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Updates from Dean Charlene Wolf-Hall

April was certainly a busy month with a lot of challenges met. Students, Faculty and Staff – I cannot thank you enough for how you have adapted to the changes that have been needed to address the COVID-19 pandemic. Even in these stress-filled times, our college has done amazing work as can be witnessed through the highlights of this newsletter.

Health and safety continue to be the top concern for you and your family and friends. Moving the courses online quickly has been disruptive and we all continue to adapt. All summer courses will be online as well. We encourage you to visit with your advisors to see if any summer offerings may be good options for you. We are also doing some fundraising to help support students during this unusual summer term.

Students, please know our faculty and staff care deeply about you and your learning. We will continue to adapt to support your learning and preparation for the next steps on your career paths. Our college is working on some restructuring to enhance our student success efforts.

Seniors graduating this spring, congratulations! You

made it and will be remembered as a particularly special class. I will be watching the commencement video with you and missing you. Please keep in contact with us and share your experiences.

Faculty and Staff, please continue to reach out to your supervisors, mentors, and colleagues when you are struggling to adapt. We have been collecting resources and connecting for referrals as needed to support your needs. If you or yours become ill, take care and don't hesitate to let others help.

What will May bring? Whatever it is, our College of Natural Sciences is ready to adapt and evolve. Stay tuned, and please consider [following us on social media](#). Happy end of spring semester and welcome to the spring weather.

Celebrating Work Anniversaries

for
April 2020

Thank you for all your hard work & dedication!

- Sally Krueger – 48 years
- Carol Doyle – 15 years
- Amanda Appel – 10 years
- Kim Johnson Maier – 4 years

University Budget Oversight Committee (UBOC) Update

The UBOC hearings originally scheduled in April were canceled as were all spring semester events in April. Instead, all reports and voice over presentations have been [posted online here](#).

U.S. News & World Report: Best Grad Schools

Five SDSU graduate programs, including the Biological Sciences program, were ranked among the nation's best following a survey of more than 2,000 programs by U.S. News & World Report. The other four are professional programs, making Biological Sciences the only research-based program on the list!



CNS COVID-19 Video Competition Results

Thank you to all who participated and submitted videos for the CNS COVID-19 Video Competition! We had eight entries total and a 5th grade panel judged them.

- **1st:** Sarah Engels
 - Acting credit: Jaden Petersen and Theodore DeLange
- **2nd:** Abdullah Al Maruf
 - Credits: Ashiqur Rahman, Elizabethann Cook, Mark Malinovskiy, Todd Letcher
- **3rd:** Jennifer Kyeremateng and Vivian Osei Poku

View all the videos here!

Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships

Alana Moe (Tanaka Fellowship)
Susan Grabenstein (Okken Fellowship)
Brandon Schuldt, Sarah Engels, Tim Paris, Logan Smith (East Fellowships)
Chemistry & Biochemistry

Van D. and Barbara B. Fishback Honors College – Schultz-Werth Awards

Molly Kroeger
Biology & Microbiology
Juliana Pederson
Biology & Microbiology
Jace Waybright
Physics
Bryanna Chipley
Geography & Geospatial Sciences

Awards & Recognition

South Dakota State University – Dr. Aprils Brooks Women of Distinction Award (NFE / Professional Staff)

Marjoanne Thompson
Biology & Microbiology

National Science Foundation – Graduate Research Fellowship

Nathan Turner
Chemistry & Biochemistry

URSCAD Results and Recognition

The Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity Day (URSCAD) looked much different this year as the whole event moved online for the first time. The students and faculty in CNS adapted and rose to the challenge with a strong showing at this year's event! Congratulations to these students for ranking in the top three out of their departments:

- Department of Biology & Microbiology
 - 1) **Molly Kroeger** and **Laura Munger**
 - 2) **Allison Bjornstad**
 - 3) **Jessica Scheer** and **Anyesha Sarkar**
- Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry
 - 1) **Jillissa Taubel**
 - 2) **Sydney Woltman** and **Alana Moe**
 - 3) **Sarah Engels** and **Thad Indermuhle**
- Department of Physics
 - 1) **Jace Waybright**
 - 2) **Zachary Lehmann**
 - 3) **Abdullah al Maruf**

Many thanks to our volunteer faculty judges for taking the time to thoughtfully review posters:

Jihong Cole-Dai, Anne-Marie Hoskinson, Surtaj Iram, Sara Madsen, Robert McTaggart, Matt Miller, Scott Pedersen, Doug Raynie, Rachel Willand-Charnley, Yajun Wu

South Dakota State University Student Association – Faculty Advisor of the Year

Jaime Lopez-Mosqueda
Biology and Microbiology

“Dr. Lopez goes above and beyond in three main ways: He challenges students to reach their full potential, he suggests ways to improve, and he recognizes a job well done.”



Club Info

- **What:** American Medical Student Association (Pre-Med Chapter)
- **When:** 1 – 2 times a month
- **Where:** Rotunda
- **Who:** any pre-medical student
- **Club Leadership**
 - President: Kennedy Kirsch
 - VP: Sydney Bormann
 - Secretary / Treasurer: Allison Hemmer
 - Social Coordinator: Raina Grimsley
 - Faculty advisor: Marjoanne Thompson
- **How to join:** click here to email Raina Grimsley and get your name on the email list
- **Follow:** Facebook and Twitter

What is “AMSA”?

AMSA stands for “American Medical Student Association”. This national organization is the oldest and largest independent association of physicians-in-training in the United States. The first chapter was founded in 1950 in Washington D.C., and we are honored to have a chapter on our campus here at SDSU!



Student Club Spotlight: AMSA

The AMSA club meets regularly to learn about pre-medical topics and organizes community outreach efforts. All pre-med students are encouraged to join!

Each meeting covers a different, important theme such as medical school applications, the MCAT, physician guest speakers, medical student panels, panels about medical school interviews, and more. The AMSA plans to continue curating and providing new resources that aide pre-medical students on their journey to medical school.

These activities not only provide good information, they also help students create beneficial connections. Underclassmen have opportunities to connect with upperclassmen who can be valuable resources, and all club members will get chances to network with community members and different speakers from the medical community.

Interacting with the community happens frequently, and much of it is done in coordination with SDSU's Pre-Professional Club. "We take pride in our volunteer efforts and community outreach!

AMSA members volunteer weekly at ULC Nursing Home to play bingo with the residents. We also usually take a trip [pictured] during the year to volunteer to make a meal for the families at the Ronald McDonald House in Sioux Falls," said Kennedy Kirsch, president of this chapter.

"We are working on getting our club more involved with raising awareness on Public Health issues in the coming semesters," Kirsch said. "We hope to continue getting involved in the community to fulfill our desire to serve those in need!"

Student Reminders: S/U grades, Fall Classes

S/U Grade Decision Due by May 18

South Dakota State University is providing an alternative grading option of S/U for some programs and courses in recognition of the circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Students will have from May 4th to May 18th to make their decisions.

Please talk to your advisor so they can help you make the best decision for your GPA, transcript, and future career goals!

Fall & Spring Semester Registration

Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 are both open for registration! Everyone's normal spring schedule has been thrown off and as a result, some students are behind on registration. If this is you, you're not alone! There is even still time to register for Summer 2020 courses.

Our advisors are standing by to help you select next year's courses, lift holds, and troubleshoot registration issues!

Graduate Student Balawanth Jadhav Helping Peers

Jadhav is pursuing a doctorate in chemistry and conducting research in the conversion of biomass into value-added chemicals using environmentally friendly techniques in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. In addition, he has led an effort to raise funds to donate groceries to nearly 40 other Jackrabbits.

“Because a lot of students depend on part-time jobs, there is no opportunity to work, especially since international students have to work on campus,” Jadhav said. “I contacted a few of my friends to ask how they’re doing, and several told me they’re struggling because they lost their job and it’s getting difficult to buy needed items,” he continued. “When I heard this, I knew I wanted to give back. A lot of friends helped me

when I came here. I had nothing but they helped me. Now is a time I can help my fellow students and maybe others in the Brookings community.” Jadhav contacted Vivek Patel, a family friend and owner of the Brookings’ Quality Inn.

“I shared my idea on how to help the other students,” Jadhav said. “He offered to help however he can and then asked a few others for donations. Five motel owners in Brookings donated funds, which were used to purchase groceries.” Various food staples such as rice, lentils, eggs, bread, noodles, onions and potatoes were purchased for 40 students.

[Click here to read the whole story!](#)



**SOUTH DAKOTA
STATE UNIVERSITY**

College of Natural Sciences

Congratulations to Dr. Robert McTaggart!

Dr. McTaggart has been named Assistant Department Head of the Physics Department. He began his new duties on April 22, 2020.

Congratulations to Dr. Heike Bücking!

As announced last month, Dr. Bücking will begin as the new Department Head of Biology & Microbiology on May 22, 2020.

Search Announcement: Associate Dean of Research

Due to Dr. Bücking moving into her new position, the Associate Dean of Research role will become open. CNS plans to conduct an internal search among all four departments to fill this space. Keep an eye on the BOR employment website to see this job posting and apply.



Welcome, Lydia!

Parents: Hankui (Geography & Geospatial Sciences) & Dan

Weight: 6lbs, 1oz

Length: 19.5 inches



Welcome, Sufi!

Parents: Shiksha (Chemistry & Biochemistry) & Nabin

Weight: 6lbs, 4oz

Length: 19.5 inches

Research Spotlight – Dr. Dapeng Li

Dr. Dapeng Li has recently published a paper on the potential value of national address point databases in improving wildfire public safety in the *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction* (IJDRR). This is the first study on this topic and could not only promote the use of national address point databases in wildfire evacuations, but also shed light on how to use them in other applications such as the Next Generation 911 system and public health incident tracking.

This study has been reported by media outlets such as the U.S. Fire Administration (FEMA) website and the Brookings Register. [Click here](#) to read it yourself!

What is “address point data”?

Address point data contains both the textual address name and the geographic coordinates of the address

Results:

- Address point data can be used to improve wildland urban interface (WUI) mapping.

Results, cont.

- Address point data can be used to issue tailored protective action recommendations to specific at-risk households.
- Address point data can be used to generate more accurate evacuation travel demand in wildfire evacuation traffic simulations.
- Address point data can also be used to build house loss assessment and notification systems in wildfire evacuations.

Where did your interest in science begin?

Dr. Larry Browning *Department of Physics*

It was about 1960 when I said to myself that I wanted to understand how things worked, and that I should be more careful about observing the world. That curiosity may have been because I used to play with my father's tools, or take things apart (they didn't always work when I got them back together). Or it may have been from watching some of the TV shows on our RCA

black and white television (like Mr. Wizard or Discovery '62, or Captain Kangaroo). I used to find it thrilling and satisfying when I felt I understood a little more about how things worked. Even now, 60 years later, whenever I'm able to come up with a demonstration, a Do-At-Home lab for an on-line class or workshop, or a Physics Bowl question that shows a little bit about how the world works, I get that same thrill and feel a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. Along the way, I've

had lots of help and encouragement from teachers, professors, friends, and especially my parents and family. I've been lucky to have that support, but I also found you have to make an effort to seek out opportunities. One of the most supportive things is when I share those insights with students, colleagues, and friends – especially when some even share my excitement. That sense of a common accomplishment helps us all build a better future.



Once a friend asked Albert Einstein what he did. His answer was a picture, a map of the scientific process, where someone looks at the world and comes up with an axiom about how it works. Then consequences are derived from that axiom and then tested against the real world (often in a laboratory). I've always found that model to be helpful, especially when trying to explain Physics.

