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Hellman Fellowship Program Announces 2014-2015 Award Recipients

2014-2015 marks the 20th anniversary of the faculty fellowship program at UC San Diego

Eleven faculty members at the University of California, San Diego have been selected for the Hellman Fellowship Program for 2014-2015. The program provides financial awards to junior faculty members to support their research and scholarly work as they advance toward tenure. A total of \$487,500 was awarded to the 2014-2015 class of fellows.

“The Hellman Fellowship Program supports the excellence and strength of our faculty, sparking innovative thinking, activity and discoveries that benefit our community and society,” said Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. “We are grateful to the Hellman family and the Hellman Foundation for their investment in our scholars and transformational research.”

Now in its 20th year, the Hellman Fellowship Program was established by the late Warren Hellman and his wife, Chris, to provide financial support and encouragement to young faculty who show capacity for great distinction in their research and creative activities, and to enhance their progress toward tenure. To date, the Hellman Foundation has committed \$5 million to the Hellman Fellowship Program at UC San Diego and supported 263 faculty fellows.



Warren Hellman

The 2014-2015 class of Hellman Faculty Fellows includes:

Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences:

- **Jennifer Burney**, School of International Relations and Pacific Studies
- **Gloria Chacon**, literature
- **Kevin Lewis**, sociology
- **Simeon Nichter**, political science

Engineering, Biological and Physical Sciences and Scripps Institution of Oceanography:

- **Eric Bennett**, cell and developmental biology
- **Jelena Bradic**, mathematics
- **Eva-Maria Schoetz Collins**, physics
- **Amato Evan**, Scripps Institution of Oceanography
- **Drew Hall**, electrical and computer engineering
- **Chambers Hughes**, Scripps Institution of Oceanography
- **Patrick Mercier**, electrical and computer engineering

Past fellowship recipients have also used the award to expand opportunities for students.

Rommie Amaro, a 2012-2013 fellow and assistant professor in the department of chemistry and biochemistry, used the award to launch a new research-oriented outreach initiative in her lab called BioChemCORE. Among the program's first middle and high school students to participate was Eric Chen, who went on to win the grand prize in the 2013 Google Science Fair, as well as the 2013 Siemens Competition in Math, Science and Technology and the 2014 Intel Science Talent Search. Most recently, Chen shared with President Barack Obama his research of new approaches to fight influenza during the White House Science Fair in May.

"UC San Diego's Hellman fellows are exceptional young faculty members of great promise who have the ambition, creativity and intellectual curiosity to make significant contributions to our campus and greater community," said Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Suresh Subramani. "Funding for early-stage research and scholarly projects is critical to ensure that they have the opportunity to reach their full potential."

Current fellow Eric Bennett, assistant professor in the department of cell and developmental biology, is focused on understanding how defective proteins are targeted for degradation within cells. The central idea, he said, is that increasing the cell's ability to selectively remove poorly made or aggregation-prone proteins will be broadly beneficial in delaying a variety of aging-associated disorders. The Hellman fellowship will provide support to acquire essential preliminary data, and build the momentum needed for his lab to secure more long-term funding.

"My long-term research goal is to understand the basic mechanisms controlling protein quality control pathways and how these mechanisms can be leveraged to combat aging-associated disorders," said Bennett. "The Hellman fellowship will assist my lab's pursuit of this goal."

For more information about the Hellman Fellows Program, visit
academicaffairs.ucsd.edu/faculty/awards/hellman.

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