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BioCONNECT

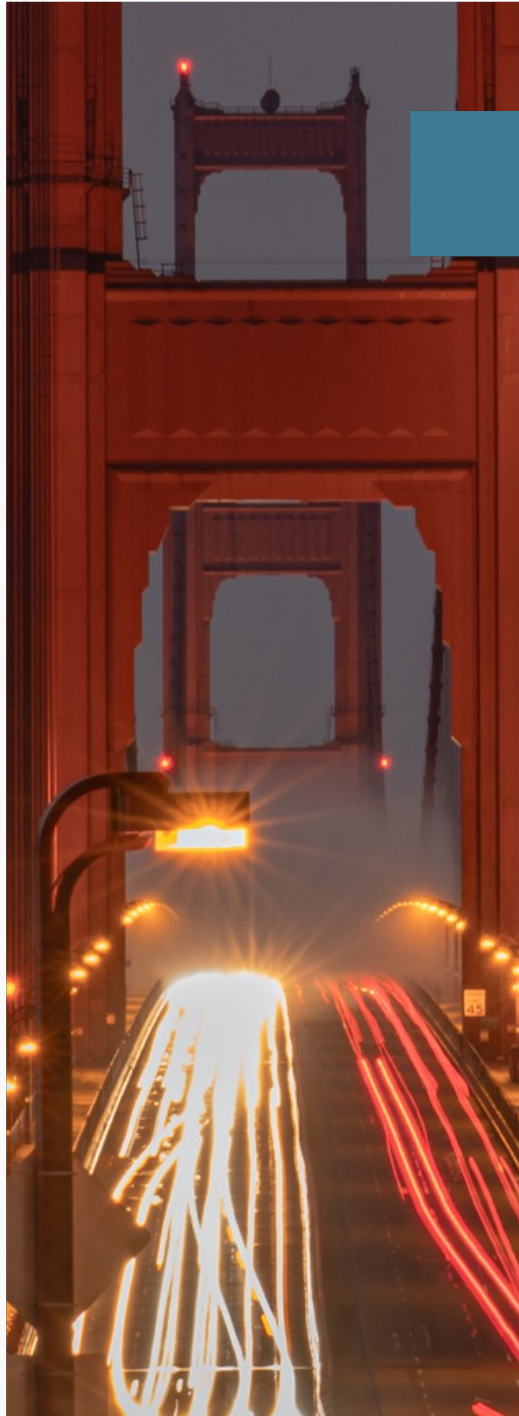
SF State Biology Newsletter, Fall 2020



Edited by: Giovanna Tuccori (above) and Colin Leasure (not shown).

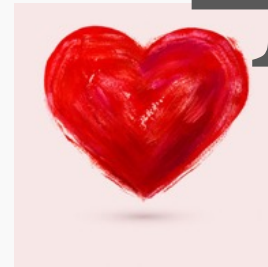
Welcome to our first edition of **BioCONNECT!** We went all out to design a brand new look, format, and name for our Biology newsletter. Though I love the experience of leafing through a paper newsletter, it was past time for us as a Biology Department to step up and reduce our environmental footprint. We hope you enjoy it. Please let us know what you think (biology@sfsu.edu)!!!

LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter handles: @SFStateBio



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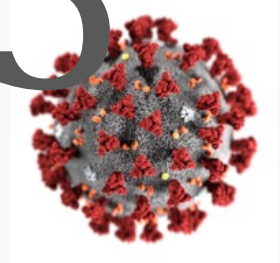
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Recognizing Our Donors

List of all donors in academic year 2019

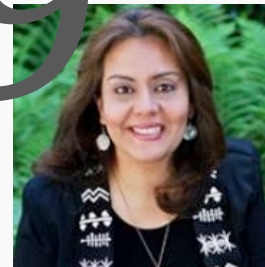
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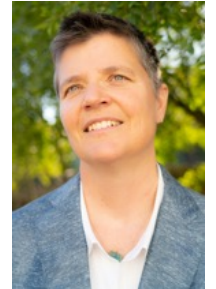


Letter from the Chair

Dear Friends,

As you well know, we are facing unprecedented challenges around COVID19, anti-Black racism, and Climate Change. Most recently, the University has been hit with layoffs. I am very sorry to say that Biology did not escape unscathed. Without a doubt, these are the hardest times that I have ever known. It is virtually impossible not to feel crushed by what feels like an endless stream of setbacks. How then do we find purpose and meaning? What is the role of a Biology Department in the midst of all of this devastation? And where do we find hope?

Now more than ever, we need science. Our lives quite literally depend on it. Working to educate a science literate society gives me purpose and meaning. This gives me great hope. I am so fortunate to be surrounded by exceptional students, staff, and faculty who despite numerous challenges, continue to fight the good fights and to do the good work. As I see it, the role of the Biology Department is to continue to be a point of light – by working to mitigate health disparities, to dismantle anti-Black racism, to combat Climate change. All of these efforts are grounded in the education of a new generation of students (both majors and non-majors) to be curious, skeptical, and evidence based. These students - our students- are my points of light. They give me great hope.



Laura Burrus, Chair

Over the summer, the Department of Biology in collaboration with departments across campus worked hard to craft a proposal for a new Certificate that addresses the Causes, Impacts, and Solutions for Climate Change. To broaden the reach of this certificate, we are targeting both matriculated and non-matriculated students. Our goal is to inspire a new generation of Climate literate leaders. In anticipation of the launch of the Certificate in fall 2021, we are hosting a series of webinars pertaining to Climate Change. The first of these webinars, titled WILDFIRES: Causes, Impacts, and Solutions, was held on October 16 and featured 2 faculty from the Department of Biology (Gretchen LeBuhn and José de la Torre). I am delighted to report that we had over 300 attendees, including students, faculty, staff, alumni and community members, attend the webinar. I hope that you will join us for future Webinars on Climate-related topics. And of course, please consider donating to support our efforts!

Warmly,

Laura

Recognizing Our Donors

Anonymous (8)
Janis Lynn Allen
Bruce & Carolyn Altrock American
Society for Cell Biology
Andre Prost, Inc.
Mel Anselmo
Valerie & Geoffrey Baldwin
Cliff Bellone
Benevity Community Impact Fund
Linda Bostwick
Elizabeth Crabb Breen, Ph.D.
Jerry Cabilatazan
Eleanor Canova-Davis, Ph.D.
Edward Carpenter & Gerdi Weidner Nancy
Catena
Celgene
Wilma Chamberlin
Fang-Yu Chou
Daniel Ciomek
Philip Cohen
Odie B. Cook
Noel Cruz-Pacheco
Katherine Cuneo
Christopher & Diane Davies
Caroline Day
Maribeth De Rocher
Sylvia de Trinidad
Jane Eble

Franklin Ennik
Carol & Gianni Ferrieri
Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund
Tim Folsom
Toby Freedman & Peter Symonds
Susan & Steve Freiman
Patricia & James Fuller Linda Garris
Genentech Foundation
Genentech Matching Gifts
Gilead Sciences, Inc.
Wayne Gleiber
Paul Gold & Wendy Sondov
Allan Goldberg
Dr. Michael Goldman
Duane & Algean Grandgenett
Great Lakes Scientific, Inc.
John Hafernik
Healthy Hive Foundation
Hong Jiang
Benson & Shew Jung
Stuart & Alicia Kenter
Llewelyn Lao
Ralph & Sandra Larson
Ronald and Laura Laue
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Micky Lee
Guangpu Li
Samuel & Angela Liu
Eduardo Lujan
Judith Lujan

Ellen Macneale
John Makemson
Shalimar Manalili
Adrian Martin
Richard & Kathleen Mazzarella
Krista McNally
Daniel Menge
Clinton Mielke
James Morris
The Nature Conservancy
Tuan Nguyen
Thomas & Anne Niesen
Katarzyna Nowak
Janet Oelklaus
Stan Ogren
Dr. Sally Pasion
Dragutin Petkovic
Elaine Plaisance
Ellen Prager
Precision Oncology
Karen Proehl
Elena Ramirez
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Estate of Elizabeth Rice
James Ripley
Stanford Roodman
Sue Ann Rosser
Robert & Beverly Safreno
Santa Clara Valley Beekeepers Guild
Myrna & Edgardo Santos
Ann Sartori
James Sartori
Paul Sartori
Patrice Sartori-Wharton
Schwab Charitable
Margaret Shannon

Jerald Shapiro
Leah Shulman
Raymond Slavin
Diana Sokolove
St. Louis Community Foundation
Stanford University
Sue Stephens
Elisabeth Sund
Mojdeh Talebian & Farhad Fouladi
John Tavis & Maureen Donlin
Carmela Thompson
Joseph & Margaret Tieger
Alton & Nancy Tom
Regina Tomlinson
Arunkumar V
Maria Vargas
Gaetano Vasta
Nicole Salazar Velmeshev
Lance Vick Richard & Ann Walenta
Terry Welsh
Donald Wicklow
Lawrence Wineski
Dale Wong Doug & Pam Wong
Sarah Wright & Terri Sonoda
Huizhong Xu
Mary Alice Yund
Crystal Jing Zhang



Dr. Cathy Samayoa, Co-lead of BioSLAM Project

To prepare for remote lab instruction in the Fall, the department, under the leadership of Chair Laura Burrus, created the BioSLAM program. Many faculty, lecturers, staff, and graduate students in the biology department came together for BioSLAM.

BioSLAM 2020



Understand the Process of Science

One goal of the program were to align the department's lab courses with the core competencies of the department: Understand the process of science; Quantitative reasoning; and, the Relationship between science and society. Another goal was to ensure that all of the lab activities were grounded in equity and inclusion.

The BioSLAM Project was divided into two phases. In phase 1, participants were divided into small groups and focused on created online lab exercises of one of five specific types, which were: Experimental Design; Analyzing Data Sets; Reading Primary Literature; Case Studies; or Meeting Scientists/Scientific Communication.



Connect Science and Society

In the 2nd phase, new groups were formed to tailor the online lab exercises created in phase 1 to a specific lab course. Ultimately, the BioSLAM project proactively addressed the challenges of remote lab instruction, created a deep reservoir of online lab exercises, and improved the biology department's lab instruction in ways that will be beneficial in both online and in-person instruction.

COVID19: Turning Challenges into Opportunities (1)

Over the course of three weeks in June 2020, roughly 400 participants and mentors from around the world participated in the UCSF COVID-19 Hackathon, which was hosted by the UCSF LaunchPad and UCSF Catalyst Program. The goal of the event was to design innovative and technical solutions to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hackathon Team Award...

Bridges to the Baccalaureate summer student Arianna Velarde and Biology Professor Lily Chen, both of SFSU, joined with Kristina Chan and team captain Nicole Carvajal from UC Berkeley to form team Sniff 'N Drip.



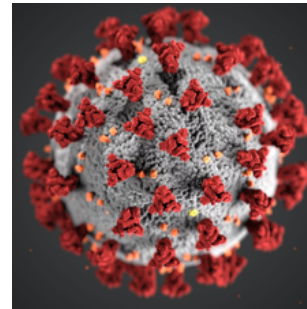
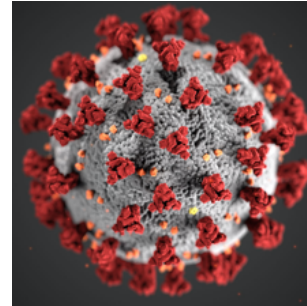
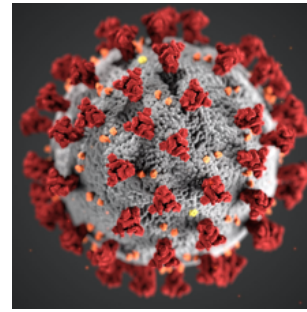
Arianna Velarde

Collecting samples for COVID-19 testing is typically done by inserting a swab deep into the nasopharyngeal cavity, which is challenging for the sampler and uncomfortable or even painful for the patient.



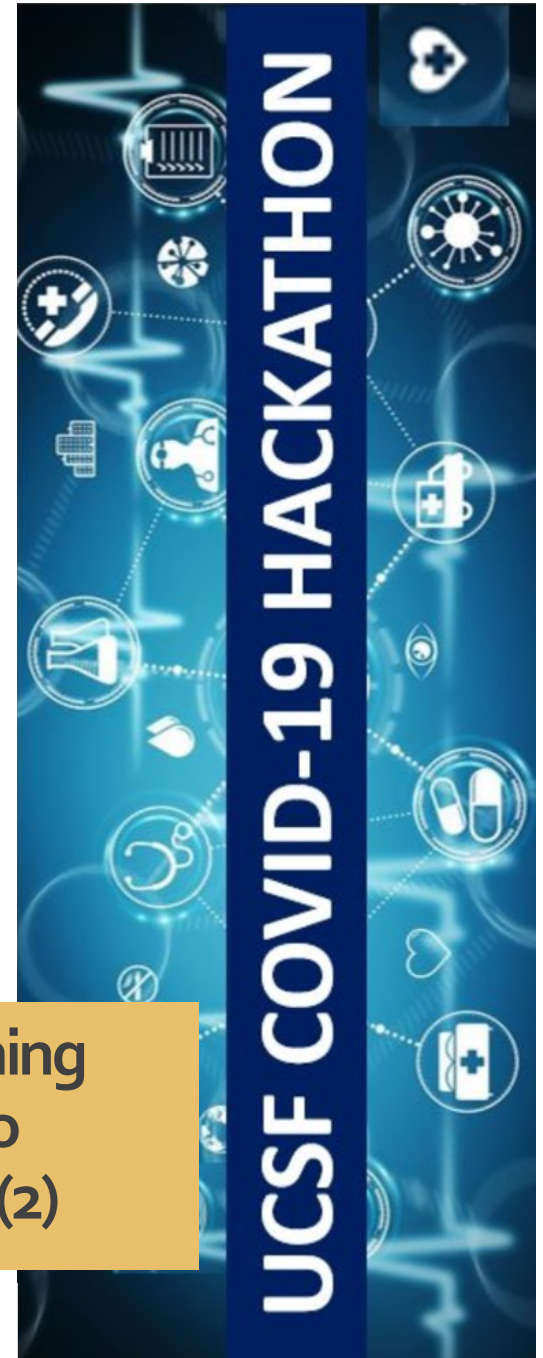
Dr. Lily Chen

Team Sniff 'N Drip proposed a new and less invasive method for sample collection. In their method, a saline solution is sprayed into the nasal cavity, and then a throat swab is used to collect nasal drip from the back of the throat. Their project, entitled "Nasopharyngeal wash and oropharyngeal swab for COVID-19 testing", was recognized with an AWS award.



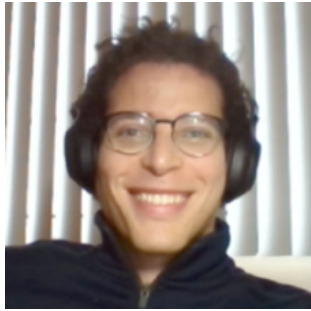
COVID19: Turning Challenges into Opportunities (2)

Hackathon Sniff N' Drip





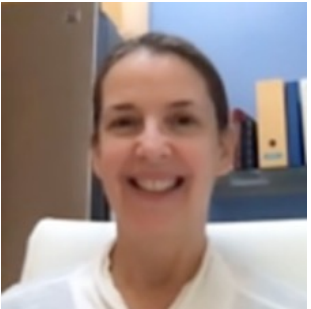
Stephannie Seng



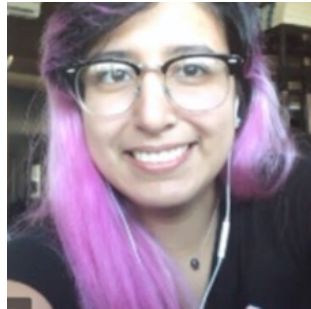
Salvador Alvarado



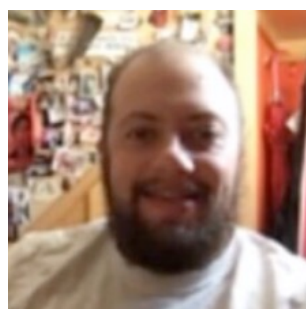
Eduardo Hernandez



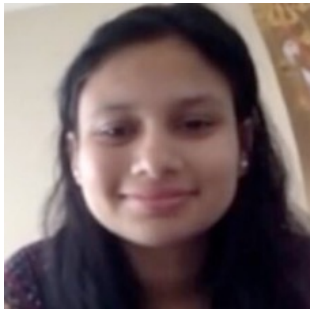
Allison Adams



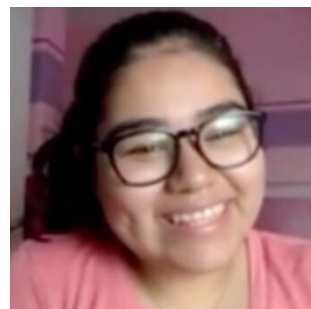
Daniela Sanchez



Jeremiah Ets-Hokin



Sabina Dahal



Daisy Salazar



Madu Nzerem

The Science Coding Immersion Program (SCIP) was formed to help SFSU Biology and (Bio)chemistry students to learn how to code, and ran from June 1 to August 7, 2020. The program was spearheaded by Dr. Pleuni Pennings, and was run through her CODE lab under the leadership of Olivia Pham and Rochelle Jan-Reyes.

Program participants were placed into teams that were dedicated to learning either Python or R, and met through Zoom meetings. Additionally, the program leadership organized weekly webinars where the presenters discussed how they used coding in their careers and research.

COVID19: Turning Challenges into Opportunities (3)

160 students, staff, and faculty learned to code!!



Olivia Pham – SCIP mentor



Rochelle Jan-Reyes - SCIP Mentor

As a response to the shelter-in-place order and limited on-campus operations, the SCIP created a space where students came together as a community to learn valuable coding skills, which they will be able to use in their own research and look great on a resume.

*Science Coding
Immersion
Program...*

Giving Back to Biology



Chris Pineda, Former Biology Undergrad ('16) and Grad student ('18) – now a PhD student at the University of Michigan...

Now more than ever, we need science. And now more than ever, we need each other. By staying connected, we continue to learn and grow, lend a hand or an idea, be a part of strengthening a community. We invite you to connect with alumni, students, and friends through the SF State Alumni Association's digital programs (<https://alumni.sfsu.edu/>) and by way of Gator Connect (<https://gatorconnect.sfsu.edu/>).

Looking for ways to give back?

True north Gator values help our community carry us through any set of challenges and unprecedented times— from remedying wrongs to finding evidence-based data to take action. We cherish how passionate our students

are in committing to their education, and how the SFSU community pulls together to listen, learn, give, mentor, and improve their academic and personal experiences. With your support, the Department of Biology is ready to create a healthier and more equitable world. Below are critical areas of need as we continue to serve our students, staff, faculty, and communities:

+ADVANCING EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN STEM DISCIPLINES

We are exceptionally proud that our students have endowed a new ABS BioLuminary Fund to provide financial support to students wishing to gain experience with hands-on research. This gift was a result of the thoughtful collaboration of the Association of Biology Students, including Jesus Hinojosa Paiz '20 and Madu Nzerem '20. Their support not only elevated a path for student access to cutting edge research, but also provided a carry-it-forward style of leveraging community resources to do more for the future of diverse science leadership.

However, there is more work to be done to bridge student gender parity and racial equity gaps that exist across STEM disciplines. Lifting Black Voices in STEM is a new student-led effort

that aspires to amplify Black students' needs and concerns, as well as identify and eradicate barriers to success that are rooted in racism.

Lifting Black Voices in STEM Initiative | up to \$10,000

Provides resources for Black student scholars in the field of Biology. With your support, SF State can invite renowned Black scientists from peer institutions and beyond to share their research experience with our students.

Fund Existing and New Endowed BioLuminary Awards | up to \$25,000

Our data show that hands-on learning has an enormously positive impact on graduation rates and is critical for launching scientific careers. You could consider a gift towards an existing award. For example, to the newly established ABS endowment or in memory of beloved faculty member Felipe-Andres Ramirez-Weber.

+CLIMATE LEADERSHIP

In preparation for the launch of a new campus wide certificate in Climate Change, early seed funds can make this initiative a reality:

Certificate in Climate Change Causes, Impacts, and Solutions | \$5,000

Scholarships for First Cohort: Current use funds to off-set tuition costs for matriculated and non-matriculated students.

Public Forums: Current use funds to build interest from experts in the field of climate change to facilitate an interactive discussion with students, faculty, and engaged community members.

SF State is home to a rare collection of endangered plant specimens in the greenhouse that require highly specialized care:

Named Botany Collection | \$100,000

These funds will help us to care for our amazing collection of over 800 different plants normally found in temperate highlands, warm tropics or arid environments so that students can learn from these plants for years to come.

+CEMENTING A LEGACY

Did you know? *Membership in the Alexander C. Roberts Legacy Society is an honor bestowed upon those who have informed us that they have included SF State in their estate plans. The University recognizes Roberts Legacy Society members on our special donor wall and at a private annual recognition.*

Planned or Deferred Gifts

Provides the University with an endowed bequest gift or alternative deferred gift in real assets to support the greatest area of need for the Department of Biology or program specialization within the Department. In addition to including SF State in your will, you can establish an annuity or other income-bearing arrangement that benefits you and possibly your heirs, and at the same time benefits SF State.

Did you know? You may be able to make a matching gift through your employer to support the University.

Individual Matching Gifts

Please consult your employer's HR department to learn more about furthering your individual charitable contribution through your organization's corporate giving program. To learn more, visit: <https://develop.sfsu.edu/matching-gifts>.

For additional questions about making a gift, please contact the Office of University Development: develop@sfsu.edu.

Celebrating Our Successes! (1)

Leticia Márquez-Magaña Excellence in Professional Achievement Award

A professor of Biology, Dr. Márquez-Magaña joined SF State in 1994. Since then, her research focus has evolved from microbial genetics to health equity.

Dr. Marquez-Magaña has published 35 peer-reviewed articles in top-notch journals and has garnered highly competitive grants, including leading two NIH BUILD (Building Infrastructure Leading to Diversity) grants totaling more than \$31 million. The overarching goals of this project are to 1) enhance the diversity of the biomedical research workforce by transforming the instructional and research environments at SF State and 2) enable students and faculty to contribute to biomedical research by asking questions that are relevant to their local communities

Although microbial genetics and health equity require vastly different skill sets, Leti's colleagues have commended her ability to consistently secure federal grants from the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health throughout her career.

Michael Goldman Excellence in Service Award (Tenured Faculty)

Dr. Goldman joined the Department in 1988 and served as a greatly beloved Chair of Biology for 12 years. To place his service in context, Biology is the largest department in the College of Science and Engineering. During the time that Mike was chair, the Department experienced tremendous growth in the number of students that it served with virtually no additional resources.

Since stepping down as Chair, Mike has served on the Evaluation Committee for Academic Institutional Research, the University Academic Assessment Advisory Committee, the Strategic Issues Committee of the Academic Senate, and the Academic Senate itself.

On top of all of that, Dr. Goldman has been a long-term leader in CSU Program for Education and Research in Biotechnology (CSUPERB). Another hallmark of his career is the Personalized Medicine conference that he launched, now in its 11th year.

William Cochlan Excellence in Teaching Award (Lecturer Faculty)

Dr. Cochlan is a research professor of Biology for the Estuary and Ocean Science Center, where he has worked since 1998. In addition to maintaining an active, extramurally funded research program, he teaches a number of classes in the Biology Department.

As a way to better engage his students, Bill explains scientific concepts in the context of everyday life experiences. His colleagues applaud him for valuing competency over curricula and for teaching his students an important piece of career advice: Good knowledge with bad professionalism goes nowhere.



Dr. Leticia Marquez Magana



Dr. Michael Goldman



Dr. William Cochlan

SF State Distinguished Faculty Awards...



Celebrating Our Successes! (2)



Dr. Pleuni Pennings
Biology



Dr. Anagha Kulkarni
Computer Science



Dr. Ilmi Yoon
Computer Science

PINC PROGRAM RECEIVES GENENTECH FOUNDATION GRANT

The Genentech Foundation has graciously awarded the Promoting Inclusivity in Computing (PINC) program a \$580,750 grant. This GEN-PINC grant will provide scholarships and mentor support to 10 PINC students starting this fall. Selected students in the program will receive \$4,500 for the whole academic year.

Through the GEN-PINC program, scholarship recipients will have the opportunity to collaborate on projects with researchers from industries and other academic institutions such as Genentech, IBM and Stanford. The projects will help students strengthen their computational training, receive mentorships and establish professional relationships in preparation for careers post-graduation.

The projects will help students strengthen their computational training, receive mentorships and establish professional relationships in preparation for careers post-graduation.

Promoting Inclusivity in Computing...



Biology Undergraduate Mentor Program (BUMP)

LAUNCHING OUR UNDERGRADUATE MENTORING PROGRAM

This Fall 2020 semester, the Biology department rolled out a new peer mentoring program called BUMP (Biology Undergraduate Mentoring Program).

BUMP is focused on welcoming new students of all backgrounds, especially first-generation college-going students, students of color, and transfer students into Biology and connecting them to important resources.

The goal of this program is to connect incoming students with their peers, virtually and in-person in the near future, and to set these incoming students on a path to success in Biology

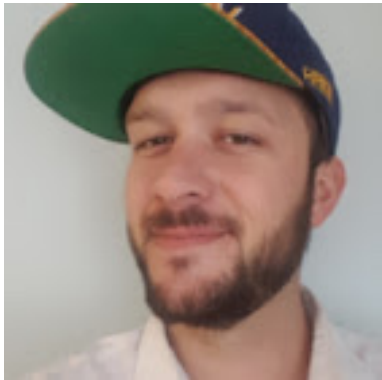


KATE BARRETTO HUSAIN
(MS Ecology, Evolution & Conservation Biology 2016)
is a tenure-track Biology Professor at Madera Community College.



PAUL HANKAMP *(MS Ecology & Systematic Biology 2011)*
is a Biology Professor at the College of San Mateo.

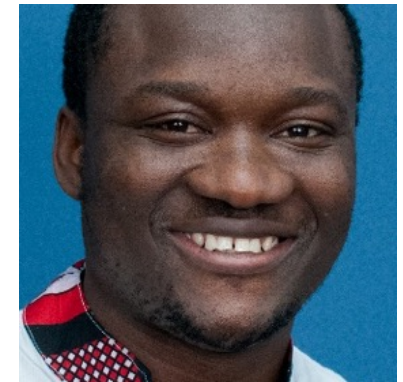
Alumni, Students, Staff, Faculty (1)



RYAN HOWARD *(MS Marine Biology 2019)* is a Ph.D. candidate in Auckland University of Technology's Biology program where he is studying adaptations in the visual system of deep-sea squid.



SARBJOT JOHL *(BS Physiology 2015)* is attending the Nursing Program at Gurnick Academy in Fresno.

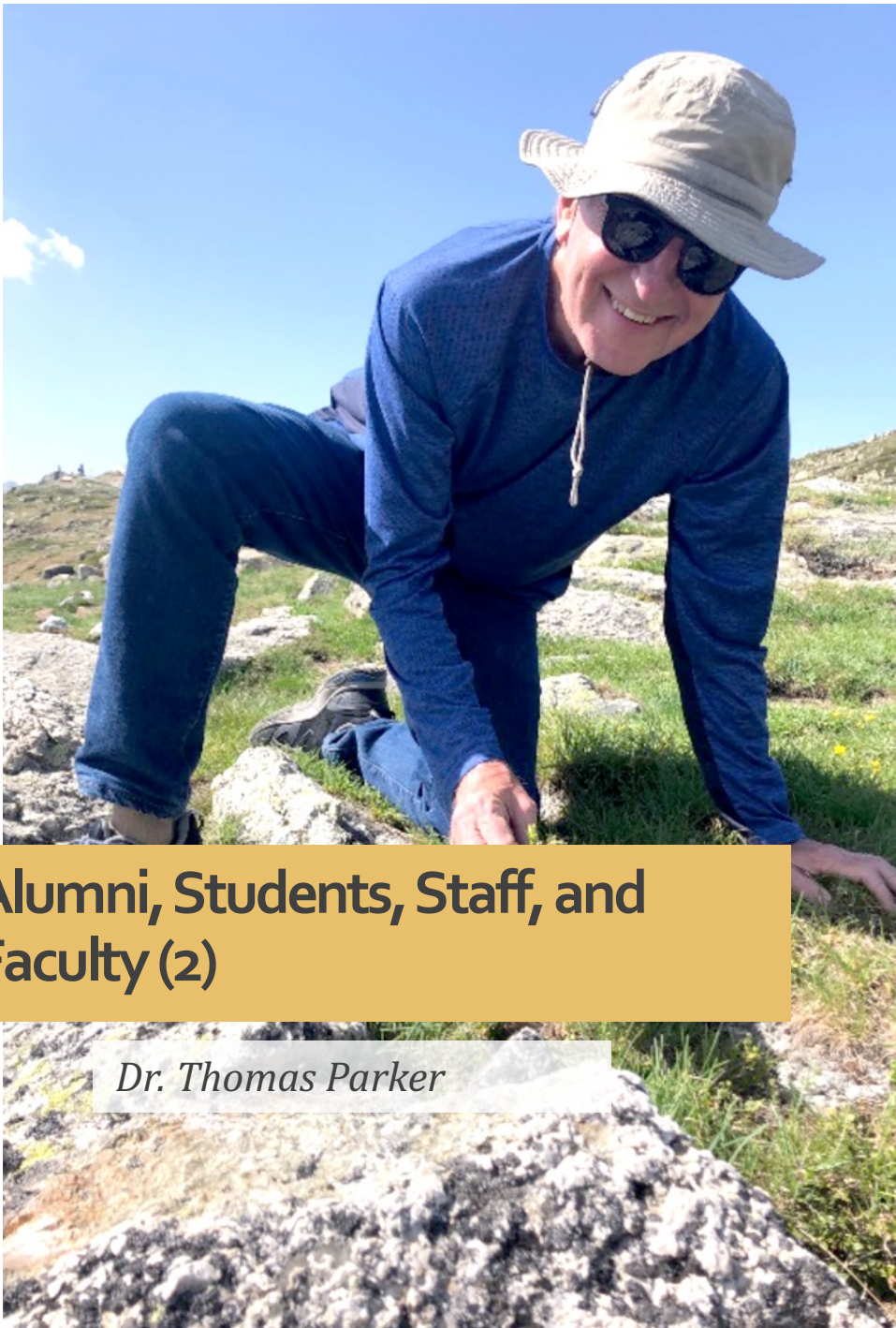


PINGDEWINDE SAM *(BS Physiology 2015)* was awarded a National Academies of Sciences' Christine Mirzayan Science and Technology Graduate Policy Fellowship. He is pursuing his PhD at Johns Hopkins University.

Alumni Accomplishments



DARA TOLCHIN *(BS Physiology 2015)* has been accepted into the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine program.



Alumni, Students, Staff, and Faculty (2)

Dr. Thomas Parker

Dr. V. Thomas Parker retired last Spring after 40 years with the SF State Biology department. Dr. Parker earned his Ph.D. in Ecology from UC Santa Barbara in 1977, and then served as an Assistant professor at Rider College in New Jersey before joining the SF State Biology department in 1980. His prolific research and publication record includes nearly 100 journal publications, book chapters, and books. His research focused on various areas of plant evolution and ecology, seed dispersal, and restorative and conservation ecology. He was well-known as the expert of Manzanita evolution and systematics.

Faculty Retirement!



Tom in front of a Manazanita tree



Students on a field trip!

Dr. Parker taught numerous undergraduate and graduate-level courses, ranging from introductory biology to many advanced topics in ecology. He trained over 60 graduate students in his research lab, of which 67% were women and 20% were from under-represented minority groups.



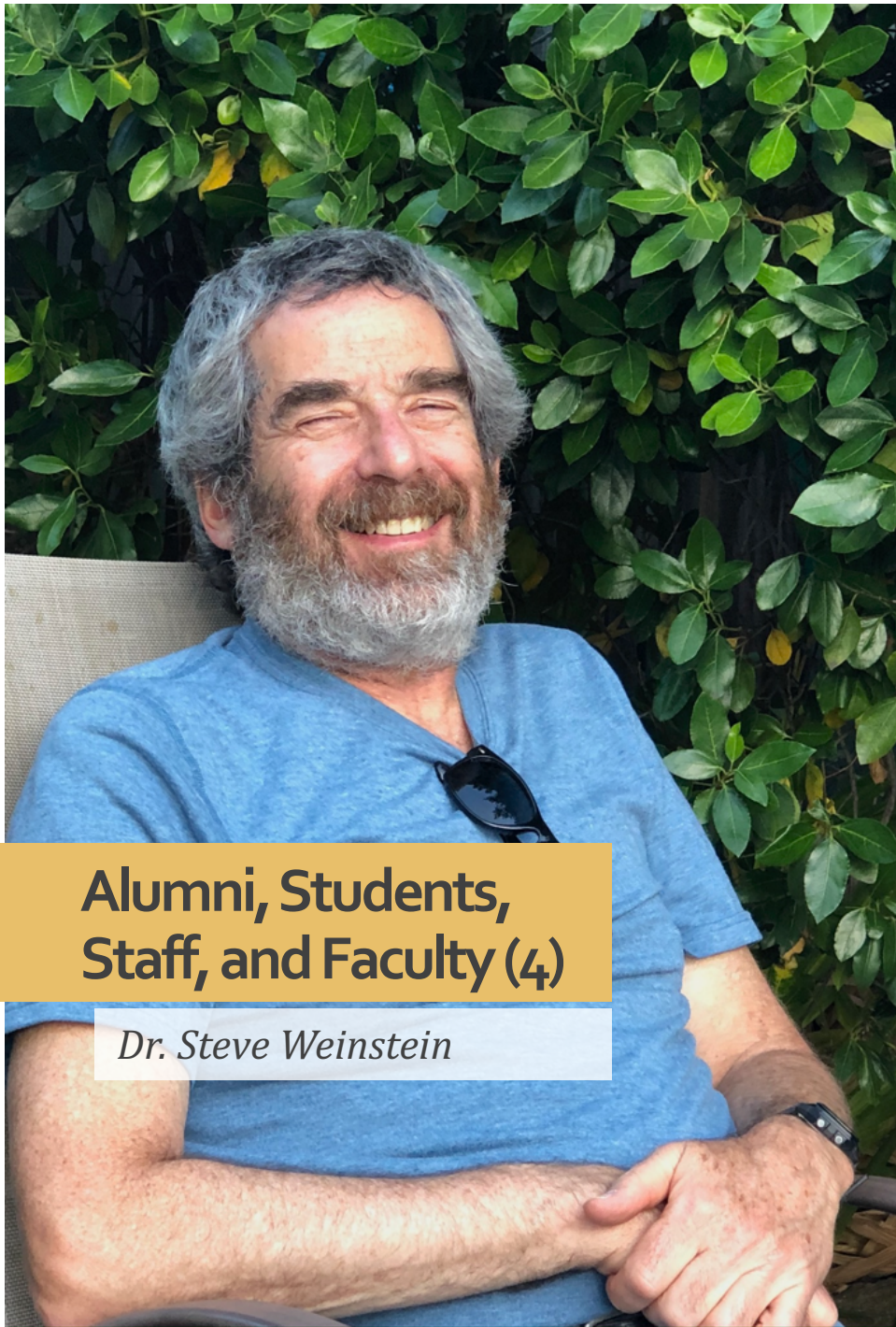
Alumni, Students, Staff, and Faculty (3)

Dr. Barry Rothman

Faculty Retirement!

Dr. Barry S. Rothman retired at the end of Spring 2020, after 34 years in the SF State Biology department. Dr. Rothman earned his Ph.D. in Biochemistry from CalTech in 1976. Over the next ten years he performed research at U. Texas – Galveston and then at UCSF. He joined the SF State Biology department in 1986, and ran a research lab that focused on the degradation of peptide neurotransmitters. In 1993 he shifted his professional focus primarily to teaching, and in 1995 he became SF State’s Health Professions Advisor. He was the Co-director of the Health Careers Opportunity Program from 1997-2004, which helped disadvantaged undergraduates prepare for careers in health professions.

In 2006 he founded the first of several SF Pre-Health Professions Certificate Programs, which were Post-Baccalaureate Programs. These programs provided coursework, training, and application assistance to Post-Baccalaureate students seeking careers in the medical, dental, and nursing fields, with a special effort to assist disadvantaged students. Under his leadership, the Post-Baccalaureate Programs that he founded grew and were well-funded, and served to advance the careers of hundreds of health care professionals of the years.



Alumni, Students, Staff, and Faculty (4)

Dr. Steve Weinstein

Dr. Steven L. Weinstein retired at the end of spring semester, after 23 years of teaching, research, and service to the SF State campus and the bay area community at large. Dr. Weinstein earned his Ph.D. in Physiology from UCSF in 1992, and continued on as a postdoctoral fellow there for several years until joining the SF State Biology department in 1997. His research laboratory was focused on immunology generally, and more specifically on the functions of macrophages. He mentored dozens of undergraduate and graduate student researchers in his lab, and taught the Immunology lecture and lab courses for the department.

Investigator of the NIH CCSF/SMCCD/SFSU Bridges to the Baccalaureate Program. After taking over the leadership of the program in 2002, he grew the program to include the three nearby community colleges. Each student participating in the program was individually and directly mentored by Dr. Weinstein. His service and leadership of the program provided opportunities and research experiences to hundreds of community college students, and assisted their transfer to a 4-year program.

Faculty Retirement!



Bridges students circa 2012

In addition to his teaching and research, Dr. Weinstein served as the Program Director/Principal



Steve at Dead Friend's New Year's Eve Show in 2018



Colleen Francis, SF State alumna (BS Biology 1986) and longtime editor of the *BioNews*, retired at the end of Spring 2020. After graduating from SF State, Colleen worked as an Administrative Assistant at the Center for Advanced Medical Technology (later renamed the Center for Biomedical Laboratory Science – CBLS). CBLS was later absorbed into the Biology Department and she became a part-time member of the Biology staff.



Photo of Colleen's house after the 2018 Camp Fire....

She also enrolled in SF State's Certificate for Teaching Secondary English Composition and worked as a Lecturer (2003-2005) to assist College of Science and Engineering graduate students with their writing proficiency.

In 2006, Dr. Michael Goldman, former Biology Chair, asked Colleen to create an alumni newsletter (*BioNews*), which would feature articles on Biology's people and programs. As Editor, she interviewed Biology faculty, staff, lecturers and students, and wrote about their wide-ranging research interests and career achievements.

In 2007, they moved to the small town of Paradise located in California's northeastern Sierra Mountain foothills, where she continued to edit *BioNews*. On the morning of November 8, 2018, California's deadliest and most destructive wildfire, the Camp Fire, destroyed their house as well as the homes of their neighbors and friends, the and town's infrastructure.

Staff Retirement!

Colleen and her husband, their two cats and 27,000 other citizens became government-classified 'displaced persons.' Rather than rebuild in Paradise, which was still vulnerable to fire, they moved to southwestern Oregon in Summer 2019, seeking wetter and cooler conditions.

Colleen writes, that "I... now look forward to being one of the publication's 10K+ readers. Being encouraged to stay-in-place during the Covid pandemic has given me time to reflect on the many excellent researchers who work at SF State. All of us have been affected by this virus in one way or another. In addition, many of us have become 'displaced persons' as a result of a natural disaster. As an alumna, I am proud of the SF State's Biology researchers who are working towards developing a greater understanding of disease and climate change, and I hope to hear more about their work in future issues of *BioNews*."



Alumni, Students, Staff, and Faculty (5)

Ms. Colleen Francis

Derrick Groom

(He/him/his)

We are thrilled to have Derrick Groom join the Department of Biology at SF State this upcoming Spring! Derrick is a comparative and environmental physiologist, primarily interested in the physiology and biomechanics of flight in birds. In particular, he wants to understand how differences in the flight environment, such as elevation or temperature, impact the amount of energy birds need to fly. Derrick is also interested in the physiology of migration, an amazing feat of endurance exercise, with some species flying for hours to days at a time during a single migratory flight. He investigates how birds are able to prepare for such a journey and how they recover from this massive expenditure of energy.



Derrick Groom

Brianna Franklin

(she/her/hers)

Brianna is our new Undergraduate Coordinator/Specialist for the Biology department! She previously worked in the Bursar's Office at SF State and has been with this University since Fall 2018.

Brianna graduated from CSUEB in 2017 with a BA in Psychology. Briana

says..."I love the friendliness of the Biology department and the focus on equity and diversity. I'm looking forward to growing with Biology and helping as many students as I can along the way!"

Since her arrival in the Department of Biology, Brianna has been busy launching our Biology Undergraduate Mentoring Program V2.0 and expanding our pre-health advising efforts.

New hires!!!



Brianna Franklin

Alumni, Students, Staff, and Faculty (6)

Derrick earned his Ph.D. at the University of Toronto with Dr. Ken Welch, where he worked on hummingbird flight energetics. His project focused on the Brazilian hummingbirds and how both elevation and morphology interact to determine the metabolic costs of flight.

After completing his Ph.D., Derrick moved to the University of Massachusetts to start a position as a postdoctoral research

associate in the lab of Dr. Alex Gerson. At UMass, he studied how the environment impacted the physiology of birds during migratory flight.

Derrick will begin a research program at SF State that examines the energetics and physiology of flying in different environments and how animals can keep up with the energy needs of challenging environments. Derrick will be teaching anatomy and physiology at SFSU and showcasing these truly fascinating fields of integrative biology!

Alumni, Students, Staff, and Faculty (7)

Elliot Levin, Greenhouse Coordinator

We are also delighted to welcome Elliot Levin, the new greenhouse manager, to the fold. Elliot grew up in the Bay Area and was fascinated with plants from a young age. At age 13, he joined the Conservation Corps of the North Bay. Elliot earned his undergraduate degree from SFSU in 2018 with a major in Recreation, Parks, and Tourism with an emphasis in Outdoor Education.

He went on to work with the City of San Francisco at the Golden Gate Park Nursery where he fell in love with greenhouse work and was given the opportunity to apprentice under three different Nursery Specialists responsible for propagating and maintaining plants for the parks in San Francisco, San Francisco's Botanical Garden, and the Conservatory of Flowers. Some of his favorites are California natives, neo-tropical Ericaceae, carnivorous plants, Namaqualand plants, and Proteaceae.

This fall, Elliot received a layoff notice from SF State. However, we are super fortunate that his layoff has now been rescinded.

Elliot is excited to be working at SFSU to make Horticulture and plants accessible to everyone where the greenhouse (and permanent plant collection garden) functions as a living library used by the Biology Department in curriculum and research. It also functions as a classroom outside of the lecture halls to students interested in learning about plants. The greenhouse is hard at work during shelter-in-place rebuilding and repotting our collections, including some exciting new additions. Elliot's work is supporting the re-opening of research in Biology and the curriculum through virtual demonstrations of plant dynamics.

New hire!!!

He has also created quite a following on social media, highlighting different plants each week. Check him out on facebook (SFSU Greenhouse) and Instagram (sfsu_greenhouse). His next big task is to move and repot plants from the old greenhouse by the Science building to the new greenhouse behind Hensill Hall. Elliot has truly taken ownership of the greenhouse and has quickly become a beloved staff member.



Elliot basking in the glorious company of his plant friends...