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Food Science in Action: From Cells to Cultivated Seafood

Join us for an inside look at how science is reshaping the future of food.

Learn how color, texture, and quality are designed at the molecular level, the real-world challenges of scaling this technology, and what it takes to bring innovation from the lab to the plate.



Our Speaker:

Sivapratha Sivabalan, Ph.D.

Food Scientist II at BlueNalu



Thursday, Feb 19th 2026
6:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Zoom webinar, register through eventbrite

Scan here

Dear members,

As we reflect on the past year, I would like to begin by thanking **Jackie and Max** for their outstanding leadership. Their dedication and accomplishments have set a high bar for our committee, and I am grateful for the strong foundation they have built.



My name is **Jiyue Chen**, and I received my **PhD in Chemistry and Biochemistry from UC San Diego** in 2024. My journey with ACS San Diego began about two years ago, when several Executive Committee members hosted a career panel on the UCSD campus. At the time, I was uncertain about my next steps and signed up seeking guidance. That event introduced me to many wonderful colleagues and mentors, and it marked the beginning of my involvement with ACS. Since then, I have regularly attended EC meetings and steadily increased my engagement.

My first experience organizing an ACS event was a **career panel in May 2024**. That event took place during a challenging period for our local scientific community and for me personally, as I was nearing the end of my PhD and navigating my own career transition. Through ACS, I found not only professional support but also a true sense of community. That experience motivated me to continue **serving, strengthening, and expanding this network** for others.

In **2024**, I had the privilege of serving ACS San Diego as a **volunteer and as Chair of the Women Chemists Committee**. I was deeply honored to receive the **Tony Bottone Volunteer Award**. Volunteering has been incredibly meaningful to me. It has connected me to a broader professional community and provided purpose beyond my day-to-day work. With encouragement from fellow Executive Committee members, I stepped into a leadership role as **Chair-Elect**, and I am grateful for the trust placed in me and for the supportive environment that enables students and early-career professionals to grow into leadership positions.

In **2025**, with the support of **Myra, Marta, Christina, and Grace**, we revitalized the **Women Chemists Committee** and launched the inaugural **Trailblazer Women Chemist Award**. Together, we developed the program from the ground up, from podcasting and nominations to awardee selection and the award ceremony. We are thankful to ACS San Diego for providing the platform and resources to make this possible. Moving forward, we will continue to highlight individual awardees in upcoming newsletters and encourage their ongoing involvement in the ACS community. We are also planning a Women Chemists career panel in Spring 2026, along with additional creative subcommittee events.

Looking ahead to my term in **2026**, I am excited to focus on three key priorities. First, we aim to **strengthen engagement with industry** by inviting industry speakers to career panels and webinars and by collaborating with local professional organizations such as SABPA. Second, we will continue **developing and supporting sub-communities**, including the Women Chemists Committee, Young Chemists Committee, Career Development Committee, and Retired Chemists Committee. Finally, while maintaining our signature events, we will explore **new and creative programming** to better serve our diverse membership.

Thank you again for your trust, encouragement, and support. I am truly honored to serve and look forward to working together to continue building a vibrant and inclusive ACS San Diego community.

Regards,

Jiyue Chen
San Diego ACS Local Section Chair



Dear members:

It is my pleasure to join the ACS Executive Committee of SD Chapter as the **Chair-Elect** this year. I am a **computational and synthetic chemist** with background in total synthesis, molecular editing, and catalyst design. In the time I'm free from hobbies and volunteering, I work in **Next Generation Medicine Design** at **Bristol Myers Squibb**.

After 8 years of being a member of the San Diego scientific community, I am delighted to have an opportunity to give back to our amazing people through ACS leadership. I thank all the Committee members for their support and I'm honoured to have your trust in electing me for this role. I look forward to working with all of you to continue our traditional exciting events and bringing everyone together, through chemistry.

Cheers,

Nik Chekshin
San Diego ACS Local Section Chair-Elect

Food Science in Action: From Cells to Cultivated Seafood

Sivapratha Sivabalan, Ph.D
Food Technologist



ABOUT THE SPEAKER:

Siva completed her bachelors and master's in Food Process Engineering. Siva was teaching undergraduate students in a World Bank-funded project aimed at improving technical education in India. After developing an interest in innovation and evolving food choices, she moved to Washington State University to pursue doctoral program in Food Engineering. More recently, Siva was research assistant working in encapsulation strategies, emulsion based lipophilic delivery, food packaging, hydrocolloid functionality, troubleshooting formulation challenges, degradation kinetics, thermal processing of foods and accelerated shelf-life assessment. Her interests include understanding the chemistry of food, physical properties the ingredients confer and utilizing the knowledge to work towards a clean food system with natural food ingredients, functional sustainable biopolymers, phytochemicals, and coloring agents. She is excited to work at BlueNalu, where she can contribute toward developing environmentally-friendly products.

In her leisure time outside of work, Siva enjoys art, plants, nature and culture.

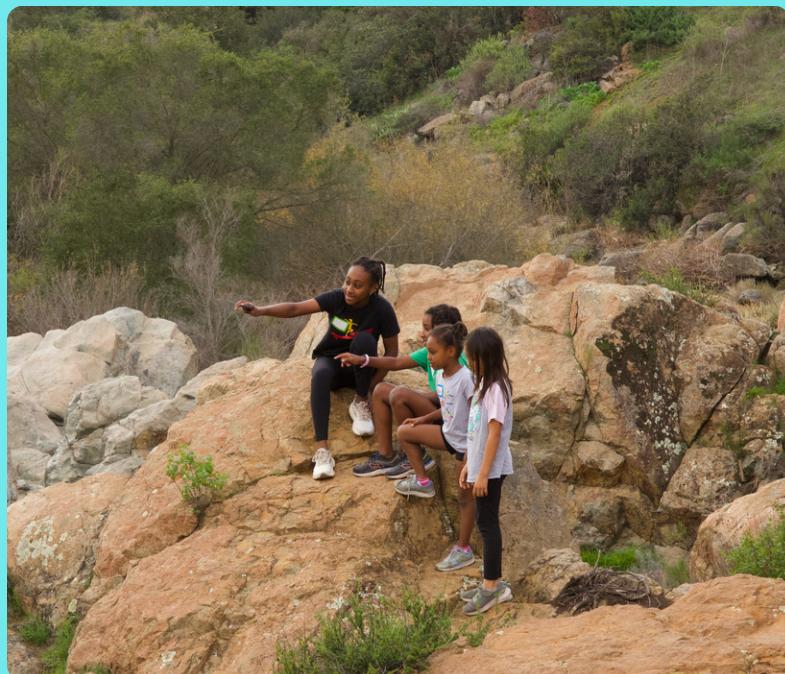
ABOUT THE TALK:

Join us for an inside look at how science is reshaping the future of food. Learn how color, texture, and quality are designed at the molecular level, the real-world challenges of scaling this technology, and what it takes to bring innovation from the lab to the plate

NEW YEAR HIKE 2026









International Day of Women & Girls in Science



Thank you for taking the
roads less traveled,
So we can follow.

In recognition of
Trailblazer Women
Chemist Awardees

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ACS San Diego Local section Executive Committee meeting minutes

Thursday, January 8, 2026

Meeting started at 6:30pm

In attendance (12): Jiyue Chen (Chair), Jackie Trischman (Immediate past co- Chair), Max Mahler (Immediate past co- Chair), Surya De (Counselor), Juan Gonzales (Alt Counselor), Jesus Cordova (WRM Chair), Christina Vialva, Jim Shih (Alternate Counselor), Sharai Mendez (WRM), Marta Vuckovic (Secretary), Nik Chekshin (Chair elect 2027), Carolina Ibarra (Newsletter)

Absent: Desiree Grubisha (Treasurer)

1. Approval of meeting minutes for November 2025: approved unanimously.

2. No treasurer Report – Desiree was absent

- Budget approval for 2026 postponed for February meeting (February 5)

3. Recap of 2025 End of the Year Meeting and Holiday party (Max)

- The venue for the End of the Year Holiday party was excellent, and the event was well attended.

4. Final report for 2025 will be prepared by Max and Jackie, due in February

5. Upcoming ACS local section events:

Jiyue: New Year Hike co-organizing with SABPA, on **January 24, 2026**, starting at 9 am. Jackie: Blue

Nalu in-person event on **February 19** scheduled in a Sorento Valley location, the search for the venue is still ongoing, there was a discussion on which location might be the best

Jim: March - National ACS meeting and satellite events

Jackie: Super STEM Saturday at Southwest College

Date: **Saturday, March 14** (Pie Day or Pi Day)

ACS will host a table at this event

Budget for this event: \$250, included supplies for activities

Juan: Activity area/table with Freaky Foam faces event for kids, very busy, call for volunteers

February ACS Newsletter should have a call for volunteers for Super STEM Saturday.

Great San Diego Science and Engineering competition at Petco Park

Jim will send a call for judges volunteers.

Sharai: Zoom seminar on **Applications of AI tools in Chemistry Education and Research**, scheduled for **Thursday, January 29, at 6: 30 pm.**

Sharai introduced the talk, she will present the AI tools and lead the discussion.

Juan suggested moving the seminar date to mi-late February to coordinate with community college academic schedule, as 1/28 is the first day of spring semester to community colleges in San Diego.

After a lengthy discussion back and forth regarding the best date for this seminar, taking into consideration other planned events, and other spring schedules for UCSD and SDSU, and USD, the committee decided to approve the event for the original date in January.

Marta: Food chemistry seminar via Zoom on Chemistry of natural vs synthetic food colorants and dyes by Dr. Jing Zhao (from SDSU) proposed schedule for February 5, 2026. The Executive Committee voted and approved the talk and topic, but the event will be re-scheduled for April due to conflicts with Blue Nalu and ACS national meeting events. Marta will propose 3 dates in April for this seminar talk.

Christina (YCC New Year plans and visions):

- Forming a committee
- Applying for ACS local section grants up to \$500 to start or plan one event in the spring
- Caroline can prepare a designated listserv for YCC events

Jiyue (WCC New Year plans and visions):

- Requested annual budget for 2026: \$8,000 for planned events
- Joined events with YCC
- Collaboration for professional events series with Vanessa for organizing more events for early career scientists
- Women in Leadership career development panel event in the planning phase for April 2026
- WCC will continue to feature each Women Chemist Trailblazer in the upcoming ACS San Diego newsletters in 2026
- Plans to invite Women Trailblazer award recipients for 2025 to serve as panelists
- ACS Women Chemist Trailblazer Award 2026 call for nominations planned for spring 2026 (March or April)

Meeting adjourned: 8:10 pm

Next meeting: Thursday, February 5, 2026 at 6:30 pm via Zoom.

Minutes prepared by Marta Vuckovic

UPCOMING ACS WEBINARS

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A Technical Framework for Materials by Design
in Enterprise R&D

C&EN

February 25, 2026

8:00 a.m. PST

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CHEMICAL & ENGINEERING NEWS

**Executive Committee Meeting
Dates 2026**

**First thursdays of
each month**

Zoom Meeting

***Subject to change if
in person meeting**

Metabolic Instability of Peptide Therapeutics:
Mechanisms, Analytical Strategies, and Design
Solutions for Clinical Success

C&EN

February 26, 2026

8:00 a.m. PST

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NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS!

Does your non-profit organization have an upcoming event that might be of interest to members of the ACS – San Diego Section? If so, please send your announcement to our current Chair, Jiyue Chen jchen@sandiegoacs.org. Once approved, Jiyue will see that your announcement is published on our website (www.sandiegoacs.org) and, if received by the 20th of the month before the event, in The San Diego Chemist newsletter. This is a free service of the ACS – San Diego Section. Take advantage of it!

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For more information, please contact:
Carolina Ibarra at cibarra@sandiegoacs.org

THE SAN DIEGO CHEMIST, the official newsletter of the San Diego Section of the American Chemical Society, published on a monthly basis, can be viewed at <http://www.sandiegoacs.org/newsletter/>. All content is published at the discretion of the Section's Executive Committee. Events of interest to chemistry professionals in the community may be included in the events calendar as space permits and are subject to editing for brevity. Advertisements and announcements from the chemistry community are accepted at published rates. The deadline for submitted items is the 5th of the month for publication by the end of that month.

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2" x 3"	\$ 75	\$ 68	\$ 58
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full page	\$655	\$590	\$510

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ATTENTION COMPANIES!

Do you hire student workers?
If you have open positions in chemistry and biochemistry that would be of interest to college students, such as summer internship opportunities, here is a list of contacts you'll want to keep handy. The people listed below are the faculty advisors of the ACS Student Affiliate groups for all chemistry programs in San Diego County. These professors can get the word out to all chemistry and biochemistry majors at their schools about jobs, career fairs, open houses, etc.

CSUSM

Kang Du kdu@csusm.edu

SDSU

Peter van der Geer - undergrad. advisor
pvanderg@sdsu.edu

UCSD

Jereny Klosterman jkk@ucsd.edu

San Diego Mesa College

Synthia Chang
schang001@sdccd.edu

Southwestern College, Chula Vista

Juan Gonzalez
jgonzalez3@swccd.edu

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Palomar College

Heriberto Rivera hrivera@palomar.edu

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Chair-elect: Nik Chekshin	(2026)	
Secretary: Marta Vuckovic	(2026)	
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Councilor: Hui Cai 2026-2028		
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Past Chair Max Mahler	(2026)	619-405-5509

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Surya K. De, Conju-Probe	(2028)	858-337-4961
Desiree Grubisha, Heron Therapeutics	(2028)	858-254-5497
Valerie Kuck	(2027)	973-744-5510
David Wallace, Wallace Scientific Consulting	(2028)	858-638-1866

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Jim Shih, Eli Lilly & Co	(2028)	626-826-3561
Juan Gonzalez-Gonzalez	(2027)	619-813-8520
Ryan Smith	(2027)	619-744-2220
Christina Vialva	(2028)	951-287-4503

Members-at-Large

Bill Szabo	(2025)	858-550-0306
Jessica Le		
Randall Smith	(2025)	
Sharai Mendez	(2028)	

STANDING & SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Awards Nomination Committee

Valerie Kuck (Co-Chair)		973-744-5510
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ChemExpo

Jackie Trischman, CSUSM		858-414-3323
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Communications Committee

Surya K. De, Conju-Probe.		858-337-4961
Desiree Grubisha, Heron Therapeutics		858-254-5497
Carolina Ibarra (Newsletter Editor & Social Media Manager)		619-618-9240
David Wallace, Wallace Scientific Consulting		858-638-1866

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Surya K. De, Conju-Probe		858-337-4961
Hui Cai, WuXi AppTec		858-361-8838
Jim Shih, Eli Lilly & Co		626-826-3561
Peter Iovine, USD		619-260-4028
Jackie Trischman, CSUSM		858-414-3323

Education Committee

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Joan Schellinger, USD		619-260-7960

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Mark Tichenor (Co-Chair), Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc.
David Wallace (Co-Chair), Biosplice Therapeutics
Tao Wu (Co-Chair), Kumquat Biosciences

858-945-7893
858-334-8914
858-638-1866
858-922-0428

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Nominations Committee

OPEN

Picnic Committee

Jim Shih, Eli Lilly & Co.

626-826-3561

Professional Development Committee

Valerie Kuck

973-744-5510

Public Relations Committee

OPEN

Senior Chemists Committee

OPEN

Seniors Breakfasts

OPEN

Women Chemists Committee**Committee Chair**Jiyue Chen email contact for the WCC is ACS-WCC@sandiegoacs.org.**Younger Chemists Committee**Christina Vialva, civialva@sandiegoacs.org