

# THE PERIODICAL

A Newsletter from the  
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry



May 2023 • Edition 14

## Message from Chair Michael Burkart



Dear Friends and Alumni of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry,

I am happy to present you with the Spring Edition of The Periodical. We finish off our academic year with wildflowers in bloom across the campus, thanks to significant rains this year.

Spring also means we are busy wrapping up classes, preparing for graduation events, and planning our summer goals. We are proud of everyone's accomplishments over the year and excited for what the future will bring.

In this edition of The Periodical, you will find some of the highlights from our Department in terms of recent scientific discoveries, awards, and other accolades.

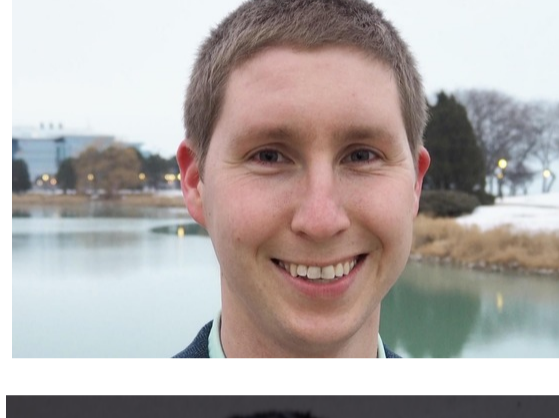
I would like to welcome Professors Kent Griffith (Synthesis, Materials and Chemical Biology) and Andrew Pun (Physical, Analytical and Environmental Chemistry), who both joined us in March. You can read about their research below. I'm also pleased to share that John Sous will officially start his faculty appointment in our department on July 1st. We will have more details about Professor Sous and his research in the Fall newsletter. We will share more information about Professor Sous, his research, and appointment in the Fall newsletter.

We hope you appreciate these updates as our Department's way of keeping in touch. Please do keep us updated about what you would like to see here, as well as any news we can highlight for our readers.

Keep making great chemistry!

Sincerely,  
Mike Burkart  
Professor and Chair

## New Faculty



### [Assistant Professor Kent Griffith](#)

Professor Griffith earned his Ph.D in Physical Inorganic Chemistry from Cambridge University in 2018. His research centers around the synthesis and advanced characterization of functional inorganic materials, particularly those for rechargeable batteries and other areas of energy.

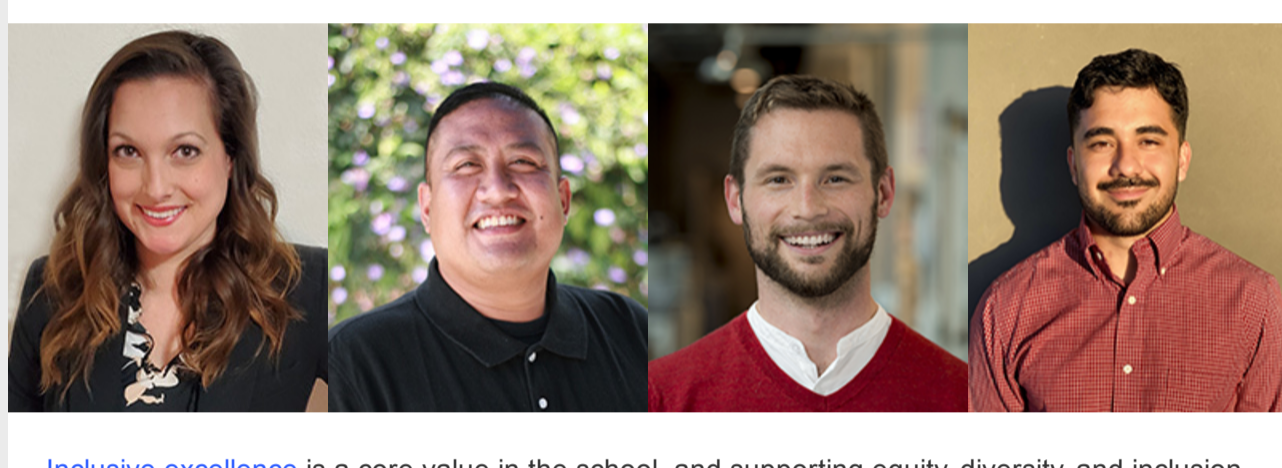


### [Assistant Professor Andrew Pun](#)

Professor Pun earned his Ph.D. in Chemistry from Columbia University in 2019. His research focuses on the photochemistry of organic and inorganic semiconductors, exploiting these systems to enhance the efficiency of photovoltaics via photon upconversion. This research is at the nexus of chemistry, engineering, and materials science, combining fundamental studies with applied research.

## Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Climate

The School of Physical Sciences Announces 2023 EDI Excellence Awardees



[Inclusive excellence](#) is a core value in the school, and supporting equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) is integral in all aspects of work. The school seeks to increase access and support for people from underrepresented groups, including women, underrepresented minorities, LGBTQ+, first-generation college students and people who are differently abled.

[Read more](#) about Chemistry and Biochemistry's awardees and their EDI contributions!

### UC CHEMISTRY CONFERENCE ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Symposia will focus on three DEI priorities for graduate students and faculty: Recruitment, Retention, and Mentoring



Keynote speaker Rigoberto Hernandez

### UC San Diego Team Participates in the First UC-wide Chemistry Conference on DEI

The first UC Chemistry Conference on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) was hosted at UC Santa Cruz on April 15th, 2023. The goal of the conference is to share the challenges and solutions toward achieving DEI in our UC departments and to build community around our shared interests.

[Read more.](#)

## Research Highlights

[UC San Diego Chemistry & Biochemistry Ranked Among Best in Nation by U.S. News & World Report](#)



In the latest annual ranking, UC San Diego's graduate education in chemistry received praise across an array of specialties. The overall ranking for the university's chemistry program rose one spot to 20th in the nation, with biochemistry jumping eight spots to eighth in the nation. The following specialties also ranked highly: inorganic chemistry (14), theoretical chemistry (15), and physical chemistry (17).



### [Professor Skip Pomeroy Talks to ABC Radio National About Biodegradable Plastics](#)

The shoes are made from eucalyptus and cotton uppers, with soles made from algae-based foam. Hear the science behind the plant-based foam that makes Blueview Footwear a shoe of the future.

## Faculty Spotlight



### [Komor Lab Outreach Team Teaches High School Students the Basics of Base Editing](#)

Assistant Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry Alexis Komor, and Ph.D. candidates Mallory Evanoff and Carlos Vasquez, designed the Genome Editing Technologies Program as a way to educate students on base-editing technologies.



### [Professor Erik Romero Selected as 2023-2024 Hellman Fellow](#)

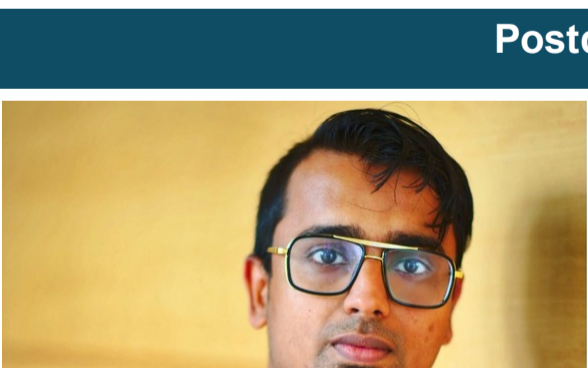
The Society of Hellman Fellows is an endowed program at all ten University of California campuses that provides research funding to promising assistant professors who show capacity for great distinction in their chosen fields.



### [Kim Prather Awarded Gustavus John Esselen Award for Chemistry in the Public Interest from American Chemical Society](#)

The Esselen Award recognizes chemists whose scientific and technical achievements have contributed to the public good and enhanced the public's perception of chemistry.

## Postdoc News



### [Saswata Dasgupta Named One of the Ten Schmidt AI in Science Postdoctoral Fellows](#)

Congrats to Saswata Dasgupta of Paesani lab, who was named a Schmidt Futures Fellow. The fellowship hopes to change how science is done by accelerating the incorporation of AI techniques into the natural sciences, engineering and mathematical science.

## Seminars

Our seminars are constantly evolving, please click [HERE](#) for an up-to-date calendar.

The Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry strives to be a top-ranked and recognized leader in the chemical and biochemical sciences through transformative research and impactful educational programs.

We are committed to excellence in teaching and mentoring excellence and supporting students and postdoctoral researchers in safe and inclusive environments as they prepare to become leaders in science and society.

We value collegiality, equity and diversity with the Department, and promote a culture of collaboration and transparency.

We aim to enhance our impact in local and global communities through partnerships with other educators, industry, government and professional societies. Learn more at <https://chemistry.ucsd.edu>

### About UC San Diego

At the University of California, San Diego, we constantly push boundaries and challenge expectations. Established in 1960, UC San Diego has been shaped by exceptional scholars who aren't afraid to take risks and redefine conventional wisdom. Today, as one of the top 15 research universities in the world, we are driving innovation and change to advance society, propel economic growth and make our world a better place. Learn more at [www.ucsd.edu](http://www.ucsd.edu)

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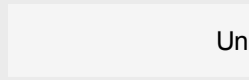
Quarterly Newsletter Deadline Dates: January 27, April 28, July 28, October 21

Got News? [chempr@chemists.ucsd.edu](mailto:chempr@chemists.ucsd.edu)

<https://chemistry.ucsd.edu>

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