



Message from the Dean



I would like to begin by wishing everyone a very happy, prosperous and healthy new year! The winter quarter is well underway and with the lower temperatures and rains, it indeed feels like winter...albeit a California-type one. I am pleased to share with you the first edition of the Ayala School newsletter for 2016. As we begin the new year, it is a great time to set new goals and share some of our ambitions.

As always, we have the audacious goal of improving society through cutting-edge research. Ayala faculty have contributed significantly to life-enhancing discoveries over the years. We have been able to reach new heights of social impact through innovation and embracing our dedication to instructing the next generation of industry and community leaders. Along these lines, a special shout-out goes to Professor Anthony James, who is pioneering efforts to eliminate malaria from the world. Because of his accomplishments, he was selected as one of the 50 most relevant people by the Orange County Register (read more about his work [here](#)). In addition, I would also like to give a special thanks to the faculty who participated in this quarter's Donuts with the Dean. I could not be more thrilled as to how well this school quarterly social event has turned out over the past 12 months, and its continued success will depend on strong faculty support.

News and Highlights

New UCI Center for Addiction Neuroscience Launches

The UC Irvine Center for Addiction Neuroscience (ICAN) brings together addiction research faculty from across the university for the first time. Under the direction of Professor and Chair Marcelo A. Wood, Neurobiology and Behavior, ICAN seeks to identify areas of collaboration for answering the most difficult questions in addiction research and provide significant public education through outreach programs. [Read more.](#)



STUDENT CORNER



Calling all Bio students! Send us your selfie representing the Ayala School with pride in a lab, out with friends, where you study, etc. and you could be featured in our next newsletter! Send photos to bioweinfo@uci.edu or tag the Ayala School page on Facebook [#ayalaschool](#).

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Sally Dabiri
Department
Administrator for
Neurology and Behavior
Sally Dabiri, Department

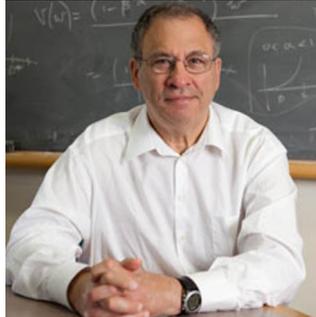
Protecting the Environment Through Ecotourism



Dr. Hana Ayala and Ayala School faculty members, Professor Michael T. Clegg and Albert F. Bennett, are working to build new models of sustainability through the "Tourism for Conservation through Research" (TCR) economic-development model, created by Dr. Ayala. [Read more.](#)

Visiting Professor Awarded National Medal of Science

Simon A. Levin, Ph.D., Distinguished Visiting professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, was recently awarded the National Medal of Science. The announcement was made in December 2015 and Professor Levin and other award recipients will be honored in a ceremony at the White House this year. [Read more.](#)



UCI Reaches Out to Community Partners to Save the Salton Sea



Salton Sea Initiative Director Professor Timothy Bradley and Dean Frank M. LaFerla traveled to Palm Springs to speak with the Rotary club about new ways to increase the awareness of the changes occurring at the Salton Sea. [Read more.](#)

Donuts with the Dean, Winter 2016

The Ayala School held its quarterly Donuts with the Dean social, where students could interact with Dean LaFerla, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, Michael Mulligan, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies, Michael Leon, and other faculty and administration members. [Read more.](#)



Administrator for Neurobiology and Behavior, has many duties within the department office, including financial and resources management. She has been with the department for 11 years and feels honored to serve the students, faculty and staff.

[Read more about Sally here.](#)

Upcoming Events

UCI Homecoming

- January 30, 2016 Join us for the 2016 UCI Homecoming Celebration
Spark the Zot in You!
Featuring school and department booths as well as Innovation Exhibits. School + Dept Booths / Innovation Exhibits.
- UCI Men's Basketball Game vs. UC Santa Barbara (Bren Events Center) at 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- TEDx Salon (The Cove) at 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. School + Dept Booths / Innovation Exhibits

[For more information visit the event page.](#)

Dean's Distinguished Lecture Series

- February 4, 2016 Featuring [Arthur D. Lander, M.D., Ph.D., Donald Bren](#)

Ayala School ARCS Scholars Honored during January Luncheon

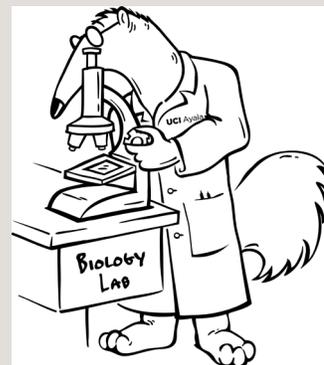


Three graduate students were recipients of the ARCS Scholar Award for their research and will receive additional financial support from the ARCS Foundation. This foundation supports exceptional students in the STEM fields. [Read more.](#)

[Professor](#) [of](#)
[Developmental and Cell](#)
[Biology and Director of](#)
[the Center for Complex](#)
[Biological](#) [Systems,](#)
[University of California,](#)
[Irvine](#)

Alumni in the News

UCI alumnus, Dr. Nikan Khatibi, was recently appointed to the Board of Trustees for the California Health Professions Education Foundation (CHPEF) by Governor Jerry Brown. Established in 1987, the CHPEF is the state's only non-profit foundation statutorily created to improve access to healthcare in underserved areas of California. The Board has awarded more than 124 million dollars in scholarships and loan repayments to California health professionals who are dedicated to providing direct patient care in those key areas. By doing so, the Board has provided California patients with a culturally and linguistically competent health workforce dedicated to delivering direct patient care in California's underserved communities. Dr. Khatibi completed his BA in Biological Sciences (2004) at UCI as well as his MD (2009) at the UCI School of Medicine.



Research in the News

Researchers Identify Potential Link between Streptococcus Infection and Neuroinflammation

Visiting Professor Dritan Agalliu, Developmental and Cell Biology, and colleagues shed light on how recurrent group A Streptococcus infections can lead to certain neuropsychiatric disorders. Their results suggest that the immune response to the infections can lead to deficits in synaptic connectivity. [Read more.](#)



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