



UCLA  
SCIENCE  
OUTREACH  
SYMPOSIUM

*“Building SciComm Skills and Community”*

**Friday October 20, 2023**

**California NanoSystems Institute**

SciComm Workshops (Registration Required)	10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Lunch For workshop attendees	12:00 p.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Check-in & Coffee	12:30 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Welcome Address	1:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.
Plenary Session Science Outreach at UCLA	1:15 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Coffee	
Tabling & Networking Fair Concurrent flash talks on the CNSI lobby media wall	2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Professional Panel <i>Why Do Science Outreach?</i>	3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Closing Remarks Excellence in Science Outreach Awards	4:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Networking Happy Hour Food and drinks will be served	5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

**RSVP HERE: [tinyurl.com/ucla-sci-outreach](https://tinyurl.com/ucla-sci-outreach)**

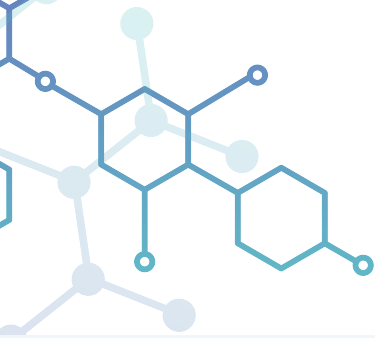
UCLA

Brain Research Institute

UCLA

Graduate Programs  
in Bioscience





# Welcome Message

To the UCLA Science Outreach Community,

Thank you for attending the second annual UCLA Science Outreach Symposium! The Symposium celebrates groups and individuals at UCLA who work to make science accessible to the public, and showcases the broad array of science outreach work that is done on campus. Our theme this year is “Building SciComm Skills and Community”, and therefore we have designed a program to focus on connecting individuals interested in science outreach from all corners of campus; to demystify the skills pertinent to science outreach; and to illuminate opportunities to get involved in science outreach.

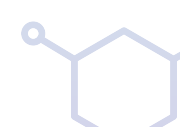
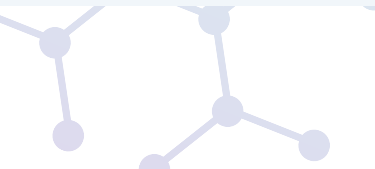
We hope you enjoy the program, and that you take this opportunity to forge new connections, grow your passion for science outreach and, above all, learn something new!

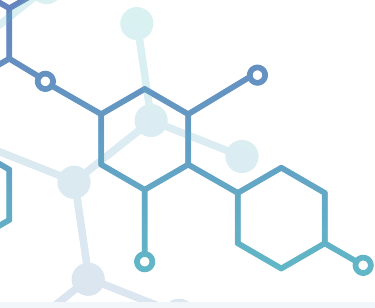
# Our Sponsors

The UCLA Science Outreach Symposium would not be possible without the generous support of multiple UCLA departments and institutes that recognize and ardently believe in the value of science outreach work. We sincerely thank the **Brain Research Institute** and the **Graduate Programs in Bioscience** for generously underwriting the program; and we sincerely thank the **California NanoSystems Institute** for generously sponsoring the venue space and providing event planning assistance. The entire UCLA Science Outreach community appreciates your support!

Special thanks to Drs. Rita Blaik (CNSI), Gregory Payne (GPB), and Felix Schweizer (BRI) for enthusiastically believing in and supporting our vision.

We also thank Mitchell Mangoba, Patricia Lowe, and Ethan Snook for their incredible administrative support.





# SciComm Workshops

10:30am - 12pm

Lunch 12pm - 12:30pm

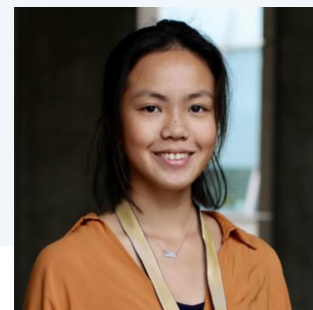


## SciComm Visualization

## CNSI 5th Floor Presentation Space

The visualization workshop offers a hands-on experience with Adobe Illustrator and Canva. This workshop is designed for beginners and expects no previous knowledge of either platform. Applications include making digital illustrations to explain your research, creating an image of your experimental design for your slides/your manuscript, or simply learning the basics of digital drawing!

**About the instructor:** Kayla Lim is a scientist and artist who is passionate about both making science more accessible through visualization and creating experiences that empower people to engage more with science. Through facilitating workshops and freelance work, she helps fellow scientists leverage design principles in their work to create clear visual solutions that effectively communicate research findings.



## The Basics of Science Writing

Workshop A: Executive Conference Room, 3rd Floor CNSI

Workshop B: Directors' Conference Room, 3rd Floor CNSI

During the writing workshops, students will learn the basics of and practice science writing for the public. How do you simplify your research to describe it to a non-scientist or non-expert audience? These workshops focus on this question and offer writing exercises for scientists. No preparation or past experience is needed. Join us to think creatively and practice science communication through fun writing exercises!

**About the instructors:** John Schranck holds a PhD in comparative literature and is a lecturer in the Writing Program at the University of California, Santa Barbara. An avid interdisciplinary whose work lies at the intersection of writing, sound studies, music and the sciences, his teaching includes "Science Writing for the Public," "Writing for Health Professions," and "Neurohumanities: Mind, Brain Memory and the Musicoliterary."



**About the instructors:** Amanda Stansell is a lecturer in the UCSB Writing Program, where she has taught science and engineering writing since receiving her Ph.D. from UW-Madison in 2003. Her curriculum development at UCSB includes a new class, "Science Writing for the Public," as well as a new track in Science Communication for the Professional Writing Minor. She conducts research in the field of Writing Studies and has edited two collections of scholarly articles. Her program profile on the Science Communication minor will be published in Composition Forum this fall.

# Plenary Session

## Science Outreach at UCLA

1:15pm - 2:30pm  
CNSI Auditorium



Jon Kovach



Douglas Barrera, PhD



Vidya Saravanapandian, PhD



Alison Hewitt

### JON KOVACH - Regional Director of the California Science Project, UCLA Center X

Jon Kovach has been working in Los Angeles for over 20 years as a classroom teacher, instructional coach and a professional development creator and facilitator in science education. Currently, Jon is supporting multiple School Districts with their vision of science instruction and three dimensional learning. He is also a training associate for Adaptive Schools which helps schools and organizations navigate complex systems through building collaborative adult groups. Jon is supporting science outreach with many schools and departments at UCLA, the California Department of Education, Green Ninja Publishing and the University of Pittsburgh.

### DOUGLAS BARRERA, PHD - Associate Director for Faculty & Community Engagement, UCLA Center for Community Engagement

Dr. Douglas Barrera is the Associate Director for Faculty and Community Engagement with the UCLA Center for Community Engagement. He oversees the Astin Community Engaged Scholars program and the university's Collaboratory site, teaches classes in the Community Engagement & Social Change subject area, facilitates faculty development, and builds relationships with community-based organizations for the center and its programs. Dr. Barrera has published on student development through community engaged learning, the interdependence of higher education and local communities, and models of critical community engagement. He is co-author of the Council of Europe publication, *Advancing Democratic Practice: A Self-Assessment Guide for Higher Education*. He serves on the editorial board for *Collaborations: A Journal of Community-Based Research and Practice*. Dr. Barrera received his Ph.D. in Education from the University of California Los Angeles.

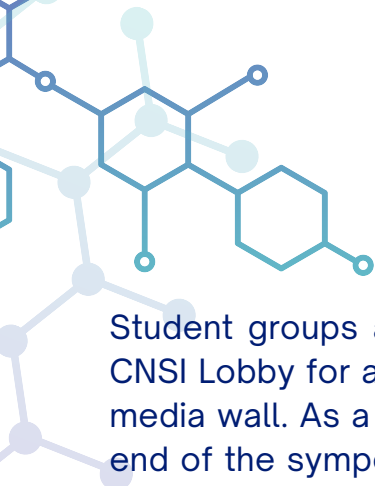
### VIDYA SARAVANAPANDIAN, PHD - Postdoc. Researcher, Neuroscience Outreach, BRI, UCLA

Vidya Saravanapandian graduated with a Ph.D. in Neuroscience from UCLA and an M.S in Biotechnology from Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani, India. She is currently a postdoctoral research fellow in the laboratory of Dr. Peyman Golshani at UCLA. Vidya is passionate about studying brain development and exploring ways to understand and treat neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs). Her research investigates changes in sleep physiology in NDDs and how these changes may contribute to poor cognitive and developmental outcomes, and bridges clinical research and research in animal models to understand NDDs. Outside of research, Vidya serves as a neuroscience outreach coordinator and has been closely working with the LAUSD schools to bring neuroscience education and awareness to K-12 children in low-income/low-opportunity communities around the Los Angeles neighborhoods. In her free time, Vidya loves baking and exploring new hiking trails.

### ALISON HEWITT - Senior Media Relations Officer, UCLA Strategic Communications

Alison Hewitt is a senior media relations officer in UCLA Strategic Communication's Office of Media Relations. She works closely with journalists to promote UCLA work, and collaborates primarily with UCLA's faculty studying the environment and climate change. She also works on topics related to the humanities, including English, foreign languages, linguistics and classics; UCLA institutional events like commencement and Volunteer Day; and veterans. She has worked at UCLA for 15 years, and came to the university after earning an M.A. in journalism and working as a journalist at Los Angeles-area newspapers for 5 years.





# Tabling & Networking Fair

2:30pm - 3:30pm  
CNSI Lobby



Student groups and outreach organizations from across campus will be present in the CNSI Lobby for a Tabling and Networking Fair! Flash talks will be held on the CNSI lobby media wall. As a scavenger hunt activity, we will be raffling off souvenir tote bags at the end of the symposium (around 5pm) to those who collect a sticker from **ALL 14 TABLES** by mingling with the group representatives. Come to the check-in desk to enter your name in the raffle if you collect stickers from all of the tables! Come learn about the incredible work led by students and on-campus organizations across UCLA.

## Participating Groups

*Add your stickers for the scavenger hunt here!  
Visit the check-in desk if you collect them all.*



**Science Policy**  
GROUP at UCLA

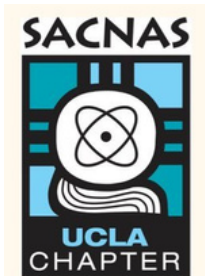


**OCDS**  
Organization for Cultural Diversity in Science

**BRI-SURE**



**UCLA Project  
Brainstorm**





# Professional Panel

## Why Do Science Outreach?

3:30pm - 4:30pm

CNSI Auditorium

During the Professional Panel, we will hear from three alumnae of UCLA graduate programs, all of whom were engaged in science outreach -- from education to writing to policy -- during graduate school. Our panelists will discuss how engaging in outreach informed their post-PhD careers, sharing experiences and insights from their own career journeys.



### RITA BLAIK, PHD

Director of Education, CNSI; Co-Director, SciArt Nanolab

Rita Blaik is a STEAM communication specialist. She received a PhD in Materials Science & Engineering from UCLA (GoBruins!), and she is also an exhibiting artist having shown her work both locally and internationally. She is currently the Director of Education at the California NanoSystems Institute, where she collaborates with UCLA faculty and students to develop nanoscience, professional development, and STEAM-based content for audiences ranging from young kids to post-doctoral researchers and early-stage faculty. She's also a faculty member at Art Center College of Design, teaching courses at the intersection of science, engineering art, and design.



### KATE FEHLHABER, PHD

Vice President, MedEd

Dr. Fehlhaver received her PhD in Neuroscience from UCLA in 2017, where she studied the molecular mechanisms of the first synapse of sight. During her graduate career, she founded Knowing Neurons, a creative education website dedicated to making neuroscience more accessible to the general public. Knowing Neurons won the 2016 and 2022 Next Generation Award from the Society for Neuroscience, has been featured in Forbes magazine, and is currently listed as #3 on Feedspot's Top 90 Neuroscience Blogs. Dr. Fehlhaver joined the independent medical education company The Fundingsland Group in 2018. As Vice President, Global Education Strategy and Operations, Dr. Fehlhaver creates compelling, compliant, and effective peer-to-peer education driven by large-scale clinician surveys to address gaps in clinical knowledge, opinions, and practice patterns. She believes that continuing medical education is fundamental to helping doctors make the best decisions for their patients. In her free time, Kate enjoys yoga, cycling, tennis, piano, ukulele, photography, and going on adventures in her campervan with her family.



### ZOE GUTTMAN, PHD

Policy Analyst, CA State Sen. Henry Stern

Zoe Guttman earned her Ph.D. in Neuroscience from UCLA, where she investigated why people make choices that are not always in their best interest. Currently, she is a Policy Analyst with California State Senator Henry Stern, where she works on legislation for a range of policy areas. She is also an Associate Editor-in-Chief of the Journal for Science Policy & Governance, as well as the Research and Strategic Growth Consultant for the California Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies (CBHA). Prior to her current positions, Zoe was a California Council on Science and Technology (CCST) Science and Technology Policy Fellow in the office of Senator Anthony Portantino. She has held previous positions as a Consultant with the California Senate Democrats and a Science Fellow with the Little Hoover Commission. Zoe founded the Science Policy Group at UCLA and started various courses and award programs to empower other scientists interested in making science more accessible to policymakers and the general public.

# Excellence in Science Outreach Award and Closing Remarks

4:30pm - 5:00pm  
CNSI Auditorium



The inaugural UCLA Excellence in Science Outreach Award recognizes individuals from the UCLA community who have shown exceptional dedication and contributions to science outreach within and/or beyond the UCLA community, especially in promoting equity and inclusion in science. This year, four recipients from various career levels were nominated and selected for their work in science communication, inclusion in science, and the promotion of training opportunities in STEM. Please join us in celebrating the recipients' accomplishments!



Brianna Ceja



Megan Chappell



Alexandra Arnold



Jean-Luc Margot, PhD

## Brianna Ceja, Undergraduate

I am Brianna Ceja, a third year civil engineering major involved in an organization called Society of Latinx Engineers and Scientists (SOLES). For the past two years, I've been heavily involved in the outreach efforts done by SOLES for underrepresented minorities at local schools in LA. Our mission is to encourage and inspire the next generation of Latinx STEM leaders and scholars, despite any challenges they may face due to social or economic reasons. During this past school year, SOLES was able to provide free resources to over 800 students from middle schools and high schools that will help them on their path to higher education.

## Megan Chappell, Graduate Student

Megan Chappell (she/her) is a Neuroscience PhD Candidate and NSF Graduate Research Fellow in the laboratory of Dr. Lindsay De Biase, where she investigates how astrocyte-microglia interactions shape early postnatal neurodevelopment. Megan serves as the founder and president of CELL Scholars, a UCLA science outreach organization which provides scholarship-sponsored early research experiences in UCLA laboratories for high school students from underrepresented backgrounds. Through her work with CELL Scholars and as the publicist for the Biological Sciences Council, Megan is dedicated to increasing the accessibility of science and removing barriers to entering STEM fields.

## Alexandra Arnold, Graduate Student

Alexandra Arnold (she/her) is a Ph.D. Candidate in the department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences, where she is a graduate fellow of Center for Diverse Leadership in Science and was awarded a Eugene V. Cota-Robles fellowship and the UC Office of the President's Dissertation Year Fellowship. Her Ph.D. research investigates how temperature, evaporation, and precipitation evolved in the southwestern U.S. since the Last Glacial Maximum, roughly 20,000 years ago, by using geochemical proxies in concert with climate modeling. Alexandra was awarded the UC President's Award for Outstanding Student Leadership for her work creating the student-led outreach program Environmental Justice and First Nations, which promotes the recruitment and retention of Indigenous students in STEM. She was also a co-founder of Society of Women Geoscientists, a community created to help make the geosciences a more diverse and inclusive space, and served as the outreach chair of the AOS department for the three years.

## Dr. Jean-Luc Margot, Faculty

Jean-Luc Margot is a professor in the UCLA Department of Earth, Planetary, and Space Sciences and the UCLA Department of Physics and Astronomy. He is a planetary astronomer who conducts research on the properties of planetary bodies with a variety of spacecraft and telescopes. His research interests include the dynamics and geophysics of planetary bodies, radio and radar astronomy, and SETI. Dr. Margot received a B.S. in electrical engineering in 1993 in Belgium and a Ph.D. in astronomy in 1999 from Cornell University.



# Symposium Organizers



## LAUREN WAGNER - Chair, Symposium Planning Committee

Lauren Wagner is a Neuroscience PhD candidate at UCLA, where she uses magnetic resonance imaging and behavior to understand the neural bases of language development in infancy. Lauren is passionate about discovering the secrets of the brain's critical and sensitive periods for language-learning. Outside of the lab, she serves as Editor-in-Chief of the neuroscience education platform Knowing Neurons, where she oversees a talented team of science writers and editors. As Chair of the Science Diplomacy Committee at the National Science Policy Network, Lauren also creates training opportunities in science policy and diplomacy for early-career scientists across the United States and globally. Lauren received her bachelor's degrees in Neuroscience and Linguistics from the University of Texas at Austin.



## MELIS CAKAR - Symposium Planning Committee

Melis Cakar is a PhD Candidate in Neuroscience at UCLA. She received her BA in Neuroscience, with a minor in French, from Pomona College. Her research focuses on the neurobiological mechanisms that underlie sensory over-responsivity in youth with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Melis is interested in bridging ASD research in humans and animal models to provide insight into the neural underpinnings of autistic features. Melis is passionate about science communication, particularly about using visual media to communicate science. She is the Co-Director of the Neuroscience Communication Affinity Group at UCLA and an illustrator for Knowing Neurons, an award-winning neuroscience education platform. Outside of science, Melis enjoys singing, yoga, and spending time with friends.



## KAYLA LIM - Symposium Planning Committee

Kayla Lim is currently pursuing a PhD in Physiology at UCLA, where her research is focused on investigating the neural circuits underlying affiliative social behaviors. Before discovering her interest in neuroscience, Kayla went to a specialized arts high school training to be a professional dancer. In a turn of events, she went on to receive Bachelors degrees in Neuroscience and Psychology. She believes that art and science are a lot more similar than others let on, and continues to find creativity in both. Outside the lab, Kayla enjoys getting others excited about science and occasionally spends too much time testing out new recipes.





# Symposium Organizers



## RAFAEL ROMERO, PHD - Symposium Planning Committee

Dr. Rafael Romero is currently the Associate Director of the undergraduate Neuroscience Interdepartmental Program (uNSIDP) at UCLA. He teaches a wide range of courses that range from introductory classes in neuroscience to advanced seminars for honors students. He also coordinates the neuroscience outreach initiatives for the uNSIDP and Brain Research Institute, such as Project Brainstorm and DOPA team. He learned his B.S. in Biology from La Universidad de Los Andes (Bogotá, Colombia) and his Ph.D. in Neuroscience from UCLA. When not thinking about the brain he enjoys reading, cooking and tinkering around the house.



## CHEYLENE TANIMOTO, PHD - Symposium Planning Committee

Dr. Cheylene Tanimoto is the Education Manager at the California NanoSystems Institute (CNSI) at UCLA. She graduated from UCLA in 2022 with a PhD in Chemistry studying the physics and chemistry of how virus particles assemble. During her time in graduate school, she volunteered with the CNSI Nanoscience Outreach Program and discovered her passion for teaching and outreach. As the CNSI Education Manager, she hopes to make science fun and accessible to everyone so they may develop an appreciation for the fact that science is all around them!

