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Newsletter Schedule for Summer 2023

The College of Science Newsletter will publish every other week during the summer. We will return to a weekly schedule August 16, 2023.



A message from the Dean

FERNANDO R. MIRALLES-WILHELM

Welcome the travelers and the doers

by Fernando Miralles-Wilhelm

Throughout the month of May, we acknowledge Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. This blog post is a conversation with the director of our [Interdisciplinary Program in Neuroscience](#), [Saleet Jafri](#), who shares his journey and the value of impactful mentorship.

"I'm thankful to have had so many opportunities. Despite growing up in what many would call a privileged household, my journey and that of those I love were not completely without injustice or adversity. My grandfather was the first Postmaster General of the Indian subcontinent who was not of British descent. Although my parents' families were very well off in India, they had to give up everything and emigrate to Pakistan, to escape violence targeting Muslims. In Pakistan as immigrants and refugees they were treated as outsiders. In spite of getting the top score on the civil service exam, my father couldn't get a job in the government at that time because of prejudice. Tragically, many groups have to go through this. We need to help people. Consider the tradition to welcome the traveler, treat them well. We are all travelers at some point. We need to treat them all well.

Due to my father's job as an economic advisor for the International Monetary fund, my parents moved to Paraguay which is where I was born. Most of my childhood was spent growing up in Maryland since we moved there from Paraguay when I was six months old.

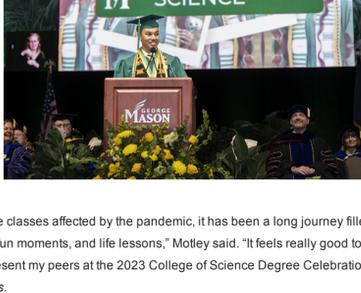
I have been interested in science and mathematics for as long as I can remember. Since the fourth grade, I knew I wanted to become a doctor to help people. I was particularly interested in cardiology because of the cardiologists I met due to my congenital heart defect that was surgically repaired when I was 12."

[Read full message](#)

MASON SCIENCE COMMUNITY

Meet the College of Science 2023 degree celebration student speaker

by Jason Motley and Srinivas Varanasi



Jason Motley served as this year's degree celebration student speaker, graduating with a [BS in Environmental Science](#) with a concentration in Ecological Science and a minor in [Conservation Studies](#). "As one of the classes affected by the pandemic, it has been a long journey filled with coursework, great internships, fun moments, and life lessons," Motley said. "It feels really good to be awarded this opportunity to represent my peers at the 2023 College of Science Degree Celebration." *Photo by Ron Aira/Creative Services.*

Missed Friday's festivities? Watch Jason's speech, and the [full College of Science Degree Celebration](#).

[Get to know Jason](#)



Graduate can't deny an animal attraction

by Damian Cristodero

Gwendolyn Fields will have many career options once she graduates from George Mason University. Should she go for her master's degree and PhD? Should she go to veterinary school and work with endangered species? Should she work with a wild animal at a zoo? "I don't know, I'm still figuring it out," said Fields, a senior [biology](#) major and member of Mason's [Honors College](#) who is set to graduate this month. "But I do know I want to work with animals, and specifically conservation." *Photo provided.*

[Find out more about Fields](#)

#FacultyFriday highlights GeorgeSquared instructor

A recent #FacultyFriday highlighted [Nivana Poonacha](#), Instructor, GeorgeSquared. Nivana joined GeorgeSquared (G2) because she related to the experience of the students in the program. The G2 program helps students gain the skills necessary to be a strong applicant to medical, dental, and PA school. [View the original Instagram post.](#)



FACULTY FRIDAY

Nivana Poonacha

Instructor
GeorgeSquared Advanced Biomedical Sciences Program

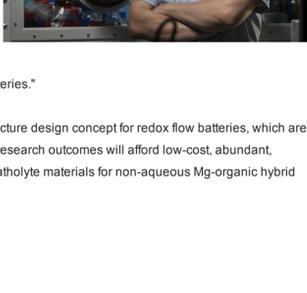


[See recent faculty highlights](#)

RESEARCH & DISCOVERY

Mason scientist receives NSF funding for research on redox flow batteries

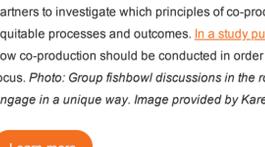
by Elizabeth Grisham



[Chao Luo](#), Assistant Professor, [Chemistry and Biochemistry](#), is set to receive funding from the National Science Foundation for the project: "Collaborative Research: Catholyte Molecular Design For Non-Aqueous Mg-Organic Hybrid Redox Flow Batteries."

Luo is proposing a new organic molecule structure design concept for redox flow batteries, which are promising for grid-scale energy storage. The research outcomes will afford low-cost, abundant, sustainable, and high-performance organic catholyte materials for non-aqueous Mg-organic hybrid redox flow batteries.

[More on this study](#)



What Does it Mean to Equitably Co-produce Research for Decision-making?

by Tracy Mason

Through a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant, George Mason University Assistant Professor of [Environmental Science And Policy](#), [Karen Akerlof](#) and University of Alaska Fairbanks

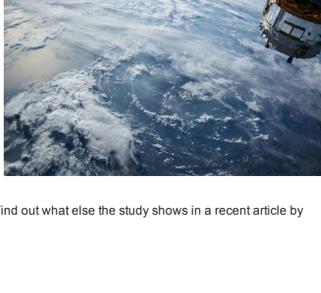
Research Associate and Mason alumna, Kristin Timm, worked with a group of federal and civic society partners to investigate which principles of co-production design are perceived to advance more equitable processes and outcomes. [In a study published in May](#), the group found three perspectives for how co-production should be conducted in order to ensure it is equitable, each with a different focus. *Photo: Group fishbowl discussions in the round allow co-production workshop participants to engage in a unique way. Image provided by Karen Akerlof.*

[Learn more](#)

IN THE NEWS

Earth's climates could drastically change by the year 2100

by Clare Watson



A study led by [Atmospheric, Oceanic and Earth Sciences](#) professor, [Paul Dirmeyer](#), indicates that changes in temperature and precipitation by the year 2100 could dramatically change the climate for close to 50 percent of the planet's land masses. Find out what else the study shows in a recent article by [Science Alert](#). *Photo by NASA.*

[More on the study's findings](#)



72-year-old congressman pursuing master's degree to better understand AI

by CBS News

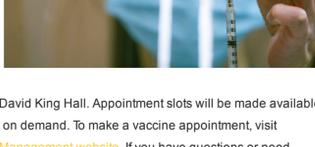
Mason students Don Beyer and Jake Merchant and [Mathematical Sciences](#) Professor [Brent Gorbutt](#) were recently

interviewed by CBS News for a story about Beyer's academic journey. A TV crew from [ABC News](#) and a photographer from the [The Washington Post](#) have also accompanied the former Virginia lieutenant governor to his math classes to capture his education journey.

[Watch the video](#)

Happening at Mason

COVID testing centers closing, vaccinations to be by appointment only



America's COVID-19 emergency formally ended May 11. As a result, George Mason University's COVID-19 testing program will conclude Thursday, May 18. Starting Monday, May 22, the university will offer COVID vaccines by appointment only at the Employee Health & Well-Being Clinic in David King Hall. Appointment slots will be made available on a weekly basis and hours will vary based on demand. To make a vaccine appointment, visit the [Safety, Emergency, and Enterprise Risk Management website](#). If you have questions or need assistance making an appointment, email [ehw@gmu.edu](#). *Photo by Evan Cantwell/Creative Services.*

[Make an appointment](#)

Participate in selecting Mason's Salesforce implementation partner

by The Mason Salesforce Project Team

George Mason University has chosen Salesforce as the system of engagement for the student journey across the institution. Salesforce is a digital Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform that allows us to store, combine, and analyze data to make impactful decisions around how we relate to students, how we recruit them, how we're retaining them, and their overall student experience. Watch this short [video](#) to learn more about Mason's Salesforce project.

Currently, the university is seeking an implementation partner to assist with customizing Salesforce tools for the Mason environment. Potential partners are scheduled to share their solutions with the Mason community from May 30 through June 8. Demonstrations will be live-streamed via Zoom. We invite you to attend the sessions and share your perspective.

Scheduled Sessions:

Tuesday, May 30, 9 to 11 a.m. – Huron Consulting Group ([Zoom link](#))

Tuesday, May 30, 3 to 5 p.m. – Vectr Solutions, Inc. ([Zoom link](#))

Thursday, June 1, 1 to 3 p.m. – Kennedy and Company ([Zoom link](#))

Monday, June 5, 9 to 11 a.m. – Accenture ([Zoom link](#))

Thursday, June 8, 12:15 to 2:15 p.m. – Attain Partners ([Zoom link](#))

[Additional details](#)

Events

Learning Management System Feedback Survey

June 28, 2023 | 5 to 6 p.m. | Virtual

Presentation recordings, including audience questions and answers, from last week's Learning Management System (LMS) finalists are now available on the [LMS website](#). Complete the [feedback survey](#) for each of the three finalists by Thursday, May 25. Those interested in sandbox testing accounts for each vendor should submit their information to the [LMS Sandbox Request Form](#). A deadline to complete sandbox testing will be announced shortly. A decision on a replacement LMS will be made within the next few months. After a platform is selected, there will be a transition period for faculty with an emphasis on faculty development and automated course conversions.

Demystifying Commercialization Pathways of Academic Research

June 15, 2023 | Noon to 1 p.m. | Virtual

Learn about the various pathways available to commercialize academic research. We will explore how tech transfer can help bridge the gap between academia and industry, enabling researchers to translate their innovations into real-world applications that generate revenue and funding for further research. [Register to attend.](#)

27th Annual Mason Conference on Atmospheric Transport and Dispersion Modeling

June 20, 2023 | 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. | Enterprise Hall, 80, Classroom (BC)

The 27th Annual George Mason University Transport and Dispersion modeling conference will be held on June 20 to 22, 2023 in-person on George Mason University's Fairfax Campus. Abstracts must be submitted no later than **June 6, 2023 at 11:59 p.m.**

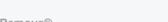
Mason Science Series

June 28, 2023 | 4 to 6 p.m. | Country Club of Fairfax

Join the conversation with [Jim Kinter](#), Professor, AOES and Director of the Center for Ocean-Land-Atmosphere Studies (COLA) to discuss the role of the Virginia Climate Center to help communities in the commonwealth increase resilience to the impacts of climate change.

[See Full Calendar](#)

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