

Bionews

The newsletter of the CSU Dominguez Hills Biology Department

Fall 2008

Success continues for 2007-08 Departmental award winners

Congratulations again to the four winners of the Biology 2007-08 awards. Vanessa Correa (Academic Award) is now in medical school at UCLA. Co-winners of the Research Award, Sylvia Bonilla and Erick Medina are starting work on their PhDs at Purdue and USC, respectively. Nkem Anebere (Service Award) starts the new academic year teaching Biology at San Pedro High School. We are very proud of you all, and we know you will continue to have great success as your careers continue.

Graduation - Spring 2008

We had a great crop of graduates this year - 59 students, of whom seven graduated with honors. The commencement ceremony was highlighted by an inspiring address from Tavis Smiley, followed by the First Annual Biology Department Commencement Reception. Based on the good time had by all, it won't be the last. It was a wonderful opportunity to congratulate our grads once more, and it gave us the privilege of meeting so many of the family members who have helped them come this far. It was sad to say goodbye, and we hope all our grads will keep in regular touch with us - you have meant a lot to us over the years.



Vanessa Correa and
Erick Medina



Abraham Gallegos,
Julissa Castaneda,
and Sylvia Bonilla

We Win Statewide Student Research Competition

Giancarlo Bonora, a graduate student in Assistant Professor HK Choi's lab, took the big prize at the statewide CSU Student Research Competition, winning the overall outstanding student research award. Considering he was competing with students from much larger campuses makes this achievement all the more spectacular. Many, many congratulations to Giancarlo and HK for this honor.

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Where are they now? (partial list from this year's graduates)

Aileen Andrion, Western University of Health Sciences MS Nursing
Nkem Anebere (cum laude), Los Angeles Unified School District, San Pedro High School
Sylvia Bonilla (cum laude), Purdue University PhD
Vanessa Correa (summa cum laude), University of California Los Angeles Medical School
Ambre Gejer, Colorado State University College of Veterinary Medicine
Susan Gilliam (magna cum laude), Western University College of Veterinary Medicine
Imani Hasan, University of Southern California, Masters of Health Administration
Jonathan Kwon, University of California Riverside PhD (deferred for a year)
Linda Ly, microbiologist, Pepsico, Riverside
Erick Medina, University of Southern California PhD
Teresa Ramirez, Brown University PhD
Onyeka (Onyx) Uzomah, Purdue University PhD



native species
on campus

Note from the Chair

2007-2008 was an outstanding year. Our students excelled in all areas of university life - in addition to the departmental awards and the outstanding Student Research Competition outcome mentioned above, two of our majors served on the executive board of Associated Students Incorporated, and others continued to do first-class research in labs both on and off campus. At the same time, many of our students work full-time while carrying a full course load, they raise families, and they care for ailing family members. It is humbling for me to see the dedication of our students, and I revel in their many successes (too many to mention here). I have never seen such cohesion and camaraderie in an undergraduate program anywhere I have taught before, and I want to thank all of you, our students, for making it that way. And although I have always enjoyed teaching, I never had this much fun before.

On a more administrative side, our departmental internal review was hailed as a model that other departments should emulate, and we successfully launched two new options in the major - Cellular & Molecular Biology and Ecology & Environmental Biology. We continue to add new courses: Principles of Biology III: Evolution and Ecology (BIO 124/125), Molecular Biology (BIO 220/221), and upper-division classes in Health Disparities and Landscape Ecology. A new graduate class, Urban Environmental Science, debuts in Spring. Our online classes are a great success, and this semester we are offering the first online section of our General Education lecture class, BIO 102.

We also continue to build relationships with the community. Biology faculty are involved in a range of activities, from serving on the boards of local environmental non-profits to coordinating science fairs. We continue to involve community members in our campus greening initiatives, particularly in planting and propagating native species, and we have several Eagle Scout projects working on this.

While not specifically Biology, Dominguez Hills last year received the highest level of accreditation, 10 years, from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). All in all, it was a great year, and I am looking forward to seeing what new successes we will achieve in the year to come. Go Toros.

John Thomlinson, Chair