

THE S2P BRIEF

The quarterly newsletter of UC Riverside Science to Policy

WELCOME

Over the last few months we've been busy teaching our third cohort of graduate students how to be **trusted science advisors** and **effective science communicators** in the policy world. We have expanded our network to new legislative offices in the Riverside area, hosted webinars that have impacted the UCR and Inland Empire communities, and have started to plan exciting spring events. This newsletter includes updates on past and upcoming events, our fellowship program, and our outstanding alumni. With your continued support we have been able to accomplish great things...but we're just getting started!

Here's what's new in this issue:

- RECENT EVENTS
- FELLOWSHIPS
- ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT
- UPCOMING EVENTS
- DONATION STATION



RECENT EVENTS

PICTURE A SCIENTIST: REFLECTION, DISCUSSION, AND ACTION FOR WOMEN IN STEM

With the UCR Association for Women in Science, the UCR Library, and UCR Grad Success, we hosted a screening and discussion about the documentary *Picture a Scientist*. Attendees had the opportunity to screen the documentary, which follows the careers of several female scientists, highlighting the challenges they have overcome and the work that still needs to be done to support and uplift women in STEM.

We kicked off the discussion with a Keynote talk from **Sarah Brady, Ph.D.**, Deputy Director of the California Council on Science and Technology. The audience was then split into breakout rooms, each with a different moderator, to discuss the film and talk about what actions we can take to better support women in STEM at UCR. Moderators included **Dr. Suveen Mathaudhu**, Chair of the Materials Science and Engineering Program at UCR and Professor in Mechanical Engineering, **Dr. Erika Bustamante**, Assistant Vice President of State Government Affairs at Stanford University, **Dr. Kendrick Davis**, Associate Dean for Assessment & Evaluation and Vice Chair of Research, Psychiatry & Neuroscience at UC Riverside's new School of Medicine, **Dr. Julie Libarkin**, Professor of Environmental Science at Michigan State University and Director of the Geocognition Research Laboratory, **Evelyn Valdez-Ward**, a PhD candidate from UC Irvine, **Leticia Meza**, a PhD Candidate at UCR and Co-president of UCR AWIS, and **Annabelle Lolinco** a graduate student in Iowa State University's Chemistry Department and current co-chair of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee of the National Science Policy Network.

UC RIVERSIDE Library | UC RIVERSIDE Science to Policy | UC RIVERSIDE Institute for the Environment

**PICTURE A SCIENTIST:
REFLECTION, DISCUSSION, AND
ACTION FOR
WOMEN IN STEM**

FEBRUARY 18, 2021 | 3 PM TO 4:30PM | ZOOM
Register [here!](#)
Film will be available for screening for 72 hours before event

Agenda
Keynote: Sarah Brady
Film discussions with guest moderators:
Evelyn Valdez-Ward, Annabelle Lolinco, Erika Bustamante, Julie Libarkin,
Suveen Mathaudhu, Kendrick Davis
Panel with UCR Agents of Change:
Kathryn Uhrich, Chris Lynch, Deborah Deas, Jason Stajich, Ertem Tuncel, &
Gloria Gonzalez-Rivera

For more information, email us at s2p@ucr.edu or awis@ucriverside@gmail.com

RECENT EVENTS

PICTURE A SCIENTIST: REFLECTION, DISCUSSION, AND ACTION FOR WOMEN IN STEM

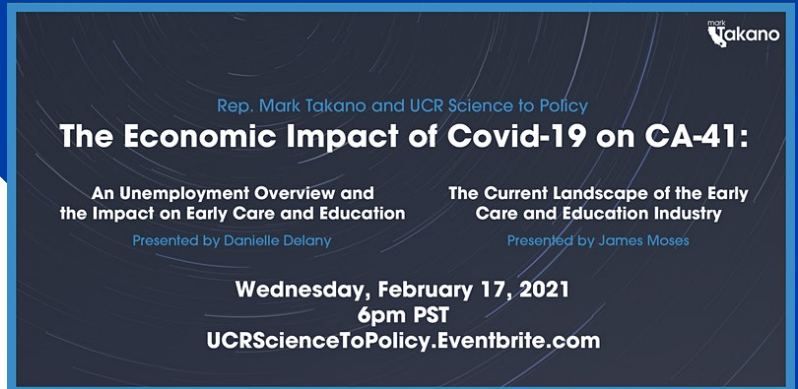
Following the breakout room discussions we shared our takeaways with the whole audience and then transitioned into a Q&A Panel with UCR Agents of Change. This panel included **Dr. Kathryn Uhrich**, Dean of the College of Natural & Agricultural Sciences and Professor of Chemistry, **Dr. Deborah Deas**, Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences and the Mark and Pam Rubin Dean of the UCR School of Medicine, and Professor of Psychiatry, **Dr. Chris Lynch**, Dean, William R. Johnson Jr. Family Chair, and Professor of the Bourns College of Engineering, **Dr. Gloria Gonzalez-Rivera**, Associate Dean for the Social Sciences and Professor of Economics within the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at UCR, **Dr. Ertem Tuncel**, Associate Dean of the UCR Graduate Division and Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering, and **Dr. Jason Stajich**, Chair of the Riverside Division of the UC Academic Senate and Professor of Microbiology and Plant Pathology.

We had a rewarding discussion about steps that can be taken to increase support for women in STEM at UCR and walked away with a list of concrete action items. We plan to host future discussions and form task forces to carry out these ideas. Many thanks to S2P Members Agnes Varghese and Morgan Dundon for working so hard on this event and helping to make it a huge success.

RECENT EVENTS

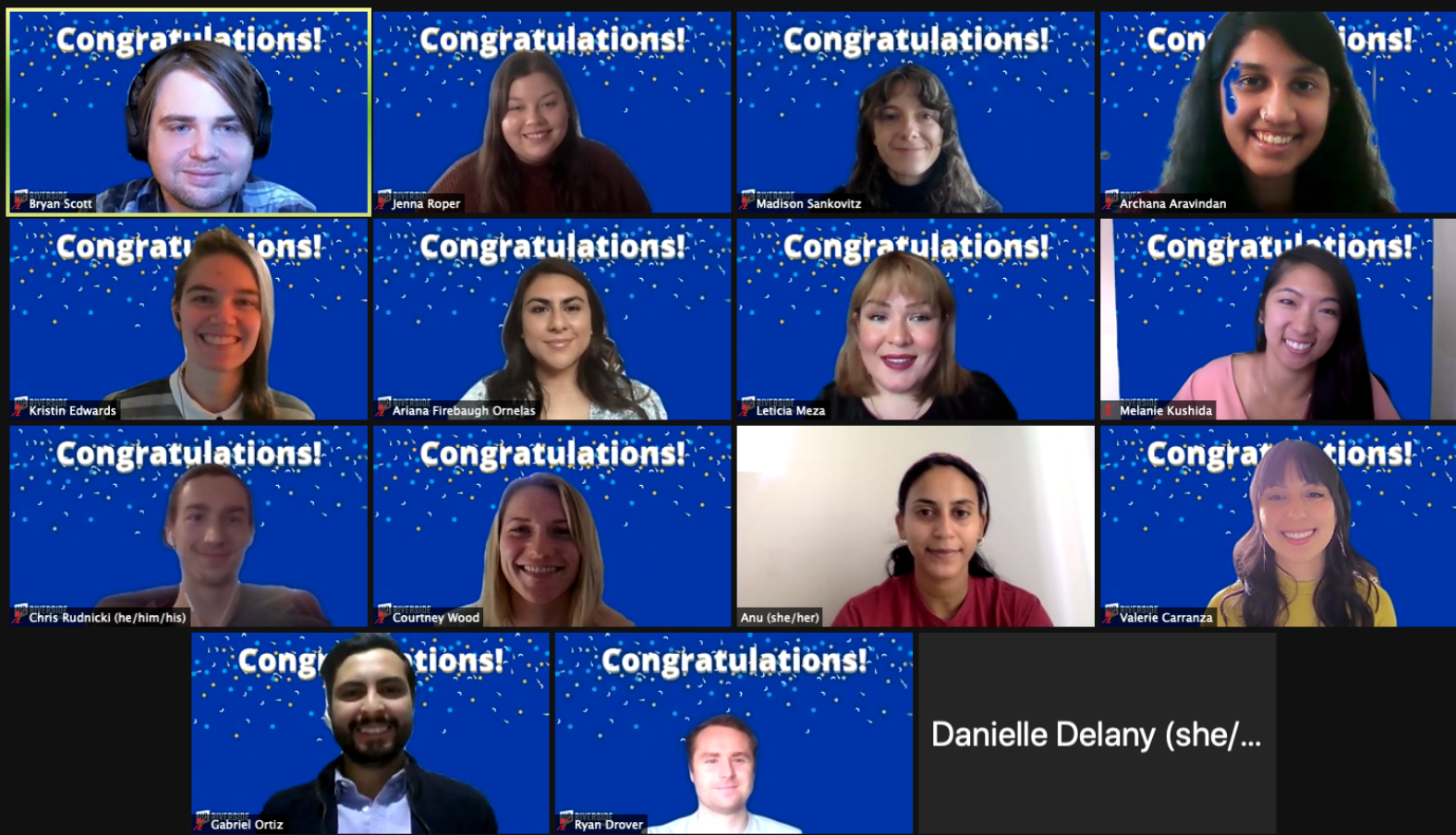
EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION WEBINAR WITH CONGRESSMAN TAKANO'S OFFICE

Through her fellowship in Congressman Mark Takano's office, Danielle Delany held a webinar focusing on the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on early child care and education. Danielle started off the event with an overview on unemployment and the impact on early care and education, and then James Moses presented on the current landscape of the early care and education industry. Then there was a panel discussion on child care and education with James Moses, Regional Director at Child Care Resource Center, Tammi Graham, Executive Director First 5 Riverside, Joseph Niet, Executive Director RCOE Early Care and Education, Deborah Clark Crews, Director of the Consortium for Early Learning Services, and JoAnn Lauer, Assistant Superintendent RCOE.



WILDFIRES WON'T WAIT

S2P Student Cabinet Member and 2020 Certificate Course Alumnus Thomas Dugger, a PhD Candidate in Materials Science and Engineering, organized and led an event focusing on California wildfires. UCR faculty experts Marko Princevac, Ph.D., Kelley Barsanti, Ph.D., and Akula Venkatram, Ph.D. pitched their wildfire-related research to California legislative committee staffers from the Assembly Natural Resources Committee, Senate Natural Resources Committee, Assembly Utilities and Energy Committee, Senate Environmental Quality Committee, and Senate Energy, Utilities, & Communications Committee.



RECENT EVENTS

2021 SCIENCE POLICY GRADUATE CERTIFICATE COURSE GRADUATION

On March 18, 2021, 15 students graduated from the Science Policy Graduate Certificate Course. This year's cohort included students from many disciplines across the UCR campus such as neuroscience, entomology, sociology, and mechanical engineering. Graduate students learned how to translate science into policy by producing policy memos, op-eds, policy analyses, and policy pitches. This was our second year holding the class virtually and we hope to have a hybrid in-person/virtual class next winter quarter. We are so very proud of every student who participated in the course and all of the instructors, speakers, guests, and students who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make this course a success. Congratulations everyone!



FELLOWSHIPS

With our Science Policy Fellowship Program we place PhD candidates in local offices as science advisors. This creates opportunities for graduate students to gain real-world experience and learn about the culture of political arenas, and forms strong connections between S2P and host offices. In our newsletter we will feature current and former fellows to see what projects they have worked on for our local legislators.

DERRECK CARTER-HOUSE, PH.D. PLANT PATHOLOGY SCIENCE POLICY FELLOW IN THE OFFICE OF CONGRESSMAN MARK TAKANO

I saw a need in a niche where I had some skills. I also recognized that by developing a tradition students could continue giving their time and talents represented a major win for young professionals as well as the representatives/policymakers they are assisting.

I studied veteran access to health care facilities in Southern California in Congressman Mark Takano's office. I generated a bioinformatic pipeline that can analyze US census data and provide customized answers about the denizens, I collaborated and provided a report to the UCR medical school in their VA grant writing efforts, I presented to Takano's office and UCR Government relations, then I was offered a position as a national coordinator to develop and lead a science policy internship program.

I have learned that we all have skills or natural abilities that can be utilized and magnified in service to others. Also, a major takeaway was that elected officials are very receptive to having PhD's on the team because we have the skills that can allow them to take on their dream projects in new ways.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

In every newsletter we will feature current and/or former students involved in Science to Policy.

In this issue we are pleased to feature Lorena Villanueva, an alumna from our 2019 certificate course cohort, and Parisa Parsafar, our former Chair of Curriculum and Events who was a key organizer of our first certificate class.

LORENA VILLANUEVA ALMANZA M.SC., PH.D. BOTANY AND PLANT SCIENCES

ACADEMIC EDITOR OF BOTANY ONE, AN ONLINE MAGAZINE ABOUT CURRENT RESEARCH IN BOTANY AND PLANT SCIENCES

Describe your graduate research in a couple of sentences.

I worked in understanding the ecological, genetic, and morphological differences between two species of palms of the genus *Washingtonia* that live in desert oases of the Sonoran Desert.

Why did you get involved in S2P?

I was interested in understanding how ecological research can be used to craft policies for biological conservation.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

LORENA VILLANUEVA ALMANZA M.SC., PH.D. BOTANY
AND PLANT SCIENCES

ACADEMIC EDITOR OF BOTANY ONE, AN ONLINE MAGAZINE ABOUT
CURRENT RESEARCH IN BOTANY AND PLANT SCIENCES

What do you do in your current position?

In my current position I do several things:

1. Find writers, commission original content, and edit their stories
2. Mentor Guest Contributors in Science Communication and Blogging Skills
3. Identify and attend scientific meetings about plant research
4. Translate into Spanish some of our stories
5. Write stories myself

What's your favorite part about what you do?

I really enjoy interviewing people and thinking about story ideas. I get to talk to scientists doing interesting research -- some of which I didn't know about! At the same time, I enjoy looking at how science affects people outside of the lab whether they are plant growers, people using plants for recreation, or people working in NGOs for the protection of plants. More and more, I realize that I also enjoy editing other people's work and making their stories shine.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

PARISA PARSAFAR, PH.D. DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

AAAS/SRCD EXECUTIVE BRANCH POLICY FELLOW AT THE
EUNICE KENNEDY SHRIVER NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CHILD
HEALTH AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE CHILD
DEVELOPMENT AND BEHAVIOR BRANCH

Describe your graduate research in a couple of sentences.

My graduate research focused on understanding the building blocks that support children's healthy social and emotional development. Broadly, my research sought to contextualize children's negative emotional experiences and understand how the ways in which children manage their negative emotions play a role in their overall health trajectories.

Why did you start S2P?

I got involved in S2P because I noticed a gap in graduate training and wanted to help address it. Graduate students in basic science receive very little training on how to leverage their research findings to impact the broader community, communicate their science to a broad audience, and convey its value to the general public. I see this as a detriment to the research community and was eager to help jump-start the S2P program because I believed in the added value this type of training could bring to PhD students and to the institution and scientific community as a whole.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

**PARISA PARSAFAR, PH.D. DEVELOPMENTAL
PSYCHOLOGY**

**AAAS/SRCD EXECUTIVE BRANCH POLICY FELLOW AT THE
EUNICE KENNEDY SHRIVER NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
CHILD HEALTH AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE CHILD
DEVELOPMENT AND BEHAVIOR BRANCH**

What do you do in your current position?

As part of my current fellowship role I am helping to manage part of a research portfolio at NICHD focused on children's social and emotional development that aligns with my doctoral training. I am also co-leading an initiative focused on identifying gaps in and addressing NICHD's investments in health disparities research, and am substantively involved in a few other initiatives focused on advancing the science of wellbeing and intervention research to improve mental, emotional, and behavioral outcomes for children in schools.

What's your favorite part about what you do?

A huge perk of my current position is the opportunity to be abreast of the most cutting-edge research in developmental science. I feel privileged in this role to be able to leverage my public health policy background, broad scientific experiences, and area of expertise to help drive the nation's research investments and priorities in a way that will advance developmental science and promote public health.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SCIENCE POLICY FELLOWSHIPS: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

UCR SCIENCE TO POLICY PRESENTS

SCIENCE POLICY FELLOWSHIPS

PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

THURSDAY, APRIL 29, 2021 5-6PM

UCR Science to Policy places current PhD students in local legislative offices as part-time science fellows focused on a single project.

Learn what it's like to be a fellow, how to get involved, and how to support future fellows.

For More info and to register go here: bit.ly/S2Pfellow



April 29, 2021 5-6pm

Our Fellowship Program offers current graduate students a unique opportunity to get hands-on experience working in a legislative office. During this part-time fellowship, students work exclusively on a single project and get to practice their skills being a science advisor to a policymaker.

During this event, current and former fellows will discuss what it was like to be a fellow and what work they did during their fellowship. The audience will have the opportunity to ask fellows questions about their work and experiences. Additionally the audience will learn about the Science to Policy Program at UCR and how to support the fellowship program.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER CLICK [HERE](#).

GIVE TO SCIENCE TO POLICY

WHAT WILL YOUR SUPPORT HELP US TO ACHIEVE?

- Expand our annual Science Policy Certificate Program for STEM graduate students -- a 10-week bootcamp on all things science policy!
- Organize events to bring STEM graduate students together with lawmakers to create policy change, aid professional development, and teach science communication skills!
- Place graduate students as visiting research fellows in policymaker offices!

DONATE

STAY CONNECTED WITH US:

S2P.UCR.EDU

@UCRS2P



PREPARED BY:

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