



# BIOSPHERE

## The Weekly Bulletin of Biology

Biology Colloquium: Friday, 9 November 2012, 2:00 pm in CR 5125

**“Genetics, Genomics, & Ecology:  
Making Population Biology Relevant to Conservation of CA Tiger Salamanders”**

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### Summer Undergraduate Research Opportunities at other Universities

Ten MARC [Minority Access to Research Careers] students spent last summer conducting research that ranged from statistical methods and modeling to nutrition. They were in research labs across the country: Dartmouth College, Michigan State University, UC San Diego, etc.

Announcements for next summer's programs are already arriving. Students are welcome to peruse the paper copies of the announcements in the MARC/MBRS office (EH 2128).

If you would prefer to look up sites for summer programs, try the National Science Foundation website. Search the site for REU and you will find a list of REU sites. From there you can search for field of interest and even location. A former CSUN student found an opportunity in Puerto Rico that way!

### Big-Cat Conservation Talk

CSUN Biology alumna, **Joanne Moriarty** (M.S. 2006) will be speaking to Dr. Polly Schiffman's Conservation Biology

class on Thursday, 8 November at 3 pm in CR 5335. Joanne is a National Park Service ecologist, and her presentation will be about several projects on predatory cats (mountain lions, bobcats, etc.) that she has been involved with in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. Anyone interested is invited to attend.

### Tomorrow's Scientists

No, you are not losing your mind: the freshman are not getting shorter or younger. Those are 7<sup>th</sup> graders from four local middle schools participating in Dr. **Gini Vandergon's** Tomorrow's Scientist program. These 7<sup>th</sup> graders come to campus for eight weeks, two schools on Mondays and two schools on Wednesdays. The after-schoolers are camp-counseled by the students in Biological Concepts (BIOL 102/L), who create and implement science lessons around the 5–7<sup>th</sup> grade life science standards. This year the 7<sup>th</sup> graders are learning about photosynthesis, cells, Mendelian genetics, DNA, the digestive system, and evolution. This is the 12<sup>th</sup> year of the project and more than 500 middle school students have participated.

## Dollars for Teacher Training

The California Science Project has funded a \$70,000 grant to help train LAUSD science teachers. Dr. **Gini Vandergon** is the Project Director.

Vandergon was also the recipient of a Service Learning Title V grant of \$5000 for the Tomorrow's Scientist program.

## Grist from and for Science Fairs

Volume 17 of the *New Journal of Student Research Abstracts* was just released. This journal showcases the individual projects of K–12 students and their teachers.

The last several years of the journal are now also available online in Scholarworks to everyone! Just Google “New Journal of Student Research Abstracts Scholarworks”—and you’ll have access to hundreds of projects that these kids have done over the years.

If you know a kid who is doing a project, encourage her or him to submit an abstract for Volume 18. Submissions are due 1 June 2013. Email the long-standing editor, Dr. **Steve Oppenheimer** ([steven.oppenheimer@csun.edu](mailto:steven.oppenheimer@csun.edu)).

You may also send an email to Oppenheimer to request a paper copy. They are free, but only while supplies lasts.

## Biology Faculty/Students at Neuroscience Meeting

CSUN was well represented at this year's Society for Neuroscience meeting in New Orleans.

Dr. **Lisa Banner** and her students **Sean Lee** (graduate), **Christina Avoundjian** (graduate), and **Alex Poladian** (undergraduate) presented their work, “Changes in genes involved in the JAK/STAT signaling pathway in brains of diet-induced obese mice.”

Dr. **Randy Cohen**'s lab presented three posters.

- “The effects of implanted fetal human stem cells on the *spastic* Han-Wistar rat, a model of ataxia,” coauthored by **Rus Nuryyev** (undergraduate), **Toni Uhlendorf** (Vivarium manager), and Alex and Oleg Kopyov from Celevie Biosciences.
- “The effects of GABAergic drugs on the *spastic* Han-Wistar rat, an animal model of ataxia,” authored by **Angelica Cruz** (undergraduate).
- “Consequences of a high-fat diet on the *spastic* Han-Wistar rat: An animal model of ataxia,” coauthored by **Shahab Younesi** (undergraduate) and **Uhlendorf**.

## Zavala Advises Nation's Agencies

The NIH, HHMI, and NSF recently held a meeting, “Training, Workforce, Development and Diversity.” There were 18 participants from across the country with representatives from comprehensive universities, research universities, and liberal arts colleges. Dr. **MariaElena Zavala** was one of the 18 participants.

“This was an intense two-day meeting,” says Zavala, “and our task was to provide guidance to these funding agencies on undergraduate STEM [science, technology, engineering, and mathematics] education. The discussions were long and heartfelt.”

After a period of time has elapsed, the group will meet again to assess whether and how these agencies have responded to the suggestions.

### *Biosphere: The Weekly Bulletin of Biology*

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