

Chair's Message

Internship Program

New to the Department

Alumni Spotlight

Goodbye to Retirees



CSUF Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry Newsletter, August 2018

# Titan Connect

## Chair's Message

### Welcome to the First Newsletter!

Many exciting things are happening in our department and a sampling of those you will find in this first edition of the newsletter. Much has happened over the past several years and if you haven't visited the department or our website in a while, we hope this newsletter is a good way to catch up a little. In this newsletter we introduce you to some of the new faculty and staff we have hired in recent years, as well as faculty and staff who have retired. As we continue to grow, we maintain our commitment to authentic research experiences for all our majors and one exciting development to reach that goal is the reinvigorated internship program. In future editions of this newsletter we plan to highlight the many great things our alumni have done so if you are interested in being highlighted, please let us know. We are very grateful to the alumni who have supported the department this year. We were very happy to see so many of you at last year's Alumni Dinner and we hope many more will attend this year (save the date – October 19). Please visit our [webpage](#) to learn more about our research, teaching record, and service activities. We also encourage you to join our [Facebook](#) page, our [Flickr](#) page, and our [LinkedIn Alumni Group](#). If you would like to make a donation to support our mission of integration of teaching and research, please visit our [giving](#) page. We'd love to hear from you so please drop us a line or stop by if you are in the neighborhood.

**Peter de Lijser, Department Chair**

## Internship Program

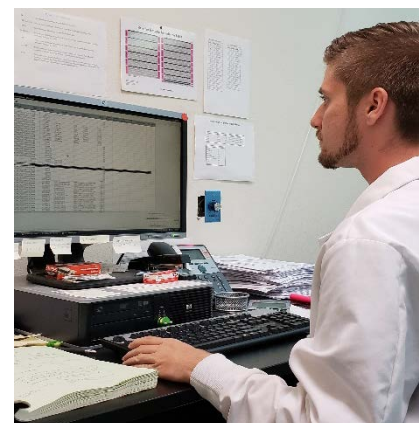
### Learning How to Succeed in the Real World of Science

The internship program in the Department is thriving with students gaining real-world experience and learning how to survive in industry. The program provides opportunities for Chemistry and Biochemistry majors to complete their capstone graduation requirement while gaining valuable industry experience. Read about Patryk Florek who did an internship with Physis Environmental Labs.

Patryk Florek, a B.S. Biochemistry major chose to apply for the CHEM 490 Internship Program in Chemistry and Biochemistry instead of CHEM 495 Senior Research. He felt that an internship would give him a better starting point in the business world than independent lab work.

Patryk did his internship at Physis Environmental Labs based in Anaheim. During the internship he worked an average of 11 hours per week, for two semesters, which was more than enough time to meet the 270 hours required by the course. At the end of the internship period, Patryk will do a technical presentation on his experiences at the internship. He is also required to write a final paper which will explain in detail the kind of work done, the school experiences he has had that relates to it, and how it has prepared him for his future career. Based on his positive experiences, he would overwhelmingly recommend the internship program to other undergraduates. Prior to participating in the Internship Program, Patryk was unsure about what he wanted to do upon graduating.

*Interested in participating in the internship program? Contact Nicholas Salzameda ([nsalzameda@fullerton.edu](mailto:nsalzameda@fullerton.edu)) or John Haan ([jhaan@fullerton.edu](mailto:jhaan@fullerton.edu)) to learn more.*



*Patryk (pictured above) is working on editing a sequence of samples for a run on the ICP-MS.*

The internship sharpened his focus on the opportunities available to him and he now wants to pursue something in the environmental chemistry industry. At the end of his internship, the company has hired Patryk as a part-time employee and he expects to be employed full-time once he graduates in Spring 2019. Patryk says that everyone can expect a different experience at an internship since all companies will vary. Ultimately the amount of experience gained is reflected in how one applies oneself. He would like everyone to remember that professionalism goes a long way.

## New to the Department >>>



Motivated by his interests in human health, bioorganic chemist **Kelvin L. Billingsley** leveraged his expertise in biomedical imaging and medicinal chemistry to develop new agents for the diagnosis and treatment of cancer.

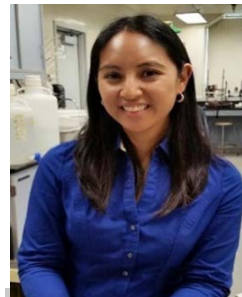
Billingsley moved his laboratory to Cal State Fullerton Fall 2017 following a four-year post as an assistant professor in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at San Francisco State University. In his lab, he focuses on the discovery and application of new therapeutics, chemical probes and methods for organic synthesis. Billingsley earned his doctorate in organic chemistry from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He conducted postdoctoral research in medicinal chemistry and radiology at Stanford University and also holds a bachelor's degree in chemistry from the University of South Carolina. The goal of Billingsley's research is to develop new molecular agents that can have an impact on human health. In his lab, they design novel imaging techniques to diagnose various diseases. Billingsley hopes that his students retain a practical knowledge of the subject throughout their scientific careers and he wants them to know that organic chemistry isn't as challenging as one might think.



**Dan Curtis** and his students are studying how aerosol particles influence the Earth's climate, urban visibility and public health. Curtis joined Cal State Fullerton's Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry as an associate professor.

He previously spent nine years as a faculty member at Cal State Northridge. He earned his doctorate in atmospheric and analytical chemistry from the University of Colorado Boulder and held postdoctoral research positions at the University of Iowa and the University of California, Los Angeles. He also holds a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Emory University in Atlanta. Curtis studies small particles suspended in the atmosphere called aerosols and how these particles affect Earth's climate by scattering or absorbing light.

The aerosol particles can also affect public health when people breathe them into their lungs. Curtis wants students to see his passion for chemistry and for understanding how the world works from a scientific standpoint. He also wants students to understand how science can impact society and improve people's lives directly.



**Elaine Mina** became the new chemical stockroom manager for the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry in September of 2017. She received her B.S. degree in Chemistry

from California State University, Irvine, and her M.S degree in Chemistry from California State University, Fullerton. During her time at CSU Fullerton, she worked for Dr. Christopher Hyland where she conducted research of palladium-catalyzed amination of benzylic carbonates utilizing N-heterocyclic carbene ligands. Working in an organic synthetic laboratory eventually lead her to a career at Boulder Scientific Company in Colorado. She worked as an R&D Chemist preparing organometallic compounds for the polyolefin industry. The mountains of Colorado may be majestic, but the beaches of California beckoned her home. When the opportunity arose, she was happy to rejoin the CSUF community once again.



Biochemist **Marcos E. Ortega**, a native of El Paso, Texas, studied how viruses replicate at the University of Colorado Denver and Health Sciences Center, where he earned a doctorate in biochemistry. Following postdoctoral fellowships at USC and Harvey Mudd College, he landed a teaching position in 2013 at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. Ortega also holds a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Grinnell College in Iowa. Ortega chose to pursue a career in academia as he truly loves the combination of teaching and research. Ortega's research interests lie in trying to understand viral infection and viral replication using biochemical techniques and studies. Ortega focuses on studying the relation between protein structure and function.

Ortega hopes students learn that biochemistry is important to all people and impacts lives on a daily basis. He wants students to find a personal connection to biochemistry that hopefully motivates them to learn more. Ortega also hopes that students realize that anything is possible with a strong work ethic and an education.



**Stevan Pecic** received a Dipl.Pharm. degree from The University of Belgrade in Serbia. He then obtained his doctorate degree in Biochemistry with concentration in Medicinal Chemistry from The Graduate School and University Center of The City University of New York, where he studied natural products aporphines, as serotonin receptor antagonists. For the past 8 years, he continued his career as an Associate Research Scientist at Columbia University Medical Center in the Division of Experimental Therapeutics where he gained experience in the designing nucleic acid-based biosensors. During this period, Pecic has authored 15 peer-reviewed publications and holds a patent related to the inhibitors of the enzyme soluble epoxide hydrolase (sEH). This fall Stevan Pecic joins The Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at Cal State Fullerton as an Assistant Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry.

His long-term goal is to identify and develop novel inhibitors of enzymes involved in lipid metabolism and their evaluation as potential therapeutics. He is also interested in the identification of DNA-aptameric sensors for small molecules. These aptamers could be used for bioimaging, drug development, drug discovery, disease diagnosis, hazard detection, and food inspection. Pecic wants his students to become independent, creative thinkers with the ability to challenge any scientific topic. He has found through his interactions with many students over the years that they will go far beyond requirements when properly motivated. He believes that such motivation is often tied to the personal experience of the teacher that is presenting the topic. Pecic would like others to have better understanding and appreciation of chemistry, especially in this modern world where we are constantly inundated with medical issues and technological advancements.

# Alumni Spotlight..

## Guy Dadson



*Guy demonstrates an eye-catching experiment in class!*

Before **Guy Dadson** pursued his teaching career at Fullerton College, he attended CSUF and earned a Master of Science in Chemistry in 2005. During his Master's program, Dadson participated in several research projects. He worked on a laser ionization mass spectrometer with Dr. Hewitt, a computational research with Dr. Tao, and a discharge flow mass spectrometer with Dr. Li. To gain teaching experience, he also spent time in the undergraduate chemistry labs as a teaching associate for the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. After working as an adjunct (part-time) instructor for three years after earning his Master's degree, he achieved his goal of working as a full-time employee at Fullerton College. Although it has taken him a few years to get to his current position, his advice to future instructors is to value this period as you can learn important experiences and life lessons.

Currently, his week is composed of three hours of lecturing, twelve hours of teaching laboratory, several hours in meetings and office hours, and the rest is spent on reviewing curriculum. He finds satisfaction in his work when his students share great news with him, such as receiving scholarships or getting admitted to research programs. He chose grading as the most frustrating aspect of teaching, especially when he catches students making the same mistake again and again.

He dedicates his accomplishments to CSUF for many reasons. Through the teaching experience for the undergraduate students, he developed a strong interest in chemistry education. He is also thankful for the opportunity to be a part of Dr. Hewitt's research lab while in the graduate program, as it helped him gain confidence in his ability to solve problems, to learn and share information, and to present ideas to others.

Besides the career goal he achieved through CSUF, he would like to share great news that he married to Claudia Quant who was also working in Dr. Hewitt's research lab! "To say the least, I owe everything I currently have to the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at CSUF," says Dadson.

*-Alumni Spotlight written by Alumna Ellen Chang (2017)*

*Interested in being featured in the next newsletter? Please contact Beena Matthew (bmatthew@fullerton.edu).*

**Save the Date !!**  
**Alumni Night**  
**October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

*Our Annual Alumni Night will be on October 19. More details to come. If you have any questions, please contact Beena Matthew (bmatthew@fullerton.edu)*

**Alumni Night 2017!**  
 @ Bootleggers Brewery Fullerton





Dr. Harold Rogers announced his retirement from the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry in January of this year after 41 years as a Professor. Dr. Rogers was born and raised in West Hollywood and he attended Cal State LA and after graduation, he went on for his doctoral studies at MIT. During his third year as a graduate student at MIT he accepted a position at CSUF. Dr. Rogers chose to pursue academia, first and foremost because of the academic freedoms it allowed him. He was able to pursue research in the areas which he found interesting and which could evolve into different directions that piqued his interest. Secondly, this opportunity allowed him to grow as a well-rounded scientist. He felt that academia was his calling as he was enamored of the love of learning and wanted to impart this passion to others and this is why he still continues to be a strong student advocate. His love of teaching allowed him to reach young minds and help them move closer to their own professional lives, which he found to be a rewarding experience. He has so many fond memories of his time here at CSUF, all of which he will carry with him as he enters into retirement. He has a lot of plans for his retirement, some of which includes catching up on reading; camping/hiking/fishing; going back to working with art (metal, glass sculpture, mosaic art), gardening (in particular, growing orchids which need a lot of attention), photography/astrophotography, learning to play the bagpipes, and doing work around the house.



**Ocena Corbin**, our Department Coordinator announced her retirement for the end of July after ten years at CSUF. She also has ten years of service at CSULA. As the department coordinator she had many duties which helped to keep the department running smoothly. She was responsible for assisting the Department Chair with scheduling of classes, helping the DPC with faculty searches, hiring of all part time faculty, teaching associates and student assistants, processing all travel requests, being the timekeeper for the department and serving as the department IT coordinator.

In her years here at CSUF, the best thing about her job was the people she got to work with. She will miss her co-workers and being an active member of the African American Faculty and Staff Association. Her fondest memories about the department are the staff meetings and the Staff Christmas Luncheons. Ocena grew up in Southern California and she loves to sing, volunteer at her church, traveling and spending time with family and friends. She hopes to do a lot of that including relaxing and sleeping in during retirement.

Her advice to everyone is to be friendly and courteous towards everyone you talk to on a daily basis. Whether it is a student, a vendor, fellow co-worker, or administrator calling on the telephone. A positive attitude is the basis of customer service and we as individuals working at a University should try to use this tool daily. Her advice for students or anyone starting out their career is to wake up early, work harder than you think you did yesterday, start off each day with a positive attitude and maintain that for the entire day and finally always take your breaks and enjoy your lunch time.

**Brad van Mourik**, our Department Computer Technician retired August 1<sup>st</sup> 2018. For twenty-five years Brad's hard work behind the scenes kept our offices, computer labs, teaching and research labs running smoothly. Brad has been a contributor to the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry's operations for many years, dating back to the 1980's when he was a graduate assistant. In 1993 Brad was hired as an IST II but in 1996 his position was reclassified as Assistant Systems Software Specialist and later to Operating Systems Analyst. Throughout the years, Brad has made major contributions to the Department, College and University. He has built from scratch the entire network in the Department and kept numerous servers running for many years. He was always to go-to person for issues with instrumentation and computers and he was always able to fix everything. His knowledge of the Department, its instrumentation and its history, as well as the University and its employees was remarkable and cannot be replaced. He served as the College liaison with IT and was heavily involved in IT-related projects within the Department and College. He also served as our Departmental liaison with Physical Plant and always knew who to contact for different projects. His personal contacts often would help move projects forward quicker and his in-depth knowledge would also make sure projects were completed as needed and without errors. His evaluations were excellent every single year and he was awarded the 1996 outstanding staff award in the College of NSM. His retirement is an incredible loss to the Department, College and University. To honor Brad's service to the department as well as his passion for both chemistry and computers, the department has established the Brad van Mourik Interface of Computers with Chemistry Award. This annual award will recognize excellence in undergraduate research on a project that combines chemistry with computational analysis.

### Name our Newsletter

Don't like the name of our Newsletter? Neither do we! Send us your suggestions for a name of our Newsletter that reflects Chemistry, Fullerton, Titans, etc. and we will select a winner! Submit ideas to [bmattew@fullerton.edu](mailto:bmattew@fullerton.edu).

### Stay in Touch

Department Website: <http://www.fullerton.edu/chemistry/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/csufchemistryandbiochemistry/>

Instagram: [@csufchembiochem](https://www.instagram.com/csufchembiochem/), <https://www.instagram.com/csufchembiochem/>

Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/133356076@N05/albums/with/72157669238290748>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13597245>