Meet the 2023-2024 Science Communication Fellows

The fellows, chosen from each department, will cover the news happening in each of the School’s four departments.

Friday, January 26, 2024

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UCI Physical Sciences Communications



The 2023-2024 UC Irvine School of Physical Sciences Science Communication fellows. Clockwise from upper left: Hana Schiff, Gulnaz Shalgumbayeva, Rain Talosig, Alice Vo.

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The UC Irvine School of Physical Sciences is pleased to introduce its four new science communication fellows. The fellows work with their departments as well as the Physical Sciences Communications office to cover all the goings-on at the School, research-related and otherwise. This includes creating informative graphic posts for department social media accounts as well as learning how to write science news stories. Founded four years ago, the fellow program is already helping participants develop skills that continue to serve them after leaving UCI. Brooke Carpenter, the 2022-2023 fellow for the UCI Department of Chemistry, received mentoring in science writing and recently secured a full-time science writing position at a chemical company in her home state of Mississippi.

The 2023-2024 Science Communication Fellows:

Gulnaz Shalgumbayeva – UCI Department of Earth System Science

Gulnaz Shalgumbayeva is a first-year Ph.D. student in the UCI Department of Earth System Science. “I’m working in Professor Isabella Velicogna's lab focusing on analyzing and modeling satellite observations, including those from NASA’s GRACE satellite mission,” said Shalgumbayeva. “As a SciComm fellow, my main objective will be to highlight the unique interdisciplinary nature of our department. I’d like to showcase how the Department of Earth System Science isn't just geared toward understanding the Earth's processes in isolation, but is also about exploring how these processes are interconnected with other fields, such as biology, chemistry, physics and social sciences.” As a fellow, Shalgumbayeva will engage actively in various department events, collaborate with faculty and connect with other students so she can learn about their research. “My goal is to inspire future scientists and students by demonstrating the vital nature of Earth System Science,” Shalgumbayeva said.“By illustrating how our department contributes to solving real-world problems, I want to generate more attention and interest in the field.”

Hana Schiff – UCI Department of Physics & Astronomy

Hana Schiff is a third-year Ph.D. student working with Professor Judit Romhanyi in the UCI Department of Physics & Astronomy. “Right now, I’m working on theories of altermagnets, which are materials that have a new fundamental type of magnetism,” Schiff said. As a returning science communication fellow, Schiff hopes to highlight research groups she didn’t get to cover as a first-year fellow. “I hope to create content that sheds light on the experience of being a physicist – its ups and

downs, and on passing on advice to our younger peers," Schiff said. "Of course, I will do my best to remind everyone of the great events we have going on, too, and on my own end I hope to improve my media skills – to hone in more on photography skills, and also to begin dabbling in videography." Schiff described how she thinks music and art are crucial for understanding ourselves and the world, and that she hopes the media she creates as a fellow will inspire a feeling of connection between her followers and the universe around them.

Rain Talosig – UCI Department of Chemistry

Rain Talosig is a fifth-year Ph.D. student researching inorganic chemistry in the lab of Professor Joe Patterson in the UCI Department of Chemistry. "I'm researching metal-organic molecules and their growth using electron microscopy and X-ray scattering," said Talosig, who thinks science communication is key for helping make science accessible to a large audience – something she believes can help people from underrepresented groups picture themselves in science and higher education. "In my time as a SciComm fellow, I aim to highlight DEI stories in research, and I also want to work with graduate students and professors to enhance their social media literacy skills so they can foster a greater scientific network outside their home institution," Talosig said.

Alice Vo – UCI Department of Mathematics

Alice Vo, also a returning fellow, is a fifth-year Ph.D. student in the Mathematical Computational and Systems Biology Ph.D. program in the lab of Professor John Lowengrub in the UCI Department of Mathematics. "My research is focused on the mathematical modeling of how cancer responds to radiotherapy treatment, with particular attention on tumors like glioblastoma," said Vo. You'll know Vo is working to tell the story of a UCI Math event if you hear the sound of a camera shutter. "I want to practice portrait and event photography," said Vo. "I hope to try and give back to the department while pursuing my interest in photography and in sharing stories. I'd also like to share what the graduate students and faculty of the UCI math department do together socially and professionally, and I intend to help popularize information on their research and outreach." Vo wants to give her followers a glimpse into the people leading projects, organizations and events in her department. "Some unsolicited advice," said Vo. "No matter how busy you get, remember to make something for yourself, whether that be your bed, your food or your art."

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