

# AWIS

ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN IN SCIENCE

*Los Angeles / Ventura County*

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## KECK GRADUATE INSTITUTE *of Applied Life Sciences*

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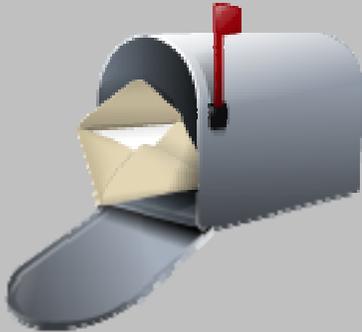
## AWIS STEMiNARS

One of the benefits of AWIS membership is access to exclusive content through AWIS National regarding career development and job searching. One of the tools available to registered AWIS members are STEMiNARS. STEMiNARS are a series of internet seminars that focus on topics such as making lateral career moves, interviewing techniques, and how to get the most out of mentoring. As the career paradigm for scientists changes, it becomes more necessary than ever for women to be aware of various career options and how to achieve your desired position. The STEMiNARS are available through the National AWIS website, [www.awis.org](http://www.awis.org), and can be viewed at your leisure. If you haven't become a member yet, you can also join at the National website in order to access this feature, along with many other member-only benefits!

# AWIS LA/VC Congrats! Column

The AWIS Congrats Column is now taking submissions...want to recognize yourself or another LA/VC AWIS Member? Just click below to send an email to:

[newsletter@awislavc.org](mailto:newsletter@awislavc.org)



## **Call for Committee Members**

Interested in becoming more involved in AWIS LA/VC but not sure where to start, or what may be available? Not to worry! Committee chair email addresses and committee are available on our website, [www.awislavc.org](http://www.awislavc.org). Check there for what duties committees need assistance with, and email the committee chair to let them know what you would like to help out with. You can dedicate as much or as little of your time as you would like – we just want you to get involved with your chapter! Our chapter's success is directly tied to member involvement, so help to make AWIS LA/VC a smashing success!

Congrats!

**Kimberly Short**, recipient of an NSF Graduate Fellowship

**Tracy Blois**, new temporary licensing associate at Amgen

**Grace Jiang**, new position in Operations at Amgen

**Welcome to our new members!**  
(joined between March and June 2011)

Barbara Alcaraz Silva

Liliana Elizabeth Caughman

Amber Kaplan

Johanna P Mullen

Sarah Paige Gibson

Nimna Samarawickrema Ranatunga

Katherine Bulgrin

Amanda Mishelle Jensen

Sarita Shree Mantravadi

Irene Maier

Chih Min Lew

Berenice Aguilar

Rachel Leah Britt

Yvette Lane-Newton



## **Interested in expanding your professional network? Looking for a job?**

LA/VC AWIS Chapter members can begin taking immediate advantage of the networking opportunities provided by this organization by getting "LinkedIn". This is also a forum used for job postings. Note, this opportunity is for members only. It is easy! Just follow these simple steps:

1. Join the LA/Ventura County of AWIS
2. Go to <http://www.linkedin.com/>
3. Sign in to your account or if you are new to Linked In, create your account
4. Search for the group "LAVC AWIS"
5. Select "Join this group" ♦

# AWIS Members Connect

Networking leads to success, so come on out and practice your networking skills at one of our social events! You get a chance to meet other outstanding AWIS women, and have a little fun while you practice those key networking skills. It's a win-win!

## Members Only Wine-Tasting Event

On Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, AWIS women gathered at the Wine Detective in Pasadena for our spring members-only event. Our afternoon began with instructions on how to use the innovative Enomatic wine dispensers. The machines allow for automated dispensing of different wines at any time! The Wine Detective boasts 48 wines on its tasting menu, so whether it was a sweet German Riesling or a bold Californian Pinot Noir, everyone discovered a new wine from around the world. Some even tried the delicious Cassanova di Neri Brunello di Montalchino, once named by Wine Spectator as "the best wine in the world"! With a showing from some of our newest members, the event brought together women throughout the Los Angeles area for a fun and relaxing afternoon!



## Family Hike at Solstice Canyon, Malibu

AWIS members, family and friends met up on Saturday April 9 to enjoy a morning of hiking in Solstice Canyon, an easy hike in the Santa Monica Mountains near Malibu. Members brought along snacks to share, and enjoyed viewing the waterfall and taking in the scenery while discussing careers and getting to know one another. Networking can be a lot of fun, as our members discovered during their morning! Be sure to join us at one of our many other social events!



## UPCOMING SOCIAL EVENTS

An Evening of Jazz at the LACMA –6pm July 22<sup>nd</sup>

Happy Hour at the Arsenal in West LA – August 17th

## *AWIS Coffee Clubs*

Coffee Clubs are hosted at UCLA, East Los Angeles, and City of Hope the second Tuesday of each month. Check our website for more details and look for fliers. If you would like to host one, let us know! It's a great afternoon pick-me up of caffeine and camaraderie.



# Welcome 2011-2012 Executive Board Members!

Many members voted in our June election, and we are pleased to announce that the executive board members for the 2011-2012 year will be:

**President: Tracy Blois**  
**Vice President of Operations: Erin Denny**  
**Vice President of Planning: Sophia Tsai**  
**Vice President of Communications: April Shiflett**  
**Vice President of Finance: Grace Jiang**

Congratulations, ladies! If you didn't run in this year's election, don't worry, there is plenty of opportunity for involvement. We always need members for our various committees and outreach programs. Your involvement is critical to maintaining a strong and successful chapter, and your help is needed! Check out our website, [www.awislavc.org](http://www.awislavc.org) today to find out more.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### NEXT MEETING

WE HAVE REGULAR TELEPHONE CONFERENCES TO PLAN UPCOMING EVENTS, BOTH PROFESSIONAL AND NETWORKING. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE PART OF THIS PLANNING COMMITTEE, JOIN US ON OUR NEXT CALL ON MONDAY, JULY 11<sup>TH</sup> AT 7 PM.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

CAMPUS COFFEE CLUBS – MONTHLY

AN EVENING OF JAZZ AT LACMA – 6 PM, JULY 22

HAPPY HOUR AT THE ARSENAL, WEST LA – AUGUST 17

### NETWORKING EVENTS

WE WILL BE PLANNING UPCOMING NETWORKING EVENTS – CONTACT US IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN HELPING TO ORGANIZE THESE EVENTS! GO TO [WWW.AWISLAVC.ORG](http://WWW.AWISLAVC.ORG) FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DETAILS.

## **AWIS LAVC Summer Planning Retreat**

*All are welcome to join us in planning our 2011-2012 calendar of events. All ideas from speed networking to career development panels to outreach in the community are encouraged! We want to hear from our members – be sure to attend!*

*Thursday, August 4th  
6pm Social potluck  
6:30pm Planning meeting*

Van Nuys Sherman Oaks Park  
14201 Huston St.  
Sherman Oaks, CA 91423

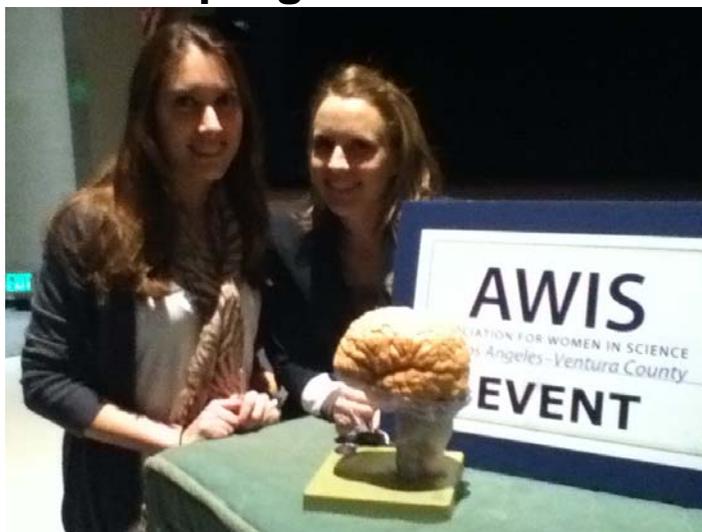
*Please bring a dish to share.*

Please RSVP at [www.awislavc.org](http://www.awislavc.org) by July 18.

*Questions? Email Tracy at [president@awislavc.org](mailto:president@awislavc.org)*

## AWIS LAVC Outreach program

The outreach program needs YOUR help! The AWIS LA/Ventura County chapter has launched an outreach program that is designed to spark young students' interest in science. Scientists from the AWIS organization and local universities visit middle and high school science classes to discuss the various opportunities in the scientific community. We sincerely believe our visit will help students explore the many different fields in science, as well as teach them the importance of networking at a young age. If you are interested in visiting a local middle or high school, please contact Allison Sargoy at [outreach@awislavc.org](mailto:outreach@awislavc.org).



### WIST Speaker Summary: Fail Forward, Embracing Risk

By **Alejandra Young**

Often, the initial feelings we most associate with failure and risk-taking are disappointment and disadvantage. Why is that we are so conditioned to see the negative side of things? In her presentation, Dr. Vohariwatt inspires us to recognize failing and taking risks as a way to achieve a fulfilling and rewarding life, not only professionally but also personally. Her insightful views about success present a positive and, more importantly, constructive outlook on challenges and adversity. In her message Dr. Vohariwatt emphasizes the idea that the most important keys to success are to have a dream, pursue it with perseverance, hard work and eagerness, and to be grateful for what we have already accomplished. This awareness will build a strong basis from which to take challenges and use them as opportunities to learn, innovate, create, inspire, and succeed no matter what inconvenience is initially presented by the adversity. First, our dream should fulfill our imagination and be rule by not limits. This allows us to encounter unlimited challenges without giving up and to push us out of our comfort zone as an opportunity to reinvent ourselves and to keep growing and becoming better in all aspects of our lives. Second, we will find out that pursuing our dreams and goals even in the presence of adversity will give us the mental strength needed to adjust changes and to exterminate our negative thinking. We will learn to ask ourselves, "what is the worst that can happen?" and then be able to reflect on the greater purposes in our lives. The most invigorating

message from Dr. Vohariwatt's presentation is that motivation can be found within failures, changes and adversities, and that being aware of what we can learn by facing challenges and taking risks will assure our triumph. The more we fail and take risk, the more confident, determined, focused, flexible, and empowered we will become.



*Pictured at left: AWIS LAVC members who attended the 2011 AWIS WIST conference held on May 14<sup>th</sup> in San Diego. This was the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual WIST conference, which provides networking opportunities and career development tools to women in the sciences and related fields. WIST is sponsored annually by the AWIS San Diego chapter.*

## **Biofuels Panel Discussion**

By Margaret Stava

Global events have been placing an increasing focus on the emergence of biofuels as a potential alternative to the fossil-based fuels we currently depend on so heavily. . Recognition is growing that the long-term viability of business depends on how quickly we develop and support solutions that use fewer resources and cleaner energy. That's what sustainable capitalism is all about: generating financial return in a long-term and responsible manner. AWIS was honored to host our recent panel discussion on the important topic of biofuels.

Ceres Inc. is an energy crop company that develops and markets non-food grasses for biofuel production. Richard Hamilton, CEO and President, and Julissa Sosa, Scientist discussed how Ceres is genetically modifying these non-food grasses to grow in areas that are generally not areas that would be conducive to growing food crops. Guatemala has made news recently because acreage given to palm plantations for agrofuel production has increased 146% from 2005 to 2010, and there is probably more that is unregulated. This is significant because these are areas once used to grow food crops, so what this means is that less food is being grown, and commodities prices are increasing. The people that are working these new plantations can't afford to eat. Ceres chose to work with a non-food crop that won't affect commodities prices and can be grown in unused unfertile areas (such as the desert) that can't be used for traditional farming, leaving fertile farm lands to grow food crops. This is bioengineering at its best, the grass is bring genetically modified to thrive in areas that are very arid and high in salt content. The ethanol fuel that is produced from these crops give better performance than current fuels, so your sports cars will have more pep, in addition to being more socially responsible.

Sapphire Energy creates renewable "green crude" oil to from algae production. Petroleum is actually ancient algae, scientists at Sapphire decided to grow their own algae and extract the oil from it now instead of waiting millions of years for the process to happen naturally. We had Yan Poon, Ph.D., Section Leader and co-founder and Tracy Duong, Scientist, discuss the exciting technologies being developed by their company. Algae grows quickly and needs only large amounts of sunlight and very little water. One of the best places to grow algae is in the desert, where the land is cheap and does not compete with food production. With only sunlight and CO<sub>2</sub>, Sapphire Energy is turning algae into Green Crude that can be refined into the three most important liquid fuels we use today: gasoline, diesel and jet fuel. Sapphire is also working to find the optimal breed of algae that will be high in lipid content in order to optimize yield per acre. .

Biofuel is worth the wait because there will not be a much of choice as the world's population increases along with the need for oil. Technology and innovation will drive the price of these biofuels down while fuel derived from traditional sources will continue to rise in price. Soon, the phrase "drill, baby drill" will belong to the antiquated past from which those fuels are derived.



*Pictured above: Attendees at the Biofuels Panel talk held at Ceres, Inc. in Thousand Oaks California. The panel talks were followed by questions and a networking session.*