FACULTY NEWS and NOTES

In June, Curt Breneman, Professor and Head of Chemistry and Chemical Biology, served as a US State Department Delegate at the EuroNanoForum2013 meeting in Dublin, Ireland on the Environmental Health effects of nanomaterials. This was one of the follow-up meetings at the tail end of the G8 Conference in Ireland. He was a speaker and panelist on the topic of nanoparticle/biomaterial interactions, and was asked to remain involved in advising the State Department on regulatory issues related to EHS issues surrounding nanomaterials in US/EU trade negotiations.

Also in June, he presented a closing Keynote Address at the 2013 Gordon Research Conference on “Electron Density and Chemical Bonding” in Les Diablerets, Switzerland on the practical application of electron density properties in predictive cheminformatics and materials informatics.

In July, he presented a paper at the 2013 Gordon Research Conference on Computer-Aided Drug Design (CADD) on predicting the likely sites of metabolism on drug-like molecules and their potential for creating off-target side effects or liver toxicity.

He was nominated as Vice-Chair of the 2015 Gordon Research Conference on Computer-Aided Drug Design (CADD).

In August, he organized a Program Review meeting in CBIS for our $5M / five-year ONR MURI project involving Rensselaer, UCONN, Columbia, Penn State and University of Akron. The event was attended by 31 co-PIs, postdocs and students, and Dean Laurie Leshin opened the meeting with a welcome speech. This MURI project was just approved for a 2-year extension, and is focused on the development of new low-loss/high energy density capacitor dielectric materials to address Navy pulse-power needs.

Lee Ligon, Associate Professor of Biology, recently spoke at the 27th Annual Symposium of The Protein Society in Boston. Her talk entitled, "Post-translational Modification of Cytoskeletal Polymers: Defining Local Organization," was featured in the Protein Interactions in the Cellular Milieu Symposium.

Ana Milanova, Associate Professor of Computer Science, received a prestigious Google grant.

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute To Train U.S. Navy Officers in Information Technology and Web Sciences

The U.S. Navy is turning to the Information Technology and Web Science (ITWS) Program at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute to prepare a select group of U.S. Navy officers with skills needed for military cyberspace operations. Under a three-year agreement, the Navy will enroll a group of five to 10 officers yearly in a new “information dominance” concentration within the Master of Science in Information Technology degree program at Rensselaer.

The new concentration will prepare officers for careers designing, building, and managing secure information systems and networks. Such training is essential for the U.S. Navy in an increasingly information-rich environment, said Professor Peter Fox, director of the ITWS program, which is offered through the School of Science.

http://news.rpi.edu/content/2013/07/18/rensselaer-train-us-navy-officers-it-and-
The 10th annual Graduate Student Mathematical Modeling Camp was held at RPI on June 11-14, 2013. The Camp runs in conjunction with the Mathematical Problems in Industry Workshop, which was held at Worcester Polytechnic Institute during the week following the Camp, and together the two meetings form an interdisciplinary program of research and education that is unique among universities in the U.S.. The primary focus of the Camp is graduate student education and career development. At the Camp, graduate students work in teams on problems brought by invited faculty mentors. These problems span a wide range of areas of applied mathematics and are carefully chosen to develop modeling and problem-solving skills, and to provide a warm-up for the more difficult problems to be presented by industrial partners at the Workshop. The team approach promotes scientific communication, sharing of mathematical ideas, and an exchange of individual expertise. This year's Camp was attended by 30 graduate students representing 18 different universities in the U.S., Canada and the U.K.. The faculty mentors brought 4 problems, including Incorporating Control in the Assimilation of Data, Mathematical Modeling of Capillary Origami, Investigating the Mechanical Properties of Plant Cells, and Multi-Scale Modeling of Crowd-Dynamics-Driven Instabilities of Suspension Bridges. The students made excellent progress on each problem and they presented their results at the conclusion of the meeting.

The Camp is organized by Don Schwendeman and Pete Kramer, Professors in the Department of Mathematical Sciences, and both the Camp and Workshop are supported by the National Science Foundation. Further details about the Camp can be found at www.rpi.edu/dept/math/GSMMCamp/

RPI will be hosting AbGradCon 2014 during August of next year! This is a NAI funded, student-run conference for early career astrobiologists (graduate students and new post-docs) that occurs on an annual basis. Kristin Coari and Bradley Burcar have been working with Anne Marie Strack and students at different universities to plan this conference and a related proposal writing workshop. If you want more information on the conference, please feel free to ask and I will tell you anything you need to know. Additionally, here is the website for last year's conference if you want to see what this conference typically looks like: http://www.abgradcon.org/

This is an excellent conference that I have attended since joining RPI and look forward to bringing it our institution!

STAFF NEWS and NOTES

Sharon Ray joined the School of Science on August 1st as a Business Administrator for the Tetherless World Constellation. Sharon earned a B.A. in English from the State University of New York at Potsdam. Sharon brings to her new position a solid background in research administration and not-for-profit management, most recently as Administrator of the Institute for Therapeutic Innovation with the University of Florida and as Manager of the Office for Sponsored Research with Ordway Research Institute.