Mason SCIENCE

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Coded Bias prompts more inclusive science in society

by Fernando Miralles-Wilhelm

Last week I attended the on-campus screening of a documentary called Coded Bias, a story released in 2020 inspired by Joy Buolamwini, a researcher whose MIT Media Lab project uncovered findings leading her to explore racial bias in artificial intelligence (AI), specifically within facial recognition algorithms and their use in day-to-day life. (The film is now available on Netflix as well as in the Mason University library). The film offers thought provoking examples of what scientists and policy makers might consider as we strive to best and fairly integrate technology into society. Buolamwini's efforts, including subsequent research and policy advocacy, inspire intellectual curiosity and action. Watch the trailer.

The College of Science is a proud sponsor of these events, which support our priorities noted in our draft Inclusive Excellence Plan to create a more aware, inclusive, and thriving science and research community at Mason.

Although our schedules are jammed these days, I'm glad I took the time to attend as it really got me thinking...imagine the ripple effects this bias within the facial recognition code could have across a

number of industries and organizations who rely on it for proper identification, matching, and subsequent action. And what can we at Mason do to help these organizations better understand the technology and optimize its use within a social justice framework?

Read full message

MASON SCIENCE COMMUNITY

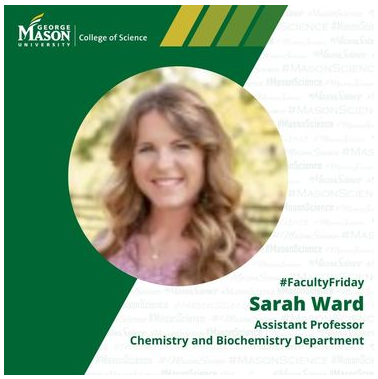
Mason graduate helps launch new degree program at Korean campus



by James Brian Colchao and Dorothy Kondal

James Brian Colchao, Assistant Professor, initiated the Computational and Data Sciences BS degree program at Mason Korea. An alumnus of both the Microbology, BS and MS programs, he is the sole faculty member for the news program, teaching all introductory courses. The courses are currently offered virtually to students at the Incheon Global Campus with plans to move to a hybrid in-person mode in January 2022.

More on Colchao



#FacultyFriday features new chemistry assistant professor

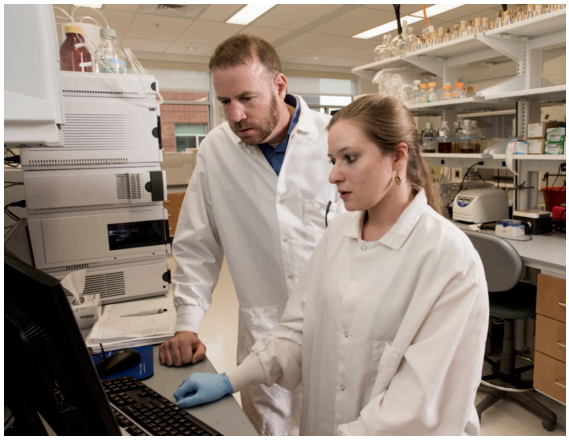
In honor of National Chemistry Week, we highlight Sarah Ward who joined the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry in August 2021 as an assistant professor of organic chemistry. Her research focuses on synthetic organic chemistry, examining the total synthesis of marine natural products, with cytotoxic properties against human colon carcinoma.

Ward's bio

RESEARCH & DISCOVERY

Mason researchers use scent analysis for COVID diagnostics

by Katie Maney



With COVID-19 continuing to spread throughout the world, there is a demand for rapid, noninvasive diagnostics. George Mason University researchers Robin Couch and Allyson Dailey, Chemistry and Biochemistry and the Institute of Biohealth Innovation, are working to answer that call with their research on volatile organic compounds (VOCs) for infectious disease detection.

More on their research

IN THE NEWS

Lovejoy says the state of the Amazon is worst it has ever been



Thomson Reuters Foundation News spoke to Thomas Lovejoy, University Professor, Environmental Science and Policy, on deforestation and other threats to the Amazon Rainforest and what needs to be done to protect it.

Read the article

Happening at Mason

Submit feedback on Mason's Quality Enhancement Plan by October 29, 2021

The university community is invited to provide feedback and suggestions on the full draft of Mason's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), Transformative Education through Anti-Racist Community Engagement. The purpose of the QEP is to improve student learning or the student experience in a specific way over the course of a five-year evaluative period. Find out more about the QEP.

Submit feedback



Events

American Society for Intercellular Communication (ASIC)
October 21, 2021 to October 23, 2021
This event offers informal exchange of ideas on emerging questions and cutting-edge developments in the field of Extracellular Vesicles (EVs), Extracellular Particles (EPs), and particulate carriers of extracellular RNA (exRNA) as biological mediators, regulators and diagnostic analytes.

"Cat's Out of the Bag: Risks to and from free-roaming domestic cats"
October 22, 2021 | 3 to 4 p.m.
Join the Department of Environmental Science and Policy's virtual seminar series and hear from Dan Herrera, an urban ecologist studying wildelife in Washington, D.C. for the last four years. Registration required.

Southern New Mexico and Western U.S. Dust Symposium
October 25, 2021, noon to October 27, 2021, 9 p.m.
This symposium, sponsored by New Mexico Department of Environment, NASA Applied Science, and George Mason University, explores advances in dust research and bridges to applications in public service for data, information and technology from research. Registration required. No cost to attend.

Nambia: Natural Resources, Equitable Development and Corruption
October 27, 2021 | 1:30 to 3 p.m.
Join us to hear keynote speaker Allen Muketela, 2021-22 Fellow from Namibia in the Community Solutions Program, in discussion with A. Alonso Aguirre, Chair, Environmental Science and Policy, and Shaazka Beyerle, Senior Fellow at TraCCC.

President Washington's Annual Academic Unit Visit
November 4, 2021 | 2 to 3 p.m. | Merten Hall 1201
The one-hour town hall will provide a brief 'state of the university' update and discuss how unit goals and strategies fit within the overall plan. President Washington also looks forward to hearing directly from you and encourages in person attendance for full participation. A Zoom webinar link will be provided via email before the event. Register to attend.

Picture a Scientist Screening and Discussion with Filmmakers
November 4, 2021 | 7 to 9:30 p.m.
Mason's College of Science and other colleges and schools presents a special screening of Picture a Scientist that features leading female scientists discussing the inequalities they have faced as they write a new chapter in

STEM for women.

See Full Calendar

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