research that focuses on diabetes, obesity prevention, and health disparities reduction in the US and Mexico.

AWIS-SD Upcoming Events

- Academia to Industry Coffee Club. Guest Speaker: Dr. Joanne McNellis (Cato Research). Time: September 2, 2016 4.30 pm. Location: Bella Vista Café (2880 Torrey Pines Scenic Dr., La Jolla, CA 92037).
- AWIS-SD Brewery tour and happy hour event. Time: Wednesday, September 14, 2016, 5:30 pm-8:00 pm. Location: Saint Archer Brewing, Co. (9550 Distribution Ave., San Diego, CA 92121). Free for AWIS-SD members, \$15 for non-members.
- AWIS SD members have been invited to join the UC Riverside and LA/Ventura Chapters in an AWIS Summer Networking Brunch on the 21st of August, 11:30 AM to 2:00 PM. Location: Malibu Wines, 31740 Mulholland Hwy, Malibu, CA 90265. Cost \$15 includes food and wine. **RSVP through the secured PayPal checkout button. Add your name, title, and institution in the "special instructions" section.** [<paynow.png>](#)

Other Events of Interest

- Qualcomm Women in Science and Engineering (QIWISE) conference. Time: Wednesday, September 21, 2016 8 am – Friday, Sep 23, 2016 8 pm.

About the Authors



Melissa Scranton received her PhD in Plant Biology from University of California, Riverside. In 2013, she moved back to her home town to study algal biotechnology at University of California, San Diego as postdoctoral researcher. She is currently a researcher at BASF Enzymes, LLC and a Co-Chair of the AWIS-SD Events committee.



Anne Kornahrens is pursuing graduate studies at The Scripps Research Institute in a joint program with the University of Oxford. Her field of study is organic chemistry and she is focused on developing electrophilic probes to investigate underexplored families of hydrolases. She is active in the Network for Women in Science (NWIS) at TSRI and serves as the Outreach Co-chair for AWISSD. After completing her PhD she hopes to pursue a career in science policy.



Juliati Rahajeng received her PhD in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from the University of Nebraska, Medical Center in 2011. She joined UCSD School of Medicine as a postdoctoral researcher one month after her graduation. Juliati has been a member of AWIS-SD for the past 3 years. She is currently an active member of the Scholarship and the Newsletter committees. She was also a member of the AWIS-SD Open House 2015 committee.



Sigrid completed her PhD and master's degrees at the University of Vienna, Austria, studying invertebrate-bacterial symbioses in marine chemosynthetic environments. She moved to San Diego to pursue her research as a postdoc at Scripps Institution of Oceanography and at the Moores Cancer Center. Sigrid is an active member of the AWIS San Diego Outreach Committee.

Contribute to the Newsletter

If you are an AWIS-SD member, we encourage you to contribute to the newsletter. Please send articles, photographs, and member news as MS Word attachments to newsletter@awissd.org. News articles should not exceed 250 words, event summaries should not exceed 500 words, and feature articles (special-interest stories and profiles) should not exceed 1000 words. The submission deadline for the next issue is October 10, 2015

Important Contacts

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