# Mason SCIENCE

Understand. Innovate. Succeed.

**Wednesday, February 23, 2022** **science.gmu.edu**

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## Cultivating a questioning mindset

*by Fernando Miralles-Wilhelm*

Inquisitiveness. Curiosity. Determination. These are some of the well-honed characteristics of a scientist at Mason. We are trained and encouraged to ask questions at every turn. To cultivate the spark of wonder. Why does this work the way it does? What would happen if we added this? Or how could we start/stop X to change something or make it better? With the X being anything from personalized treatments for breast cancer survivors to making transportation safer or more energy efficient, to tracking severe weather, or finding new exoplanets, scientists at Mason 'solve for X' a lot.

These questions can also lead to process improvements, broader and more diverse perspectives, better health and workplace conditions, or enhanced research collaborations for our community. What type of an environment cultivates such curiosity? One where questions are encouraged and new ideas are welcomed with open arms. That's what innovation is all about. And the hallmark characteristics of curiosity and innovation our namesake's patriots were known for are thriving here at George Mason University.

Teaching both the how and the why lets students broaden their understanding about their disciplines. That's how we get the first word of our mantra...UNDERSTAND. It's by asking questions. By running the data, time and time again.

Read full message

# MASON SCIENCE COMMUNITY

## Submit your degree celebration student speaker nominations

*by Donna Fox*



Do you know of an exceptional graduating senior who you believe should be the student speaker at Mason Science's degree celebration on May 21, 2022 at 10 a.m. in EagleBank Area? Submit a one page, double spaced write up describing why you believe the student would be a great representative of the undergraduate student body to your department's chair. Chairs will select one student to submit from the department, with the dean making the final selection. Nominations from the department should be submitted to Donna Fox by **Friday, March 28, 2022.**




## #FacultyFriday highlights AOES assistant professor

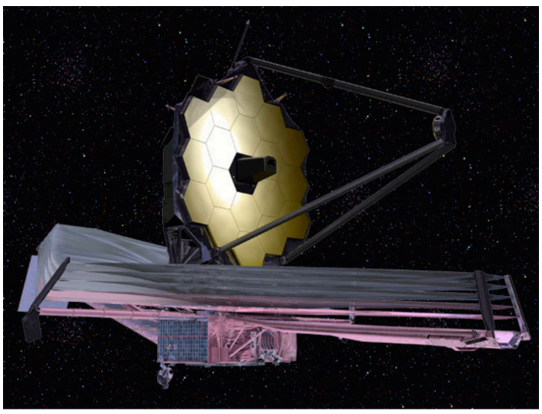
This week's #FacultyFriday features Paul Betka, Assistant Professor, Department of Atmospheric, Oceanic and Earth Sciences whose research focuses on the rates, timing, mechanics, and deformation styles of the Earth's lithosphere in response to the motion of its tectonic plates. Betka currently leads the Structural Geology and Tectonics Lab and is actively recruiting graduate students with an interest in geology.

Read Betka's bio

# RESEARCH & DISCOVERY

## The James Webb Space Telescope launch

*by Michael Summers and Peter Plavchan*



Early on Christmas day 2021, after more than two decades of painstaking planning, building, and testing, NASA successfully launched the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST). JWST is expected to make observations that will revolutionize our understanding of the early universe, the formation of the earliest stars and galaxies, planets orbiting nearby stars (exoplanets), and search for signatures of life on those planets. *Photo: NASA.*

What it means for Mason astronomers



## Mason scientist studying method for capturing immune activation and inflammatory response

*by Elizabeth Grisham*

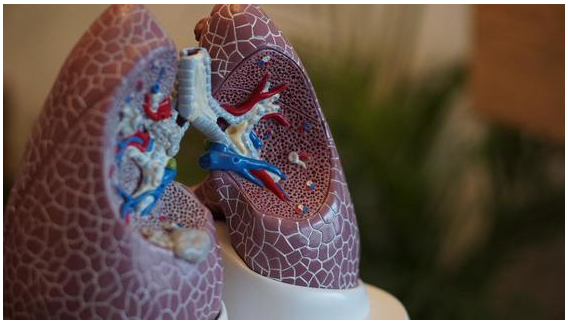
Mariaelena Pierobon, Associate Professor, School of Systems Biology, Applied Proteomics and Molecular Medicine (CAPMM), received $14,460 in funding from Inova Healthcare to test a novel sampling method for capturing immune activation and inflammatory responses within the tumor microenvironment of patients affected by gastroesophageal cancers.

More on her research

# IN THE NEWS

## Alumnus receives grant to study how metals cause lung cancer

*by Betty Coffman*



Mason biology alumnus John Pierce Wise Sr. recently received a $6.7 million grant to research and understand how metals disrupt

chromosomes and cause lung cancer, as well as ways to prevent or reverse the disease. Wise currently works as a professor in the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology at the University of Louisville. *Photo: Robina Weermeijer on Unsplash*

Full article

# Happening at Mason

## Nomination deadline May 25: Jack Wood Award for Town/Gown Relations

*by Traci Kendall*

In honor of former Mayor Jack Wood, the driving force for Town Gown relations between our university and its surrounding communities, the Office of Government and Community Relations presents this university/community-wide award program to recognize faculty, staff, students, businesses/not-for-profits, community members and elected officials/staff who demonstrate leadership in fostering mutually beneficial relationships between the university and the community. Those with community relations/outreach as a primary responsibility in their job description are not eligible.

To nominate yourself or someone else, submit the online form **by March 25**. If you have questions, contact Traci Kendall.

Submit a nomination

## Call for session proposals: Innovations in Teaching and Learning conference

*by the 2022 ITL Planning Team*




Mason's 14th annual Innovations in Teaching and Learning (ITL) conference is now accepting speaker and session applications. This event is an opportunity for the Mason community to discuss how teaching and learning is evolving at Mason, especially over this last year, and to exchange tips, strategies, tools, and resources with colleagues. Session proposals will be accepted through **Wednesday, March 4**. The conference will take place **Friday, September 30, 2022** from **9 a.m. to 6 p.m.**

Submit your session proposal




**Be the Match Tabling Event**

February 25, 2022 | 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. | Mason's SciTech campus: Katherine Johnson Hall and Colgan Hall

*Learn about the Be The Match organization and learn how you can become a bone marrow donor. A simple cheek swab will add you to the bone marrow donor registry.*

**Challenge of Biodiversity, 2022 Speaker Series - Beyond the Obituaries: Success Stories in Conservation**

February 28, 2022 | 5 to 7 p.m. | Virtual

*Join Dr. Nancy Knowlton, Sant Chair for Marine Science at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. To register, email Cheryl Rash Jones.*

**Sojourner Truth Lecture**

March 1, 2022 | 1:30 p.m. | Zoom

*Join African and African American Studies and Women and Gender Studies for their annual Sojourner Truth Lecture with guest speaker Dr. Jennifer Nash from Duke University. Registration required.*

**Staff Senate Meeting**

March 2, 2022 | 10 a.m. to noon | Zoom

*March's meeting will feature Carol Kissal, senior vice president for administration and finance, and Lester Arnold, vice president for human resources and payroll, to discuss Mason's Tier 3 financial management status.*

**Faculty Senate and Administration Welcome: Kimberly Jackson Davidson**

March 3, 2022 | 9 to 10:30 a.m. | Johnson Center Bistro

*Meet Mason's new University Ombudsperson, Kimberly Jackson Davidson. Register to attend no later than February 28, 2022.*

**See Full Calendar**

## Stay Connected

Read the College of Science's latest annual report

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