



BIOSPHERE

The Weekly Bulletin of Biology

Biology Colloquium: Friday, 3 May 2013, 2:00 pm in CR 5125

“Corticotropin Releasing Factor: an Ancient Stress Hormone and its Emerging Role in Glucose Metabolism”

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Biology Majors to Pilot iPad: Next Fall's 106 & 107 Students Begin

Starting with next fall's Principles of Biology student cohort, Biology majors will be asked to have an iPad (other platforms will be supported in the future). Biology is one of six majors across campus to pilot *myCSUNtablet*. Check out the [promo](#).

Campus administrators have calculated that the change will be cost neutral. The reason for this is students will be purchasing less expensive eTexts instead of paper texts. Financing for the iPad is available to spread the cost over several semesters. The savings, similarly, will be realized over multiple semesters.

Tablets have several advantages.

- Instructors will use them in class. They will take over the role of clickers, but with substantially more options to foster student engagement and participation.
- Students can study in slivers of time between other activities without having to haul around a laptop and backpack full of monster books. Students can access Moodle, recorded lectures, readings, class exercises, etc.—all through their tablets.

- eTexts are more lively than paper texts with multimedia capabilities and activities that blur the lines between text, lectures, and labs.

- Times are changing. In not too long, students who have been using tablets in K–12 will matriculate to CSUN. We need to be prepared to educate them in the manner in which they have become accustomed.

Next year's freshmen will learn how to highlight, take notes, and build study guides on their tablets. Certain [core apps](#) have been adopted to establish a common skill set that will be used also in upper division classes.

By spring 2014, Evolutionary Biology (BIOL 322), Genetics (BIOL 360), and Cell Biology (BIOL 380) will go digital. When the student cohort reaches their 400-level classes, they will continue to use the same technology. Meanwhile, the last cohort of students using primarily paper texts (those who are currently juniors) will keep hauling around their luggage.

“An iPad for school and a computer for home” seems to be the prescription. The tablet won't take the place of a computer when you really need to create something substantial. And at school, you need more

than a smartphone to read an eText. The move suggests two other changes: (1) you may wish to consider the least expensive phone plan possible, relying more on email through Wi-Fi from your iPad; (2) your next computer doesn't have to be a laptop.

Why Apple's iPad? Part of the answer is technical: CSUN's computer scientists project that other tablet platforms, mostly abbreviations of the Android system, will experience uncomfortable jumps in the next four years, whereas they think iOS will improve by updates. This gives the 2013 iPad a better chance at still being reasonably useful by the time next year's freshmen become seniors. Another reason is that, right now, higher education is app-limited, and more apps currently exist for iOS. Finally, choosing one operating system will at least temporarily cut down on incompatibilities.

As for BIOL 106 & 107 lectures, the electronic content will consist of the 5th edition of Freeman (which has a green lizard on the cover) with [MasteringBiology](#). The combo will rent at \$110 covering *both* semesters if purchased directly from Pearson for our CSUN classes. If purchased through the bookstore, it will cost more. Students will also have to buy the BIOL 106L lab manual; the faculty who wrote the BIOL 107L lab manual, will make the eText version available for free.

Students Present Poster in Boston

Dr. **Steve Oppenheimer's** lab was represented at the annual Experimental Biology meetings just a few days after the bombings. Oppenheimer told his students that their attendance was not required given the special circumstances, but **Samantha Arvizu** wrote back,

"Dear Dr. Oppenheimer, Thank you so much for thinking of me, but I've been so excited to have the chance to be a part of

this event. I don't want to pass it up. You are correct. Boston is probably the safest city in the nation at this time. Thank you so much!"

The poster they presented was titled, "Edge assay: kinetic analysis of reagents affecting cell clumping." The authors were **G. Zem, H. Ter-Papayan, S. Arvizu, J. Nernsuan, S. Rabizadeh, M. Amidi, S. Nazari, S. Waas, S. Lee, A. Orujyan, L. Manookian, P. Taghinia, C. Carpio, D. Trinh, H. Balazadeh, K. Harutyunyan, M. Ghassemlou, and S. B. Oppenheimer.**

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