ACS Chemistry for Life®

The San Diego Chemist

San Diego Section

Volume 38, Number 11 November 2026



CHAIR NOTES

Dear ACS San Diego Members,

We're already in November, and I want to thank you all for taking the time to read these updates. As we move forward together, I'd like to share some news with you.

October was a highlight for our local section as we celebrated this year's Distinguished Scientist Banquet on October 22nd. We were proud to honor Dr. Rommie E. Amaro for her remarkable accomplishments and contributions to our community.

Building on that spirit of engagement, our Local Section ACS elections are right around the corner! If you are a voting member, please keep an eye out for our Local Section election ballot emails. The voting period for this year's election will run electronically from November 10th through November 24th, 2026. Your voice matters, and we want to make sure it is accounted for as we elect our incoming 2027 San Diego ACS leaders. If you have any questions or concerns about your ballot, reach out to my colleague, Jackie Trischman (trischma@csusm.edu), who serves as the Local Section election coordinator.

As we look toward wrapping up a fantastic year, please save the date for our final meeting and End-of-Year Holiday Party on Wednesday, December 2nd, at The Butcher Shop Steakhouse, where we will gather to celebrate and announce our election results. Thank you for your enduring commitment to our section, and I cannot wait to celebrate with you next month—be sure to register today!

Regards,

Jiyue Chen,
ACS San Diego Local Section Chair

EXECUTIVE BOARD CANDIDATES FOR 2027
ACS SAN DIEGO SECTION
CANDIDATE BACKGROUNDS

CHAIR
(Confirmation of Chair-elect)



NIK CHEKSHIN, PH.D

Nik Chekshin currently works in Next Generation Medicine Design at Bristol Myers Squibb. After completing undergraduate and Masters studies in Chemistry from the University of Oxford, he earned PhD in Computational and Synthetic Organic Chemistry from Scripps Research, where he worked on asymmetric catalysis and rapid access to new chemical space. His postdoctoral research was in Medicinal Chemistry at the Calibr-Skaggs Institute for Innovative Medicines, where he worked on the development of next generation Mpro inhibitors for Poliovirus. Nik has co-authored 1 US patent, over 20 research publications, and numerous presentations in organic, organometallic, and computational chemistry and catalysis.

Nik is a member of the Royal Society of Chemistry and has been involved with the ACS since 2017 (full member since 2021). He has presented at multiple national ACS meetings, and has actively participated in the events of the MEDI, COMP, and ORGN divisions. Outside the ACS, Nik has been actively involved in volunteering and leadership, serving on the leadership board at Nucleate San Diego (Director of Communications, 2023-2024; Ambassador since 2024), on the SOF Executive Board at Scripps Research (Industry Bridge Program Chair, 2021-2025), and as the invited member of the Board of Directors of WSPA Associates (since 2024).

CHAIR-ELECT



SHARAI MENDEZ

Sharai is a dedicated supporter of ACS and a member since 2016, deeply committed to advancing scientific knowledge and community outreach. Her background in medicinal chemistry, chemical education, and department coordination aligns with the strategic direction of the San Diego Local Section. Furthermore, her active membership in the Orange County Local Section has provided her with valuable insight into fostering regional collaborations. She believes strengthening regional networks is paramount for the success of future joint events and community outreach.

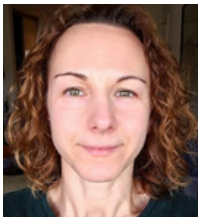
Sharai holds a BS in Biochemistry from CSUSM, where her leadership began early as a founder of their ACS Student Chapter. Building on this foundation, she earned an MS in Chemistry from SDSU and subsequently served as a Lecturer and Department Coordinator. Sharai remains highly active in the scientific community, having attended 12 conferences and presented at 6 in the last year to stay at the forefront of research (including PacifiChem 2025 and ACS Chicago 2026). Currently, she is serving on the 2028 Western Regional Meeting (WRM) planning committee.

Professionally, Sharai is an Instructional Designer at Catalyst Education, which serves over 150+ institutions in the US and Canada. In this role, she collaborates with instructors directly to design custom STEM courses and streamline future curriculum planning. By blending chemistry with instructional design, she leverages her academic and pedagogical expertise to optimize classroom accessibility, engagement, and effective feedback for both students and instructors.

ACS Chemistry for Life®

SAN DIEGO ACS ELECTIONS

SECRETARY



MARTA VUCKOVIC
Research Scientist and Lecturer at SDSU

Marta is a Research Scientist and a Lecturer at San Diego State University, working with Connie Weaver. And her work focuses on food chemistry and calcium metabolism. Marta joined the ACS San Diego local section in 2025 as a volunteer and quickly found multiple opportunities to get involved and become an active member of the local section. Currently, she is a member of ACS San Diego Women Chemist Committee, and member of the Annual Picnic Committee. She received the 2025 Tony Bottone local section award for the outstanding service. Marta's motivation to run for the local section secretary stems from her passion to engage with the local chemistry community in San Diego and bridge the widening gap between science and the public.

Marta completed undergraduate studies in Biochemistry at University of Belgrade in Serbia, and graduate training in Molecular Biology at the Max-Plank Research School in Gottingen, Germany. She holds PhD in Neuroscience from the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, and completed postdoctoral training in Metabolic Biology at UC Berkeley, in the Nutritional Sciences and Toxicology department. She also holds Instructor position at UC Berkeley Extension where she teaches evening classes in Nutrition, Pharmacology and Toxicology to working professionals preparing to enter the field of medicine and health care.

TREASURER

DESIREE GRUBISHA

Desiree has been an active volunteer with the San Diego ACS Section since 2004. She is currently serving the San Diego Section as a Councilor, as the section Treasurer, and the Communications Committee. She is a past member of the ACS National Local Section Activities Committee, and has been active in the ACS Western Regional Meeting Board as Secretary from 2017-2019. She has been involved with ChemExpo, YCC, and WCC activities, the planning committee for the 41st Western Regional Meeting in 2007, and has served on the Public Relations committee.

Desiree currently works in CMC Quality Control at Heron Therapeutics. She has also worked in QC at Halozyme, and in Lab QA in Commercial QC at AstraZeneca/Amylin Pharmaceuticals supporting diabetes medicines in the worldwide market. Desiree earned a PhD in inorganic chemistry from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, and did postdoctoral research developing novel detection platforms for molecular diagnostics in the Microanalytical Instrumentation Center at Iowa State University. She has coauthored 1 U.S. patent and over 30 journal articles and presentations in analytical, organometallic, and inorganic chemistry.

COUNCILOR **(Vote for up to 2)**



JACKIE TRISCHMAN

Jackie is the Dean of the College of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics at California State University San Marcos, where she has helped to build the Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry and the university since 1995. She served in many leadership roles across campus, including department chair and faculty chair, in her 25 years prior to stepping into the dean role. Jackie studied under William Fenical and has a PhD in Marine Natural Products Chemistry from Scripps Institution of Oceanography. She is passionate about student success and about inviting K-12 students into the world of chemistry.

Jackie has been an active member of the San Diego Local Section for over 20 years. She is currently a Councilor and serves on the Committee for Community Activities nationally, running the 2024 National Chemistry Week Team. She has served as Secretary 2002-2005, Chair in 2006, and has run the electronic election every year since then. She has also been active in the ACS Western Regional Meeting Board as Secretary from 2005-2016, and as Poster Chair for the 2007 meeting. Committed to outreach to girls in chemistry, Jackie is currently working on coordinating national Girl Scout Badges with National ACS and the National Girl Scouts organization. This is a natural growth from her work in setting up the Scout Badge experiences at ChemExpo each Fall since 2006.

Jackie is a Hokie at heart, with a BS in Biochemistry from Virginia Tech. Her first job involved making Kevlar and Teflon at DuPont, and she has since taught Organic Chemistry at both Tulane and UCSD before moving to CSUSM.

SAN DIEGO ACS ELECTIONS



JIM SHIH

Jim is a Senior Principal Biologist at Eli Lilly & Company's Lilly Biotechnology Center in San Diego, where he specializes in drug candidate characterization. He has more than 32 years of experience in protein chemistry and bioanalytical chemistry, having previously worked at Ligand Pharmaceuticals, Amgen, and Quidel Corporation. Jim earned both his B.A. and M.S. with a focus on parasite biochemistry from the University of California, Riverside.

An active volunteer with the San Diego Section of the American Chemical Society since 2007, Jim has served as Section Chair and chaired both the Picnic and Nominations Committees. He currently serves as an Alternate Councilor, representing the San Diego Section at the national level.



NIK CHEKSHIN, PH.D

Nik Chekshin currently works in Next Generation Medicine Design at Bristol Myers Squibb. After completing undergraduate and Masters studies in Chemistry from the University of Oxford, he earned PhD in Computational and Synthetic Organic Chemistry from Scripps Research, where he worked on asymmetric catalysis and rapid access to new chemical space. His postdoctoral research was in Medicinal Chemistry at the Calibr-Skaggs Institute for Innovative Medicines, where he worked on the development of next generation Mpro inhibitors for Poliovirus. Nik has co-authored 1 US patent, over 20 research publications, and numerous presentations in organic, organometallic, and computational chemistry and catalysis.

Nik is a member of the Royal Society of Chemistry and has been involved with the ACS since 2017 (full member since 2021). He has presented at multiple national ACS meetings, and has actively participated in the events of the MEDI, COMP, and ORGN divisions. Outside the ACS, Nik has been actively involved in volunteering and leadership, serving on the leadership board at Nucleate San Diego (Director of Communications, 2023-2024; Ambassador since 2024), on the SOF Executive Board at Scripps Research (Industry Bridge Program Chair, 2021-2025), and as the invited member of the Board of Directors of WSPA Associates (since 2024).

ACS Chemistry for Life®

SAN DIEGO ACS ELECTIONS

ALTERNATE COUNCILOR



CHRISTINA VIALVA
Graduate Student

Christina Vialva, B.A. is a graduate student in San Diego State University's inaugural M.S. Food Science cohort and laboratory manager in the Department of Exercise and Nutritional Sciences. Her six-year involvement with the ACS San Diego Local Section includes serving as Local Section Chair, Member-at-Large, Alternate Councilor, and current Chair of the Younger Chemists Committee.

Christina's track record in leadership includes participation in the 2022 ACS Leadership Institute, securing ACS Innovative Project and DEIR grants, and directing impactful section programming. A participant of three NSF REU programs, several graduate research fellowships, and a recent summer internship at the USDA, she brings national research and extensive public speaking experience to her advocacy.

If reelected as Alternate Councilor, Christina will continue to connect local section needs with national ACS initiatives. She is committed to creating professional development opportunities, serving as a strong voice for early-career scientists, and ensuring that everyone finds a place of belonging within the chemical sciences. She respectfully asks for your vote.

JUAN GONZALEZ

Juan Gonzalez is a tenured chemistry professor at Southwestern College and advises the college's Student Affiliate Chapter. He began serving the American Chemical Society in 2002 as a founding member of the Student Affiliate Chapter he now advises. Since 2020, Gonzalez has served the San Diego Local Section in multiple capacities, including two consecutive terms as the Local Section Chair. Under his leadership, he led the Local Section through the pandemic and helped to revitalize its spirit. Gonzalez's leadership and initiatives have been praised by the National ACS, the local section membership, and other local sections across the country for innovative events such as the Chemistry and Art of Glass, Now, You're Cooking with Chemistry!, and The Chemistry of Art Conservation. Gonzalez has been instrumental in attracting young chemists to serve in the Local Section. Notably, his protégé, Christina Vialva, succeeded him as the youngest person to hold the title of Local Section Chair. Gonzalez seeks reelection as an alternate councilor to continue to serve the San Diego chemistry community by fostering collaboration, inspiring innovation, and providing mentorship.

SAN DIEGO ACS ELECTIONS

RYAN SMITH

Ryan Smith, Ph.D., J.D. is a patent attorney with the law firm of Duane Morris LLP where he advises clients on patent prosecution, opinion, and litigation matters, in particular in the chemical and biotech areas. Prior to his legal career, Dr. Smith was an early scientist at Illumina, Inc. where he developed a number of key DNA sequencing platforms used in Illumina's sample preparation, DNA sequencing, and DNA genotyping technologies. Dr. Smith was previously a scientist at Amersham Biosciences/Molecular Dynamics/GE Healthcare where he developed DNA sequencing technologies used to substantially complete the Human Genome Project. Dr. Smith earned his Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of California at Berkeley, his B.S. in Chemical Physics from the University of California at San Diego (Revelle College), and also completed postdoctoral studies at Stanford University and IBM.

MAX MAHLER

Max Mahler is a professional working in the San Diego biotech sector. He spent the last 8 years at Illumina where he worked hands-on as a lab tech and later led teams that built various products including bead array technologies and flow cells. Most recently, he has transferred into a role as an Environment, Health and Safety Specialist. Although he received his original bachelor's degree in Modern Literature, he began to cultivate a strong interest in chemistry from his passion for brewing beer and a formal certification in this process through the UCSD extension program. He later enrolled in the SDCCD system to begin working towards a graduate level degree in Biochemistry which he is still in the midst of pursuing.

Max has always found chemistry fascinating and decided to join the ACS in order to meet other people who share his love of understanding the building blocks of the universe. He has been a member at the college level where he served as Vice President for the Miramar College chapter and has served as a Member At Large and Chair of the San Diego Local Section in recent years.

SIGN UP

We are looking for Members-at-large

We encourage you to write in your name if you are interested in checking out the Executive Committee in this role.

Make a difference in our community!

For more information, contact:
Jackie Trischman
trischma@csusm.edu
(Send bio and headshot)

Chem Expo 2026














Table
22




ACS
Chemistry for Life®




ACS
Chemistry for Life®
AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY
National


Table
21










SKATEBOARDING
ROLLERSKATING











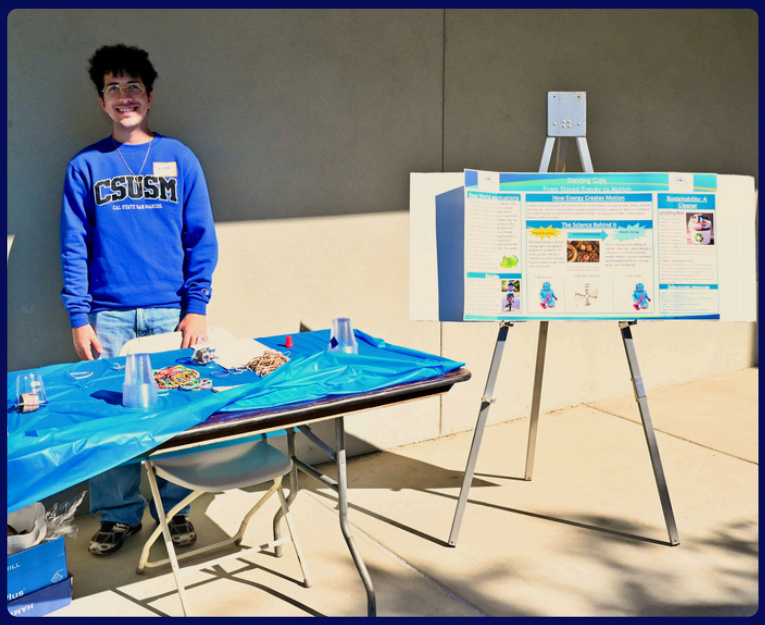

ACS
Chemistry for Life®

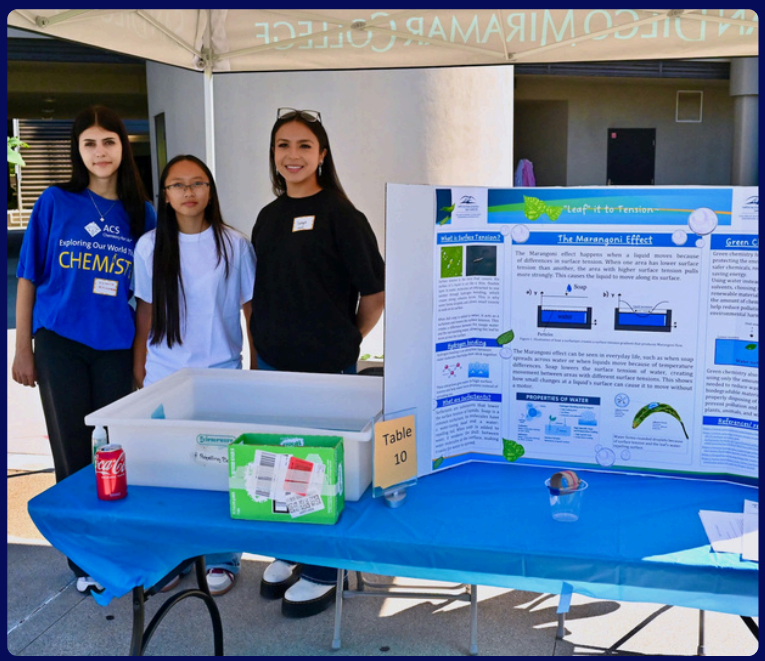



Candy Apple cell
Application
What is a Cell?
Table
4


What is the Color Change?
The pH Scale
Table
1


GO MIRAMAR COLLEGE


CSUSM


ACS
Exploring Our World
CHEMISTRY
"Leaf" it to Tension
The Marangoni Effect
Table
10

Distinguished Scientist

2026

Dr.Rommie E. Amaro












ACS
Chemistry for Life®
ROMMIE AMARO
American Chemical Society




CELEBRATING
ACS


KIRKLAND
Women of Science


WARNING:











Thank you
Jim Shih
for the photos

UPCOMING ACS WEBINARS

Application of UV-Vis-NIR Spectroscopy in Nanomaterials Research
November 10, 2026
Click here

Integrate Analytical Instruments into Your Self-Driving Lab
November 11, 2026
Click here

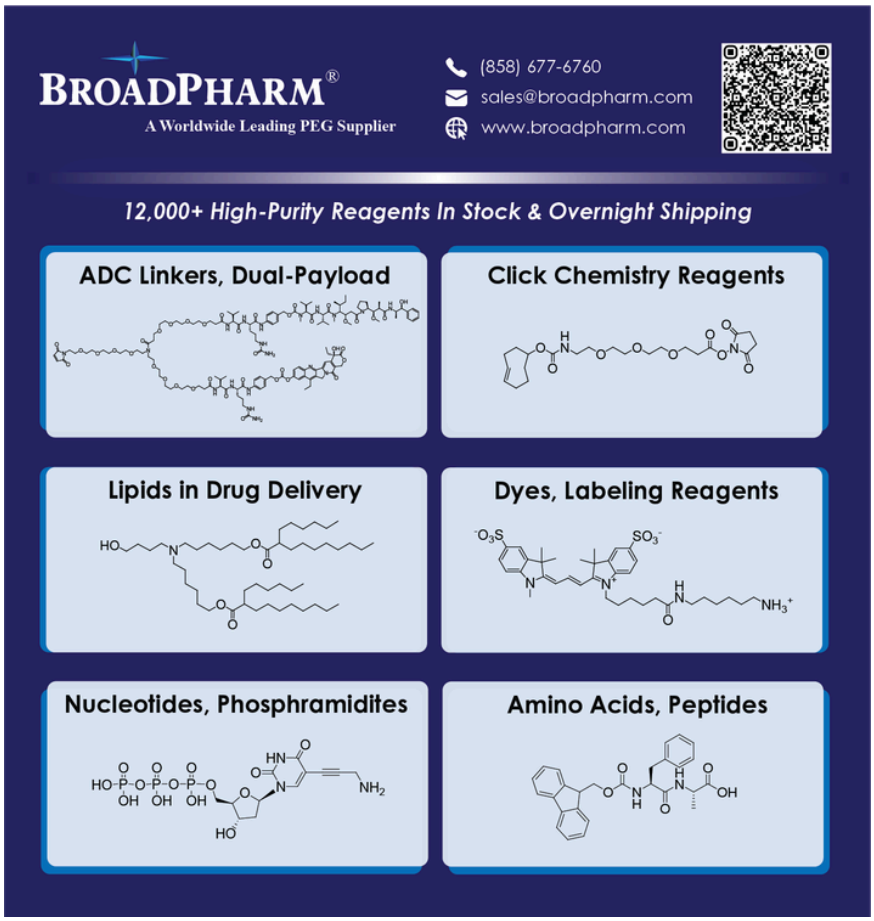
Titration Myth or Method? Putting Common Lab Assumptions to the Test
November 18, 2026
8:00 a.m. PT
Click here

Science Has a Voice. Is Yours Part of It? An ACS Town Hall on Advocacy, Advisory, and Action
Article Post Icon
ACS Webinars
November 10, 2026
Click here

Executive Committee Meeting Dates 2026

First thursdays of each month
Zoom Meeting

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


BROADPHARM®
A Worldwide Leading PEG Supplier
(858) 677-6760
sales@broadpharm.com
www.broadpharm.com
12,000+ High-Purity Reagents In Stock & Overnight Shipping
ADC Linkers, Dual-Payload
Click Chemistry Reagents
Lipids in Drug Delivery
Dyes, Labeling Reagents
Nucleotides, Phosphramidites
Amino Acids, Peptides


NuMega Resonance Labs
FAST TURNAROUND, ACCURATE RESULTS
*NMR 500MHz*Mass*Elemental Analysis
TEL: (858) 793-6057
www.numegalabs.com

SPONSORSHIPS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

The San Diego Section of the American Chemical Society would like to thank our Corporate Sponsors.

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!

ATTENTION ADVERTISERS

Did you know that The San Diego Chemist is the only monthly e-newsletter that targets chemists and chemical engineers in San Diego and Imperial Counties? As soon as our newsletter is uploaded on www.sandiegoacs.org a separate notification is sent to over 3000 recipients, each potential customers for your products and services! **Quick turnaround:** Ad copy submitted by the 5th of the month will be published by the 15th of that month. Ads submitted after the 5th will be published in the following month.
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.

Size (w x h)	**Number of Issues & Price/Issue**		
	1	**3**	**6**
2" x 3"	$ 75	$ 68	$ 58
4.5" x 1.5"	$ 80	$ 74	$ 67
4.5" x 4.75"	$200	$184	$163
8.5" x 5.5"	$400	$360	$310
full page	$655	$590	$510

Discounts will be available for issues not shown.
Please send your jpg to:
Carolina Ibarra at cibarra@sandiegoacs.org

SPONSORSHIPS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

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

Miramar College
Rebecca Bowers-Gentry
rbowersg@sdccd.edu

University of San Diego
Christopher Daley
cjdaley@sandiego.edu

Point Loma Nazarene University
Laurance G. Beauvais
laurancebeauvais@pointloma.edu

Palomar College
Heriberto Rivera hrivera@palomar.edu

Mira Costa College
Kent McCorkle
kmccorkle@miracosta.edu

Grossmont College
Hima Joshi Hima Joshi@gcccd.edu

LOOKING FOR A CHEMIST?

CHEMPLOYMENT IS THE ANSWER!
THE SAN DIEGO CHEMIST read by over 2000 chemists and biochemists in San Diego and Imperial Counties.

A two-month ad costs only $80

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

YOUR AD HERE

Your ad in the next issue of

THE SAN DIEGO CHEMIST

For information contact:

Carolina Ibarra

cibarra@sandiegoacs.org



YOUR AD HERE

Your ad in the next issue of

THE SAN DIEGO CHEMIST

For information contact:

Carolina Ibarra

cibarra@sandiegoacs.org



2026 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & COMMITTEE MEMBERS

SAN DIEGO SECTION OF THE AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY

EXECUTIVE		
Chair: Jiyue Chen	(2026)	858-260-8283
Chair-elect: Nik Chekshin	(2026)	
Secretary: Marta Vuckovic	(2026)	
Treasurer: Desiree Grubisha, Heron Therapeutics, desgrubisha@gmail.com	(2028)	858-254-5497
Councilor: Hui Cai 2026-2028		
Past Chair Jackie Trischman, CSUSM	(2026)	858-414-3323
Past Chair Max Mahler	(2026)	619-405-5509
Councilors		
Hui Cai, WuXi AppTec	(2025)	858-361-8838
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
Alternate Councilors		
Ben Pratt, Pratt Pharma Consulting LLC	(2025)	858-945-7893
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		
Jessica Le		
Randall Smith	(2025)	
Sharai Mendez	(2028)	
STANDING & SPECIAL COMMITTEES		
Awards Nomination Committee		
Valerie Kuck (Co-Chair)		973-744-5510
ChemExpo		
Jackie Trischman, CSUSM		858-414-3323
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
Distinguished Scientist Awards Nomination Committee		
David Wallace (Chair), Biosplice Therapeutics		858-204-5412
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		
Valerie Kuck		973-744-5510
Joan Schellinger, USD		619-260-7960
EarthFair		
OPEN		
Finance Committee		
David Wallace (Chair)		858-204-5412
Ryan Smith		619-744-2220
Fundraising Committee		
OPEN		
Government Affairs Committee		
Hui Cai, WuXi AppTec (Chair)		858-361-8838
Law Committee		
Ryan C. Smith, Duane Morris LLP		619-744-2220

2026 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mad Science Program
OPEN
MedChem Symposium
Ben Pratt (Co-Chair), Pratt Pharma Consulting LLC 858-945-7893
Mark Tichenor (Co-Chair), Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc. 858-334-8914
David Wallace (Co-Chair), Biosplice Therapeutics 858-638-1866
Tao Wu (Co-Chair), Kumquat Biosciences 858-922-0428
Membership Committee
OPEN
Nominations Committee
OPEN
Picnic Committe
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, cvialva@sandiegoacs.org