



### UNDERGRADUATE ALUMNI



Michael Abdelsayed graduated from CI in spring of 2008 with a BS degree in Chemistry with an emphasis in Biochemistry. He enrolled in the Cellular and Molecular Biology gateway program at UCI in summer of 2010. After the gateway program Michael joined the Luptak lab and transitioned to the PhD program under Molecular Biology and Biochemistry at UCI. The Luptak lab focuses on research of catalytic and functional RNA by using in vitro selection techniques. Currently his research focuses on in vitro selections of luminescent molecules.

***Michael had this to say about the Sciences at CI:***

*"Thanks to the great faculty at CI, I was well prepared for graduate school. CI has intimate class sizes, great instructors, and plenty of opportunity to develop skills in research. The chemistry and biology staff at CI went out of their way to make themselves available to help me during and after my undergraduate career. Their support has been invaluable to my graduate career."*

### GRADUATE ALUMNI



Jesus Olvera graduated in 2008 from UCSB, where he double majored in Biological Sciences and Global Studies. Jesus entered the MS in Biotechnology and Bioinformatics degree program in 2008 and was a member of the first class of Bridges to Stem Cell Research Fellows from CI. As a fellow he conducted his research in neural stem cells and cortical development in Dr. Ulrich Mueller's laboratory at Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla. After receiving his MS degree with an emphasis in Stem Cell Technology and Laboratory Management, he continued his research in neuroscience and human genetics at UCSD in the Gleeson lab. He currently resides in San Diego with his wife Virgen and daughter Stella and is working as a Cell Biologist at Anaptysbio, where he is involved in the discovery and optimization of therapeutic antibodies.

# STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The CI Biology program heard from some of our current, graduating and alumni students about the many things they have accomplished while here at CI or after leaving. Let's congratulate them on their accomplishments.



**Laura Milbrandt:** One of 25 students in the 23-campus CSU system to win a CSUPERB Presidents' Commission Scholar Award. The \$8,000 grant will allow her to spend her summer doing research. She will be in the lab creating site-directed mutants of the protein TCTP (Translationally-Controlled Tumor Protein) and its role in the mTOR/Rheb pathway, which has been implicated in a variety of cancers. She will be studying its effect on mammalian cells, using a variety of techniques.



**Bryn Aquino:** One of 15 CI students to be awarded the Math and Science Teacher Initiative (MSTI) Scholarship for 2011-2012. The scholarships are awarded to students who have committed to become math or science teachers and are enrolled in a teaching credential or prerequisite program at CI. Bryn graduated in 2011 with a BA in Liberal Studies, Teaching and Learning Option with an emphasis in Science. She graduated on May 19, 2012 from CI with a Teaching Credential.



**Mary Grabiak:** Graduated May 19, 2012 with a BS in Biology with an emphasis in Cellular & Molecular Biology. After five hundred hours of community service, two years of undergraduate research and two years as President of the Free Radicals club she will be starting a four year PharmD (Doctor of Pharmacy) degree program at Loma Linda University in the fall. She hopes to specialize in trauma or infectious diseases. She leaves her colleagues the parting words of Henry David Thoreau, "Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined."



**Alyssa Dela Cruz, Xaviera Ramon and Erica Jae Villanueva:** All three have been accepted into the training program in Clinical Laboratory Science (CLS) at Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital. This is quite an accomplishment since Cottage Hospital only accepts six students a year to participate in the year long program. With this training they hope to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to become Clinical Laboratory Scientists. Alyssa took courses such as Hematology through CI Extended University for admittance to the CLS program. Xaviera will graduate in the fall of 2012 with a BS in Biology with an emphasis in Clinical Laboratory Sciences. Erica graduated on May 19, 2012 with a BS in Biology with an emphasis in Clinical Laboratory Sciences.



**Emily Mazzucchi:** Graduated May 2009 with a BS in Biology with an emphasis in Cellular & Molecular Biology from CI. She graduated May 4, 2012 from the PharmD (Doctor of Pharmacy) program at UC San Francisco. Emily is currently studying for the NAPLEX (North American Pharmacist Licensure Examination) and the CPJE (California Practice Standards and Jurisprudence Examination). Post-graduation she has accepted a full time position as a Clinical Pharmacist at Kaiser Permanente Hospital Inpatient Pharmacy in Santa Rosa, CA. She also plans to continue to work at a small privately owned compounding pharmacy, "Dollar Drug" a few days a month as she is very passionate about community pharmacy. In the near future she is looking forward to becoming a preceptor/mentor for students within the UCSF School of Pharmacy program as she would thoroughly enjoy giving to them what so many have provided for her.



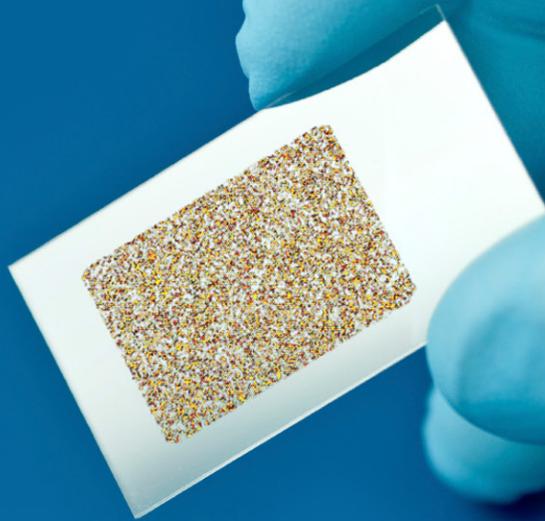
**Chad Smith:** Graduated May 2004 with a BS in Biology and a minor in Chemistry. He completed a M.S. in Biology with an emphasis on conservation and natural history of reptiles and amphibians from Indiana University-Purdue University, Fort Wayne. He is currently working as a Zoologist for the Navajo Nation's Department of Fish and Wildlife. In April 2012, Chad was featured in an article for the Navajo Times about his work rescuing an injured golden eagle (it had been fighting with other birds and was on the ground) and releasing it back into the wild after rehabilitation. He rescued the injured golden eagle on February 22 and when it was healthy enough Chad fitted it with a solar-powered tracking device on its back so the eagle could be tracked wherever he goes. The golden eagle was released on April 12, roughly where he was originally found. Chad hopes the golden eagle will live the rest of his life without getting into any more trouble and ending back up in rehab. To read the full article please visit: <http://navajotimes.com/entertainment/2012/04/12/041912eagle.php>

## WELCOME: ERICH FLEMING, PHD



Erich Fleming is a Microbial Ecologist coming to CI after spending five years as a research scientist at the NASA Ames Research Center and the SETI Institute (Mountain View, CA). Erich is a native Californian, raised on a single-family farm in the Sierra Nevada foothills outside Fresno. Here he developed a love for nature that motivated him to earn a BS in Biochemistry from UC Davis followed by a PhD in Microbial Ecology from the University of Oregon. As a scientist Erich studies natural microbial communities from lakes and rivers as well as more extreme environments like hot springs, intertidal zones, and deserts. He studies these systems to learn about microbial diversity, physiology and evolution. While at the University of Oregon and NASA, he worked on projects looking into microbial tolerance to environmental extremes (desiccation, high temperature and UVR), alternative biofuels from algae, and new satellite concepts to study microbes in space. Erich is also an avid artist. Throughout his career he has tried to find ways to merge his love of science with his love of art through scientific drawing, graphic design and even interactive multimedia.

*Erich says, "I am excited to be joining the CSU Channel Islands community. I hope I can add to its wonderful environment and bring new knowledge, ideas and opportunities to the students and faculty. I look forward to playing a role in the growth of the Biology Program and CI."*



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## DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that nanotechnology, the application of particles smaller than a hundred nanometers, has many applications in a variety of industries? In the healthcare industry nanotechnology has the potential to cure cancer and heart disease. It is likely to reduce the number of deaths over the next decade or so from traditionally difficult-to-eradicate diseases. This improvement in healthcare could come from better methods of diagnosis, more targeted drug delivery that avoids damaging side effects, and localized therapeutic treatments to destroy diseased cells.

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## DEGREE SPOTLIGHT

The MS in Biotechnology and Bioinformatics with an emphasis in Biomedical Engineering is an interdisciplinary field, fusing molecular and cellular life sciences with contents in engineering analysis, design, and synthesis approaches, business management, bioethics, law and regulation, and globalization of biotechnology. It introduces the principles and applications of bioinformatics, biomechanics, biorobotics, biomaterials, nanotechnology, genetics, cellular, tissue and organ engineering, biomedical instrumentation and devices, biosensors, and medical imaging in biological systems.

We'd love to hear from you ! Let us know what you think of our e-Newsletter.  
Please send your thoughts to: Catherine Hutchinson at [catherine.hutchinson@csuci.edu](mailto:catherine.hutchinson@csuci.edu)