Mason SCIENCE

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Wednesday, February 24, 2021 **science.gmu.edu**

In this Issue

- Message from the Dean
- Mason Science Community
- Research & Discovery
- In the News
- Happening at Mason
- Events

A message from the Dean

FERNANDO R. MIRALLES-WILHELM

Juntos perseveramos

by Fernando Miralles-Wilhelm

Last week the world raptly and virtually followed the progress of NASA's fifth Mars rover named Perseverance as it landed on the red planet to look for signs of ancient life and collect rock samples for further analysis here on Earth.

Like most big news these days, live coverage and landing commentary from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Southern California began that afternoon on NASA's own public TV channel, on their website and across social media. In fact, among the many firsts of this mission, NASA offered its first Spanish-language show to depict the planetary landing titled Juntos Perseveramos (Together, We Persevere). Those who watched learned of the Mars mission and the role Hispanic NASA professionals have had in its success. This realization hit home for me, as NASA played an important role earlier in my career as a scientist and allowed me to work towards the advancement of underrepresented students in STEM fields.

This Thursday afternoon, from 1 to 3 p.m., during our ScienceConnect research spotlight event, we

feature four of our scientists to briefly describe their respective work across the fields of COVID-19 vaccine development, climate change, sustainable ecosystems, and urban science, in the hope of inspiring our students and fellow researchers. In addition, we will highlight pathways and support opportunities for students to begin or further their respective research at Mason.

Read full message

MASON SCIENCE COMMUNITY

Climate Dynamics PhD grad joins NASA GMAO

By Natalie Burls

Abdullah al Fahad earned his PhD in Climate Dynamics from the Department of Atmospheric, Oceanic, and Earth Sciences in fall 2020. He recently accepted a position with NASA's Global Modeling and Assimilation Office (GMAO) where he will be working on air-sea-ice interactions, climate model development, high-resolution climate modeling, and annual to decadal climate prediction.

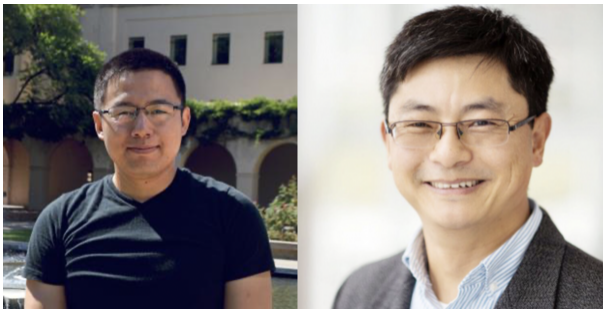
Full story

#FacultyFriday - Georgia Williams

Last week's social media #facultyfriday post highlighted the work of Georgia Williams, Assistant Professor for the Forensic Science Program. Her research focuses on developing and improving methods of extracting DNA from difficult or presumed low level samples in order to make DNA analysis more efficient and decrease casework backlogs. Her current research looks at improving the methods of DNA extraction from bone with hopes of then sequencing the DNA retrieved from these samples.

Read Williams' bio

RESEARCH & DISCOVERY



Mason scientists to develop GeoWeaver platform

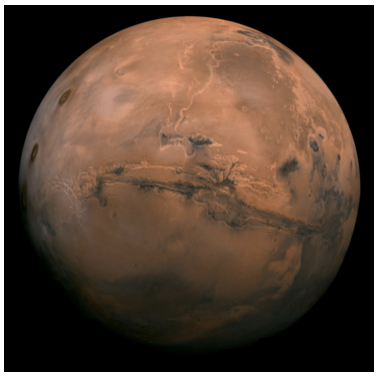
by Elizabeth Grisham

Ziheng Sun, Research Assistant Professor, Center for Spatial Information Science and Systems (CSISS), and Daniel Tong, Associate Professor, Atmospheric, Oceanic and Earth Sciences, are set to begin a project to make artificial intelligence (AI)-based Earth scientific workflows more shareable, replicable, reusable, and scalable.

Full story

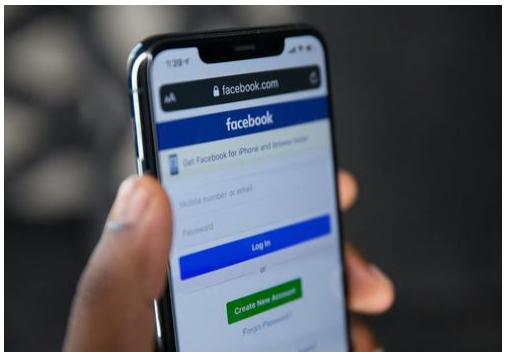
IN THE NEWS

Scientists observe Mars' changing climate



The *Academic Times* recently highlighted the work of Physics and Astronomy Assistant Professor Erdal Yiğit and his research team's study of Mars' carbon dioxide density and its possible effect on the planet's climate. Their work appeared in February's *Geophysical Letters*.

Full article

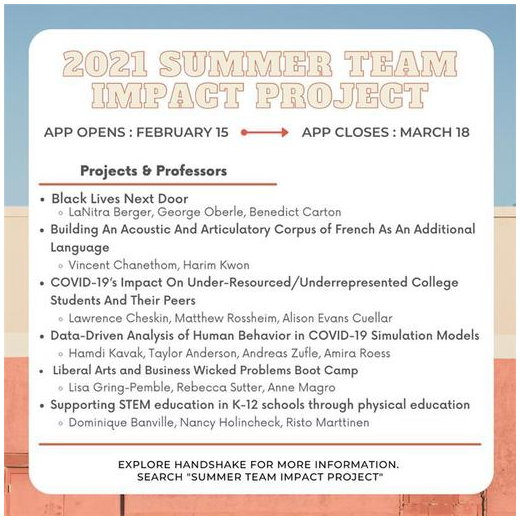


Mason among institutions to inform Facebook's Climate Science Information Center

The popular social media app, Facebook, continues to expand its efforts to ensure factually correct content regarding climate and environmental changes on its news feeds. Mason climate scientists are among those to help make that happen.

Full article

Happening at Mason



Mason Science faculty selected for the 2021 Summer Team Impact Project

Congratulations to the Mason Science faculty selected to coordinate one of the six 2021 Summer Team Impact Projects. Faculty members Hamdi Kavak (CDS), Taylor Anderson (GGS), and Andreas Zufle (GGS) will work with a team of undergraduate students on their study *Data-Driven Analysis of Human Behavior on COVID-19 Simulations Models.*

Learn more

Events

ScienceConnect 2021 (Virtual)
February 25, 2021 | 1 to 3 p.m.
Connect with Mason Science faculty, staff, and students. Hear research presentations from Aarthi Narayanan, Natalie Burls, Dieter Pfoser and Jennifer Salerno or join us for Trivia. ***Participants must*** *register* ***to get the link.***

Colloquium on Computational Social Science/Computational Data Sciences
March 5, 2021 | 3 to 4:30 p.m.
Hear Dr. James L Doti, President Emeritus and Professor of Economics at Chapman University, discuss "Benefit-Cost Analysis of COVID Policy Intervention at the State and National Level."

Galileo Science Cafe :Creating the Next Generation of Practicing Physicians and Medical Researchers - The Role of Physics in Medicine and Medical Education
March 11, 2021 | 7 to 9 p.m.
Join us for the next Galileo Science Cafe presented by affiliate faculty member, Edward Szuszczewicz.

The Future of Humanity in Space
March 17, 2021 | 6:45 to 10 p.m.
Michael Summers, professor of physics and astronomy, discusses how the use of space resources could propel human colonization throughout the solar system in the coming decades and beyond.

See Full Calendar

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