



# BIOSPHERE

## The Weekly Bulletin of Biology

Biology Colloquium: Friday, 14 September 2012, 2:00 pm in CR 5125

### “Development and Disease of Peripheral Nerves: Insights from Genetically Modified Mice”

Michael Garcia, Ph.D.  
Department of Biology, University of Missouri

#### Allen Receives New Funding

**Dr. Larry Allen** has received new funding from the Sea Grant Program for a project titled, “A fisheries-independent assessment of spawning biomass of barred sand bass on the major spawning aggregation off southern California.” The grant is for \$10,000.

#### Techie Teaching Conference Talk

**Drs. Paul Wilson** and Deone Zell (Office of Academic Technology) presented at a Moodle Moot this summer, “Peer evaluation in Moodle: Tinkering together a solution for a pressing need.” The founder and head of Moodle was present and told the audience that his people would add the functionality of allowing students to work in groups and evaluate one another in the workshop module of Moodle. CSUN should have this all running by next summer.

#### Dr. Schiffman’s Road Show

Over the summer, **Dr. Polly Schiffman** did her presentation, “Gophers Rule the World” for two community groups: the

Santa Barbara County Horticultural Society and the El Dorado Nature Center Docents.

This is a science-based, but not too technical, presentation about the diversity of ecological relationships that exist between small burrowing mammals (gophers, ground squirrels, kangaroo rats, etc.), native vegetation, and other ecosystem constituents.

Schiffman has been invited to give this presentation to four different groups in the past year of so. Each was well attended and received with considerable interest. She says, “Regular people [non-biologists] are extremely eager to learn about scientific research. It just needs to be presented in an accessible manner.”

#### Interested in Health Professions?

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Pre-Health Conference will be held at CSUN on Saturday, 20 October. Interested individuals should go to <https://csunphc.registertoattend.com/> for more information.

## Who's in the Polyp Lab?

The summer saw major changes in personnel in Dr. Edmunds's lab, which studies corals around the world.

**Dr. Vivian Cumbo** left CSUN and returned to Australia to pursue her research career at James Cook University. During her time at CSUN, **Cumbo** led research expeditions to Taiwan, where she worked with CSUN students to study the effects of climate change on coral larvae.

**Dr. Lorenzo Bramanti** recently joined the polyp lab and will be pushing ahead with 12 months of research in Taiwan that represents the final phase of research under the current NSF award. **Bramanti** received his Ph.D. from the University of Pisa in 2004, and most recently completed research under the European Marie Curie program. His specialty is the population biology of red coral.

Two new graduate students have joined the lab. **Nick Evensen** has travelled to the United States from Monaco to begin research on the effects of ocean acidification on tropical reef corals in Moorea. Most recently, Evensen worked as a research technician in the Environmental Laboratory of the International Atomic Energy Agency. **Alex Yarid** traveled a shorter distance, and moved from San Diego to CSUN to begin graduate research focused on the ecology and physiology of corals in St. John and Moorea. Most recently, he completed his B.S. at UCLA where he was introduced to coral biology during their Marine Biology Quarter in Moorea.

## K–12 Discussion in *Science*

**Dr. Steve Oppenheimer** authored a short Discussion in *Science*. The core of his argument was, "To produce the best educated scientists and mathematicians and a scientifically literate public, wouldn't it be common sense to at least require the Master's degree for K–12 teachers?"

### *Biosphere: The Weekly Bulletin of Biology*

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