Mason SCIENCE

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Wednesday, March 15, 2023 **science.gmu.edu**

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Our piece of the pie

by Fernando Miralles-Wilhelm

To celebrate the recent Pi Day and give folks a break from my typical blog topics list, I'll share a few suggestions of how to better understand your piece of the pie.

It's simple, really. You can feed your need for big picture alignment and sense of belonging by being involved and invested in what's happening around you. And by sharing your feedback.

We have a few opportunities to become fully engaged; there are two big town halls approaching that I hope are on your radar to attend.

Mark your calendars for March 28 and April 6, 2023.

First is Mason President Washington's academic town hall. On Tuesday, March 28 from 3 to 4:30 p.m. in the HUB Ballroom, President Washington will connect with all Mason academic unit faculty and staff; we would like to encourage our Mason Science community to participate.

If you haven't gotten the chance to read the recently released Mason Strategic Direction document (view the accessible version), spring break is the perfect time to explore Mason's overall plan and details. I'm counting on us scientists to bring some good questions and insights forward.

All attendees are strongly encouraged to attend in person, schedule permitting. For those unable to do so, the President's town hall will be livestreamed through Zoom. The link, as well as the password, should any participants be prompted to enter one, are provided in this week's newsletter and calendar emails.

Then, on April 6, all Mason Science faculty, staff, and students-- please join us for our college's strategic planning town hall. I'm really excited to hear about the progress made thus far by the members of the working group and steering committee. We all owe these 'pie bakers' our gratitude for the many, many hours spent to date to get us to this point. Again, bring the questions and feedback to help further define our recipe for success.

Read full message



Dean's Student Excellence Awards applications open



The Dean of the College of Science is opening applications for the annual award search to recognize excellence by students in the College of Science for the 2022-2023 academic year. There are a variety of areas where you might identify excellence in a particular student. For example, you could nominate someone for excellence in graduate teaching; in publications, conference papers, or research; in speaking or lecture competitions; in community outreach for the Sciences, or for excellence in AJEDI engagement. Department chairs or their designates must submit nominations to Cody Edwards no later than **noon on March 24.**

Award information and requirements

Faculty requests for Fall 2023 Learning Assistants due April 3

Course proposals are now being accepted to work with Learning Assistants (LAs) in Fall 2023. LAs are undergraduates who work in College of Science courses to facilitate student learning in a variety of



settings. All first-time LAs participate in a weekly pedagogy seminar, and all LAs meet regularly with course faculty to prepare for the upcoming content in the course and discuss how everything is going with the students.

The deadline for faculty to apply to have LAs in their courses is **Monday, April 3, 2023**. After that, if your proposal is approved (which may be limited based on funding), students will be able to apply directly to your course, and you can interview and select the LAs for your course. (The student application will open on or around April 11, so if you know students who would be great LAs, please encourage them to apply.)

More on the request process

RESEARCH & DISCOVERY

Can Withaferin A be a viable cancer treatment option?

by Srinivas Siddharth Varanasi



Maushma Atteeq selected to try Ashwagandha when it was marketed as an adaptogen (an organic supplement to help relieve stress, combat anxiety, and aid in well-being). The Mason biology student noticed a drop in her mother's blood sugar levels upon consuming a smoothie containing Ashwagandha. Coupled with her awareness that the supplement may also have anti-inflammatory and anti-tumor properties, Atteeq wanted to see if these elements were connected.

Her curiosity led to a deep dive into the medicinal potential of Withaferin A—a steroidal lactone derived from Ashwagandha. The journal *Frontiers in Pharmacology* recently published her literature review titled "Evaluating anticancer properties of Withaferin A—a potent phytochemical."

Explore her work



Mathematics professor working on two interdisciplinary NSF funded projects

by Elizbeth Grisham

Padhu Seshaiyer, Professor, Mathematical Sciences, will work on two NSF funded projects. The first partners with CHSS associate professor Brian Levy to understand **inclusion challenges from social isolation during COVID-19**. The second includes researchers from the College of Public Health and School of Business to observe the **use of game-based multimodel peripheral biofeedback in a higher education setting**.

IN THE NEWS

Mason Scientist to reduce food bacterial contamination detection time

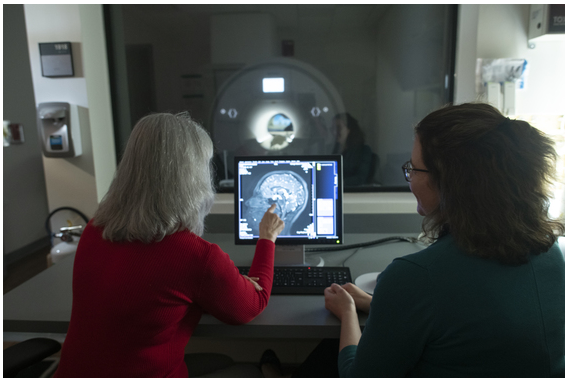


Food Industry Executive highlighted Mason Associate Professor of Infectious Diseases and Microbiology, Ramin M. Hakami who received a total of $35,000 in grants from Intellifoods Labs, LLC to continue examining methods to reduce the time to detect the presence of bacteria in food samples. “Current conventional methods of detection are time consuming and laborious,” said Hakami. “By optimizing the detection process and reducing detection time, we can better prevent spread of foodborne pathogens and provide a safe food supply,” Hakami added. *Photo by PHÚC LONG on Unsplash*.

Full article

Happening at Mason

Lunch and Learn with The Institute for Biohealth Innovation (IBI) and MRI Lab



Join the upcoming Lunch and Learn with the Institute for Biohealth Innovation and MRI Lab on **March 29, 2023 at noon in the Population Health Center Multipurpose Room.** Amy Adams, executive director of Mason's Institute of Biohealth Innovation (IBI), will share updates on IBI and resources available through IBI, including Biohealth Innovation and Virginia Bio. Jim Thompson, MRI director, and Susan Tozzi, MRI technologist, will discuss the types of research happening, ways to work with the fMRI, and give a tour of the MRI Lab. Lunch will be provided. This session will also be open to other colleges, **so please register early by emailing Rebecca Warden at rsutter@gmu.edu.** *Photo by Evan Cantwell/Creative Services.*



Update your Mason profile photo March 22

It's that time again. Creative Services Photography will be holding a FREE OPEN CALL photo session for faculty, staff, and administrators on **Wednesday, March 29, 2023 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the atrium of Katherine Johnson Hall**. Students are not eligible. You must register. This ensures that everybody who wants a portrait taken can get one. Sittings should take no longer than 15 minutes. Please try and adhere to the time slot that you signed up for. Wear solid colors and have your hair and makeup ready. *Photo by Leon Seibert on Unsplash*.

Register now



Share Commencement Speaking Opportunity with Graduating Students
Submission deadline: March 19, 2023
Mason is seeking graduating students who are interested in sharing their Mason journey and experience to serve as the 2023 Spring Commencement student speaker. Encourage your students to apply. Interested students should email their original five to seven minute speech to Alissa Karton.

Coaching for Inclusive Excellence Learning and Development Program: Strategies for Diverse Recruitment

March 21, 2023 | 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. | Virtual

The Office of Faculty Affairs & Development's Coaching for Inclusive Excellence (CoFIE) Program offers courses addressing strategies for recruiting, hiring, and retaining diverse faculty. If your unit wishes to schedule any of the CoFIE synchronous courses at other times or if faculty wishes to register for the Include U asynchronous course, email Millie Rivera. Don't forget to register.

Faculty Matters: Making Sense of Feedback, Responding to Peer Reviews

March 21, 2023 | 1:30 to 3 p.m. | Virtual

The Faculty Matters Workshop Series is designed to address key issues central to faculty development and success. The next workshop will focus on navigating feedback from peer reviews. Registration required.

Mason Science Series: Preparing for a New Normal: Making Mason and the Commonwealth More Resilient to the Impacts of Climate Change

March 21, 2023 | 4 to 6 p.m. | Country Club of Fairfax

Join the conversation with Jim Kinter, Professor of Climate Dynamics and Director of the Center for Ocean-Land-Atmosphere Studies (COLA) to discuss the role of the Virginia Climate Center to serve as a climate extension service to help communities in the Commonwealth increase resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Evening Under the Stars

March 21, 2023 | 7 to 9 a.m.

Join the next Evening Under the Stars for a public talk followed by telescope viewings, weather permitting. For the foreseeable future, all Evening Under the Stars events will be held both in-person and virtually. All Evening Under the Stars events are free to attend, and do not require registration, but donations are always appreciated.

Unit Town Hall with President Washington

March 28, 2023 | 3 to 4:30 p.m. | HUB Ballroom

All College of Science faculty and staff are encouraged to participate either in person or via Zoom. Passcode: gmu123.

College of Science Strategic Planning Initiative Town

April 6, 2023 | 1 to 2 p.m. | Exploratory Hall 3301

Join us for a Strategic Planning Town Hall where we will review key insights from stakeholder outreach activities, - Provide updates on our progress and a timeline for the remainder of the process, and - Engage in open dialogue to gain your perspectives and insights on the direction of the strategic plan. A Zoom link will be available for those who may not be able to participate in person and a recording will be shared after the meeting.

See Full Calendar

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