

Portland Section Newsletter

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September 2021

Letter from Chair Andrew Baggett



Andrew Baggett

Dear fellow members of the Portland ACS Local Section:

As we continue to navigate the challenges of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Executive Council and I are working towards safely resuming in-person dinner meetings or providing engaging virtual programming in place of those meetings. At the moment we have two exciting dinner-and-a-talk meetings tentatively planned for Fall 2021 at Reed College: we hope to welcome Associate Professor of Inorganic Chemistry Dr. Anna Oliveri from SOU on Nov. 11 and Assistant Professor of Physical Chemistry Dr. Julia Widom from the U of O on Dec. 9. While we are hoping that these dinner

meetings will be possible under the state and local health guidelines at the time, we may elect to hold these presentations virtually. Any changes to the format of these presentations will be announced several weeks ahead of time.

I am also excited to announce some bookings we have made in our Winter/Spring 2022 schedule: we plan to welcome Associate Professor of Dentistry Dr. Carmem Pfeifer (DDS, PhD) from OHSU on Feb. 10, 2022 and Assistant Professor of Chemistry Ginger Shultz from the University of Michigan on Apr. 14, 2022.

In other exciting news, we celebrate the recent success of our Section's Past-Chair and current Alternate Councilor + Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Respect Chair Marcie Merritt in writing and obtaining an Innovative Projects Grant to support a new K-12 chemistry education initiative with industry and academic partners! This program will support K-12 Green Chemistry education primarily through building and maintaining an online resource center accessible to K-12 educators.

We look forward to engaging with you throughout the next year and hope to see you when it is safe and prudent to do so at a local section dinner meeting,

Andrew Baggett, Chair

Nominations for 2022 ACS Portland offices

The Nominating Committee of the Portland Section is soliciting nominees for the offices of Chair-Elect and Secretary.

Nominations (and self-nominations) can be submitted to the Nominating Committee:

- Jim Tung (jimtung@gmail.com), chair
- David Stuart (dstuart@pdx.edu), member, or
- Irving Rettig (irettig@reed.edu), member.

Nominations should be submitted by **September 24, 2021**.

Tori Lopez: Intern at Knight Cancer Institute

This summer, Dunne-Currie Scholarship winner Tori (Maria Victoria) Lopez was an intern in Knight Cancer Research Institute (KCRI) under mentor Dr Gordon. She is among interns at KCRI who presented posters on their research August 13 when interns and their mentors were introduced and received certificates prior to a poster symposium. Portland Section Member Dave Reingold attended the event. Tori's bio and abstract follow on next page.

Andrew Baggett, Chair
Marcie Merritt, Past Chair
Elaine Nam, Secretary

Dave Reingold, Treasurer
Angela Hoffman, Councilor
Jim Tung, Councilor

Warren Ford, Alt. Councilor
Marcie Merritt, Alt. Councilor
Jean Eames, Director At Large

Hannah Hefely, WCC Chair
Quentin Wilebski, YCC Chair
Martha Dibblee, Sr. Chemists Chair

Bio

It is the challenge of Science, to answer questions and to offer solutions, that attracts, intrigues, and captivates me. I did not go to college to take the easy route or to be pushed through my courses. Biochemistry challenges the way I think and clarifies my understanding and appreciation of human life and how the world works. Throughout my life, there have been uncertainties and difficulties that I have had to face. I have called many places home. Wherever home is, there are people who love me and who share my commitment to embrace kindness and respect. Being able to share my story and help my community grow and prosper is

what restores me. I am empowered to embrace the challenge of pursuing science by relying on a complex and diverse community that I call family. My mom is my hero and empowers me to never give up, my older brother teaches me patience (a lot of patience) and kindness, while my dad gives me lessons on how sometimes things don't go according to plan and how not everything will be perfect but that's okay. I am excited about the future I want to pursue and cannot wait to see what lies ahead. Currently, my goals are to take the MCAT in February, either plan for a gap year or prepare for medical school, pursue a career in pediatrics, and one day work with Doctors Without Borders. Now I know that this plan will probably change but it's exciting to realize all the possibilities that are out there!

Abstract

During this summer I investigated a novel therapeutic strategy for inhibiting advanced prostate cancer. Prostate cancer (CaP) is a disease that kills many men in the United States. Current therapies for treating advanced CaP are poorly effective, typically only extending patient's lives by a few months. Recognizing an obvious need for a more efficient therapy that will inhibit cancer cell growth, our lab synthesized a new drug targeting a key driver of CaP. To do so we focused on the TMPRSS2-ERG gene fusion, the most prevalent genomic alteration observed in CaP patients. This fusion causes an upregulation of ERG protein expression, which results in enhanced cancer growth and causes cancer to spread to distant sites in the body, a process known as metastasis. Specifically, my project worked



Tori Lopez at her poster with Dave Reingold looking on.

on characterizing the therapeutic efficacy of an ERG inhibitor that our group synthesized when used as a standalone agent and in combination with chemotherapy, upon a variety of prostate cancer cell lines.

I have learned so many skills working at OHSU this summer. My mentor Dr. Gordon showed so much patience and grace in teaching me all these new lab techniques. This summer I have learned how to perform different assays, western blots, cytokine arrays, and so much more. This was an amazing opportunity for me as a biochemistry student, especially during this time of covid where a lot of labs are still not accepting interns. I also want to take the time to thank my lab but also the ACS community because they were the ones that helped me get connected to this program and I would not have done any of this amazing work without this community and I would not have progressed as a scientist without the guidance of my lab.

ACS Senior Chemist Committee campaign for the ACS Scholars Program.

Warren Ford reports, as a member of the Society's Senior Chemists Committee, that under the ACS Scholars Program, African American, Hispanic/Latino and American Indian students enrolled in chemical science programs are eligible to compete to receive up to \$5,000/year in renewable college scholarships. Many of the 3,500 participants in this program, now have leading roles in industry, academia, and government. Please support tomorrow's chemistry leaders by selecting this link: <https://www.acs.org/seniorchemists>