

TOX QUARTERLY

The Official Publication of UCR Mini-ETOX GSA



UCR ETOX Friendsgiving Potluck Recap

The UCR ETOX Graduate Program had our annual Friendsgiving Potluck on November 30, 2017. It was a fun celebration with friends and great food! See below for pictures from the event!



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Dr. Tara Nordgren is an Assistant Professor in the Biomedical Sciences Department & Environmental Toxicology Program.

UCR ETOX Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Tara Nordgren

by Aalekhya Reddam

While Dr. Tara Nordgren received her doctorate in Cell Biology and Anatomy and completed her postdoctoral studies in Internal Medicine, her interest in the field of science started in a high school photography class. In a class where the purpose was to look at different ways of presenting work and modifying images, Dr. Nordgren did her presentation on stem cell technology and ever since then was fascinated at the prospect of impacting human health with innovative research. Currently, Dr. Nordgren's research interest involves investigating the role of omega-3 fatty acid-derived lipid mediators in inflammation resolution. Her long-term research goals include identifying the mechanism underlying bioactive lipids and harnessing their pro-resolution properties to prevent inflammatory diseases.

We also had the opportunity to sit down for a Q&A Session with Dr. Nordgren:

Aalekhya: Can you provide a summary of your research?

- 1. Dr. Nordgren:** I study how environmental factors that impact lung health and lung inflammation can lead to disease. The environmental factors that I typically look at are different aerosolized exposures such as agriculture and pollutant exposures. I also look at dietary intake, and specifically how omega-3 fatty acids in the diet impacts the inflammatory process.

Aalekhya: What inspired you to go into research?

- 2. Dr. Nordgren:** I am passionate about the translational aspects of my work. What really drives me is seeing how the things I find in the lab can translate to somebody else's health and life. I'm interested in the mechanistic aspect of how the environment interacts at the cellular level. Looking at how omega-3 fatty acids intake impacts lung health and they ability to resolve inflammatory exposure is a way I can convey that aspect to the community.

Aalekhya: What has surprised you the most about life in academia?

- 3. Dr. Nordgren:** I came from a career path where I thought I would be doing a lot of writing. So when I started in science, I thought it would be a huge departure from that. But as it turns out, writing is a huge part of my daily work and I am personally happy about that because I love writing and it gives me a creative outlet.

Aalekhya: What do you predict the next major research breakthrough in your field will be?

- 4. Dr. Nordgren:** What I study looks at a balance between pro-inflammatory lipid mediators that come from omega-6 fatty acids and pro-resolving lipid mediators that come from omega-3 fatty acids. What level of inflammatory exposure and the mechanisms in our body that cause the switch from inflammation to resolution is not well understood. When this this question has been addressed it can lead to several great discoveries that can lead to therapeutic benefits.

Aalekhya: What do you do outside of lab for fun?

- 5. Dr. Nordgren:** I really enjoy hiking. My three year old daughter has just started to get a feel for it, so my husband, her and I along with our two Australian-Shepherd mixes have started hiking together.

Aalekhya: What piece of advice do you have for graduate students?

- 6. Dr. Nordgren:** The best piece of advice I've gotten, which I think is applicable to anybody, in any time and in fields is "to not worry so much about making the right choice, but about making the choice right". You are going to have to make a lot of choices, whether it's related to a project, what you do with your degree or which part of a career you want to pursue. Focusing on making the right choice can lead a little bit to paralysis and anxiety, what is important is to focus on the choice you have already made and how you can work to develop stronger skills, build your expertise and make the most of it.

Upcoming ETOX Mini-GSA Events

by Sara Vliet and Stefani Andrews

UCR ETOX Volunteers Needed!

- **Science Olympiad (03/03/2018):** The Inland Empire Regional Science Olympiad is happening on March 3rd, 2018! This year, the Mini-GSA is running a "Poisons & Potions," event that will test students knowledge on chemical properties and topics related to toxicology. Check out the Spring newsletter for event photos!
- **Stork Elementary Annual Science Night (03/08/2018):** The Mini-GSA is also helping to run a booth at the Stork Elementary Annual Science Night on March 8th, 2018 from 6pm-8pm. This is a great opportunity to talk with kids (and their parents) about what you actually do as a scientist and toxicologist. It's not too late to help out, please email Tori (vmcgr001@ucr.edu) if you are interested!

UCR ETOX Related Events

- **ETOX Recruitment Day 03/02/2018 from 9:45 AM to 5:00 PM):** Volunteer students will hosts visitors for a day, helping them find their faculty meetings, giving tours, eating lunch with them, and answering their questions. Dawn will email final schedules for volunteers soon.
- **ETOX Mini-GSA PAINT NITE during Spring Break Week (03/26/18 starting at 7:00 PM)!**

Where: Old Spaghetti Factory, Downtown Riverside

Cost: \$27 - Payments to Stefani Andrews (Venmo: @Stefanini_90, or PayPal: Stefani.m.andrews@gmail.com. Cash is OK too). Email contact: sandr007@ucr.edu

Who: You and anyone else you would like to invite!

This is NOT a private event, and tickets may sell out. Hope to see you all there!

GSA Meeting Minutes: January & February 2018

by Connie Mitchell

- Campus Restaurant "The Barn" will undergo renovation - Start Date: TBA
- UCR Mini-GSA's have an opportunity to obtain Sustainability Certificates - R'mail sent.
- Student Recreation Center Summer '18 Fees: \$14 for 70 days. Previous years' passes still valid.
- Recycle your badge holders from conferences/workshops at the GSA office (HUB 203).
- Grad Bash will be on February 22nd at the Getaway Cafe - Check R'mail for start time.
- Annual UC Grad Slam Competition (apply by Feb 19th for preliminary rounds in April '18).

Future Conferences, Student Presentations, Student Achievements & Awards

by My Hua

- **UPCOMING MEETINGS (Dates and Abstract Deadlines)**
- SETAC 39th Annual Meeting in Sacramento, CA (11/4-11/8/2018) <http://www.setac.org/>
- 2018 Annual Teratology Society in in Clearwater, FL (06/23-06/27/2018) - Abstracts open: <http://www.teratology.org/meetings/2018/abstract-submission.asp>
- **STUDENT PRESENTATIONS**
- **My Hua:** Invited Poster - "Mining health effects associated with electronic cigarettes in online forums." SoCal Social Symposium, UC Irvine, May 2018
- **Connie Mitchell:** "Disruption of Nuclear Receptor Signaling Alters Triphenyl Phosphate-Induced Cardiotoxicity in Zebrafish Embryos" SOT, San Antonio, TX, March 2018.
- **Esther Omaie:** "Identification of Cytotoxic Flavor Chemicals in Top-Selling Electronic Cigarette Refill Fluids." SOT, San Antonio, TX, March 2018.

Student Presentations, Student Achievements & Awards (cont.)

by My Hua

- **STUDENT PRESENTATIONS (cont.)**
- **Sara Vliet:** "Niclosamide Exposure Induces Epiboly Delay during Early Zebrafish Development" SOT, San Antonio, TX, March 2018.
- **Lauren Walker:** "'Harm-Reduction Tobacco Inhibits Osteogenesis Via Misregulation of Survival Signaling Networks'" SOT, San Antonio, TX, March 2018.
- **STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS**
- **Scott Coffin** - Holds a leadership position as **Student Member of the Board of Directors for Setac Social**
- **Monique Williams** - Holds a leadership position as **SOT Graduate Student Committee Secretary**
- **Connie Mitchell: Published a paper** "Disruption of Nuclear Receptor Signaling Alters Triphenyl Phosphate-Induced Cardiotoxicity in Zebrafish Embryos" in **Toxicological Sciences.**
- **TRAVEL AWARDS**
- **Esther Omaiye received** UCR Stem Cell Core Travel Award for SOT 2018.
- **Connie Mitchell and Sara Vliet recived** SOT Graduate Student Travel Awards for SOT 2018.

CONGRATS TO ALL OUR WONDERFUL ETOX STUDENTS FOR THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS!!!

ETOX "Shout-Outs"

- A new space in our newsletter to recognize your ETOX peers, faculty or staff. Give them a "shout-out" here!
- "A sincere shout-out to Connie Mitchell for always having having hot coffee in the office, thanks for helping to power my PhD!" - Anonymous
- "Shoutout to Miranda for giving out sweet treats when we need them the most" - Anonymous
- "Shoutout to Marissa for letting us all rant to her and being a great listener" - Anonymous
- "Shoutout to Sara for being an amazing role model!" - Anonymous

Coming
Soon...ETOX T-
shirts!

Ordering details
will be released
soon.

Keep an eye on
your emails!



**Want to share any suggestions, announcements, shout-outs,
or your accomplishments for the upcoming Spring 2018
issue?**

Please email My (Crystal) Hua (mhua002@ucr.edu) or Sara Vliet (svlie001@ucr.edu).

Thanks!