

Having trouble viewing this email? [Click here](#)

University of California, Berkeley | College of Natural Resources  
A Newsletter for Faculty, Students, Staff and Friends of the Department

# PLANT & MICROBIAL BIOLOGY

Issue No. 20

January 2014



See the bigger picture. Make a better world.

## In This Issue ...

[Grad Student Wins Prize to Help Feed the World](#)

[Nicole Abreu Chosen for Prestigious Award](#)

[Free Lab Equipment Giveaway](#)

[Spring 2014 Seminars Announced](#)

[Summer Research Program for Undergrads](#)

[New Protocol for RNA Extraction](#)

[Steve Lindow Featured in NPR Story](#)

[New Lab Sites; i-PMB update](#)

[Beyond Academia Seminar](#)

[Important Dates / Upcoming Events](#)

## Quick Links

[Undergraduate Program](#)

[Graduate Program](#)

[Give to PMB](#)

[Our Faculty](#)

[College of Natural Resources](#)

[PMB on Facebook](#)

## Michael Gomez Wins \$10,000 Prize

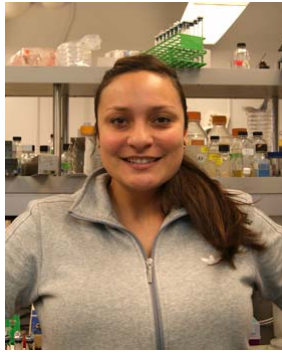
UC Berkeley graduate student Michael Gomez has developed a passion for feeding the world, and his research has been recognized as "outstanding and innovative" by the Haas School of Business.

Gomez was just awarded a \$10,000 prize in the Dow Sustainability Innovation Student Challenge Award (SISCA), administered by the Business School. The program promotes and awards "forward-thinking" projects that demonstrate social and environmental responsibility.

Read more at: <http://pmb.berkeley.edu/news/graduate-student-wins-prize-help-feed-world>

## Nicole Abreu Selected for Prestigious Award

Graduate Student Nicole Abreu has been awarded a prestigious research fellowship and will receive up to \$21,000 annually over the next three years to continue her work on how bacteria function at a



cellular level.

The American Society for Microbiology Robert D. Watkins Graduate Research Fellowship is aimed at highly competitive graduate students who are enrolled in a Ph.D. program and have completed their graduate course work in the microbiological sciences. The award is the culmination of much hard work on Abreu's part, and illustrates the multi-faceted persistence required to be an outstanding graduate student.

For the full story, please visit: <http://pmb.berkeley.edu/news/graduate-student-selected-prestigious-award>.

## Free Personal Protection Equipment for Labs



The University of California, in an effort to comply with the new Personal Protective Equipment policy signed by outgoing President Yudof earlier this year, purchased the proper Personal Protective Equipment for every lab worker in its system.

There will be several giveaway events of this equipment during February at Cal. In order to get the free equipment -- usually two lab coats and protective eyewear for each lab member -- a short training must be completed.

For more information, including details on how to sign up and what's required before signing up, please visit <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/uc-berkeley-ppe-distribution-event-registration-8477776257>.

## Spring 2014 Seminars



*The Arnon Lecture honors the late Professor Daniel Arnon (1910-1994), pictured here.*

The PMB Seminar Series for the Spring 2014 semester is set, and a special new "mini" seminar series entitled "Local Talent" has been added.

All seminars are conveniently located on one web page on the PMB website so you can find them easily. In addition, the popular Seminar Digest, which encapsulates an upcoming week's worth of seminars in a single email, will be sent weekly to all members of the department.

The regular PMB seminar series will be in 101 Barker on Wednesdays at noon and kicks off with a seminar January 22 by Helmut Kirchoff of Washington State University ("Design Principles of Plant Photosynthetic Membranes"). Other highlights include:

- [The Buchanan Lecture](#) - featuring **Kelly Craven** of the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation on "*Plant-microbe Symbiosis for Improved Crop Performance in the Wake of Depleting Resources*" scheduled for 2/5/14.
- [The Arnon Lecture](#) - featuring **Robert Blankenship** of Washington University in St. Louis on "*Photosynthetic Membrane Architecture Investigated by Mass Spectrometric Analysis*" scheduled for 3/5/14.

In addition, Monday seminars will feature Graduate Student and Postdoc Research, and the new "Local Talent" seminars will feature scientists from UC-Berkeley, Lawrence Berkeley National Lab, Joint BioEnergy Institute and Joint Genome Institute, with a focus on plants, plant-microbe interactions or microbiology.

The Plant Gene Expression Center also continues its seminar series with a full schedule that can be found at [pgec.berkeley.edu](http://pgec.berkeley.edu), the Center's new web site.

For an easy place to find information about all seminars please visit [pmb.berkeley.edu/seminars](http://pmb.berkeley.edu/seminars).

Also, you may download a seminar schedule poster to print and post in your lab or classroom: [Spring 2014 Seminar Series](#).

## 2014 Nebraska Summer Research Program

Nebraska's summer program offers research opportunities in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields in addition to a new interdisciplinary Minority Health Disparities program doing research in and around the social sciences. A complete listing of faculty mentors and research project descriptions can be found on their website at <http://www.unl.edu/summerprogram>. Students can also find information about program benefits including a competitive stipend, room and board, travel expenses, and more.



Summer 2014 programs include:

- Algal Biofuels and Nanohybrid Materials
- Applied Mathematics
- Bioenergy Systems
- Biomedical Engineering
- Chemistry
- Minority Health Disparities
- Redox Biology
- Virology
- Water in the Earth System

During the [Nebraska Summer Research Program](#), students receive first-hand exposure to research and the experience of graduate school. They work closely with faculty mentors and research teams of graduate students and other summer scholars. Students also have opportunities to participate in meaningful social and professional development activities outside of the laboratory.

The online application makes it easy for students to apply. Priority review begins on Friday, February 1st and all applications must be completed by Monday, February 17th. Students historically underrepresented in graduate education and students from academic institutions where research programs are limited are especially encouraged to apply.

## New Protocol for RNA Extraction

Researchers in the Chelsea Specht Lab at UC Berkeley have developed a new protocol for RNA extraction that can be used across land plants, which comprise over 300,000 species.

According to Chelsea Specht, associate professor in the Department of Plant and Microbial Biology and senior author of the study, this protocol will greatly facilitate RNA-based studies of non-model

plant species.

For the full story, please visit <http://pmb.berkeley.edu/news/universal-rna-extraction-protocol-land-plants>.

## Steve Lindow Featured in NPR

Professor Steve Lindow is featured in a recent news story on National Public Radio about how organizers of the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, are using a massive system of more than 550 snow-making machines to help Mother Nature deliver plenty of the white stuff in time for the Games.



In 1975, Lindow, then a graduate student in plant pathology, was studying a bacterium that causes frost damage in plants. Lindow found that the bacteria gave the water a catalyst, something for the molecules to attach to and form ice crystals.

Now a professor at the University of California, Berkeley, Lindow demonstrates how this common bacterium helps ice form. He has a test tube with supercooled water in it, but it doesn't turn to ice - until he drops in the bacteria. When they're added to the test tube, the water seems to magically form ice. Check out the cool video demonstration here: <https://vine.co/v/hU09OB9uK61>.

Here is the link to the full story: <http://www.npr.org/2013/12/10/249018773/to-get-olympic-snow-machines-give-nature-a-nudge>.

## New Websites Complete

Several new websites were completed at the end of 2013, including:

Plant Gene Expression Center - [pgec.berkeley.edu](http://pgec.berkeley.edu)

Jennifer Lewis Lab - [lewislab.berkeley.edu](http://lewislab.berkeley.edu)

Robert Fischer Lab - [fischerlab.berkeley.edu](http://fischerlab.berkeley.edu)

Meanwhile, [i-PMB](http://ipmb.berkeley.edu) is growing all the time and is the go-to place for administrative help in the department. Need to know who to contact at Shared Services? Want to find out how to get a parking permit? Need to schedule a conference room?



All of this info, and more, can now be found at [i-PMB](http://ipmb.berkeley.edu). Here's a short list:

- Make a reservation for a conference room in Koshland Hall
- Reserve the grassy space outside Pat Brown's Grill for your next lab party
- Find out all you need to know about hosting a Seminar Speaker
- Find out who to contact for all of your Facilities needs
- View helpful links and resources

## Beyond Academia Seminars

Peter Hirth, founder and former CEO of Plexxikon, is a biotechnology leader who has played a key role in the development of several key drugs including the important B-raf inhibitor Zelboraf™ approved for treating melanoma patients.

He will speak as part of the "Beyond Academia" series on January 22 on "How One Can Help Shape the Future as a Biologist or Chemist."

Presented by Beyond Academia (<http://www.beyondacademia.org/>) and the Department of Molecular and Cell Biology.

Wednesday, January 22, 2014 at 4:00 p.m in 100 GPB.

## Job Openings at Joint BioEnergy Institute

There are several job openings at JBEI, Lawrence Berkeley National Lab, in the plant group. If you're interested please click on the links for more information:

Post doc positions in Henrik Scheller's group:

<https://lbl.taleo.net/careersection/2/jobdetail.ftl?lang=en&job=76514>

<https://lbl.taleo.net/careersection/2/jobdetail.ftl?lang=en&job=76515>

Post doc positions in Joshua Heazlewood's group:

<https://lbl.taleo.net/careersection/2/jobdetail.ftl?lang=en&job=76540>

Post doc positions in Dominique Loque's group (several openings):

<https://lbl.taleo.net/careersection/2/jobdetail.ftl?lang=en&job=76592>

Please visit their website for more information: [www.jbei.org](http://www.jbei.org).



## Important Dates | Upcoming Events

### Spring 2014

1/20/14 - Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday

1/21/14 - Spring Instruction Begins

1/22/14 - PMB Seminar Series Begins

1/23 to 1/26/14 - PMB Graduate Program Recruitment Weekend (candidate interviews 1/24)

2/5/14 - The Buchanan Lecture

2/11/14 - Faculty Meeting

2/17/14 - Presidents Day Holiday

3/5/14 - Arnon Lecture

3/11/14 - Faculty Meeting

3/24 - 3/28/14 - Spring Break

3/28/14 - Cesar Chavez Holiday



4/12/14 - Cal Day

4/22/14 - Faculty Meeting

5/2/14 - PMB Spring Social, Alumni House

5/2/14 - Classes end

5/5 to 5/9/14 - Review Week

5/12 to 5/16/14 - Finals Week

5/26/14 - Memorial Day Holiday

5/29/14 - Faculty Meeting

### **Future**

9/05 - 9/7/14 - PMB Retreat, Asilomar

12/12/14 - PMB Holiday Party, Alumni House

5/15/15 - PMB Spring Social, Alumni House

111 Koshland Hall | Berkeley, California 94720 | 510.642.9999  
[pmb.berkeley.edu](http://pmb.berkeley.edu) | [pmbinfo@berkeley.edu](mailto:pmbinfo@berkeley.edu)

The PMB newsletter is produced by the Department of Plant & Microbial Biology, UC Berkeley.  
Professor Robert Fischer, Department Chair  
Professor N. Louise Glass, Associate Chair

Dana Jantz, Chief Operating Officer  
Karyn Houston, Communications / Webmaster / Newsletter Editor

Rocio Sanchez, Graduate Program  
Jenny Cornet, Undergraduate Majors

[Forward email](#)



Try it FREE today.

This email was sent to [pmbdesk@berkeley.edu](mailto:pmbdesk@berkeley.edu) by [pmbnewsletter@berkeley.edu](mailto:pmbnewsletter@berkeley.edu) |  
[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Plant & Microbial Biology | 111 Koshland Hall | University of California, Berkeley | Berkeley | CA | 94720