

Division of Life Sciences Spring 2022



As we enter our second semester of being back at Rutgers, and students are once again filling the campuses, there is a sense of new energy and excitement. Certainly, things are not what they were before, with plexiglass barriers and masks, as we are doing our due diligence to be mindful of the pandemic, but we are grateful to have faculty, students, and staff fill the classrooms and offices with chatter once again. Great things continue taking place in the Division, so I invite you to check out some of the highlights from the past semester.

Lori R. Covey
Dean of Life Sciences



Departmental Highlights



Division of Life Sciences Administration

DLS Faculty Fellow Teresa Leyro, professor of psychology, is one of two mental health experts featured in a *Business Insider* video debunking myths about stress. Take a look to see why stress can be a good thing!

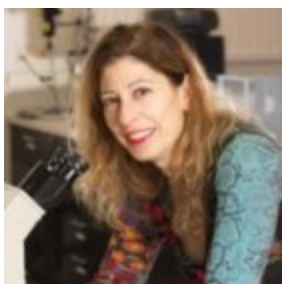
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Biological Sciences

Spearheaded by Drs. Martha Haviland and Anne Carr-Schmid, DLS was named a Rutgers Giving Day Partner to raise support for students in the Life Sciences to provide scholarships and stipends. Help our Students!

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Cell Biology and Neuroscience

Bonnie Firestein was named an American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering (AIMBE) Fellow. As an AIMBE fellow, she is recognized as one of the top 2% of medical and biological engineers.

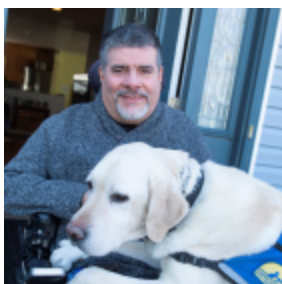
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Genetics

Devanshi Jain and a team of researchers define how the RNA helicase YTHDC2 binds RNA and controls gene expression to regulate meiosis.

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Kinesiology and Health

Javier Robles weighs in on a new NJ law that increases awareness of state employment opportunities for people with disabilities in an op-ed featured in Wider Horizons for You and Yours, (WHYY)-NPR.

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Molecular Biology and Biochemistry



Ceptur Therapeutics, a startup that has raised \$75 million, stemmed from Sam Gunderson's novel research into targeting and silencing defective, disease-causing RNA molecules.

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Office for Diversity and Academic Success in the Sciences (ODASIS)

ODASIS Alum Alister Martin was named a White House Fellow for 2021-2022, with a placement at both the Office of the Vice President and the White House Office of Public Engagement.

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In Memoriam

Two pillars of the Cell Biology and Neuroscience emeritus faculty, **Emmet Dennis** and **Francine Essien**, both instrumental in the establishment of ODASIS, recently passed away in March 2022. They leave behind a rich legacy in the students who have gone on to flourish and succeed in careers in the health professions and life sciences.



Emmet Dennis

Emmet Dennis was a distinguished scientist and academic. He served as President of the University of Liberia, Dean of University College at Rutgers University-New Brunswick, and Chair of the Board of Trustees of Tubman University. His outstanding service was recognized internationally and nationally.

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Francine Essien

Francine Essien's professional and academic life spanned decades. Her passion and concern about the under-representation of minorities in the sciences led to the establishment of the Rutgers Office for Diversity and Academic Success in the Sciences (ODASIS). She also served as a Fulbright Professor in Nigeria and received numerous awards and honors, including being named the US Professor of the Year for Research and Doctoral Universities by The Carnegie Foundation.

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Additional Department Highlights

Biological Sciences

To more closely integrate study abroad into the life sciences academic curricula and promote student involvement, Dr. Anne Carr-Schmid partnered with Rutgers Global and DLS Faculty to give Life Sciences majors an opportunity to study abroad.

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Cell Biology and Neuroscience

Research findings from Max Tischfield and his team of researchers revealed that craniosynostosis is associated with defects in the ability of meningeal lymphatic vessels to grow and remodel, which may have larger implications in understanding brain waste clearance and neurocognitive deficits.

[Read more](#)

Genetics

Meet Samuel Adeleye, a member of the Yadavalli Lab and a current Ph.D. candidate in the Microbiology and Molecular Genetics program. He is from Ondo State, Nigeria, studying the basis of bacterial response to environmental stressors at a molecular level. Learn more about his path to Rutgers and his research background!

[Read more](#)

Kinesiology and Health

Research from Steven Malin and his team recently confirmed and updated the recommendations from the American College of Sports Medicine on exercise/physical activity in individuals with type 2 diabetes.

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Molecular Biology and Biochemistry

Senior Spotlight: Meet MBB major Eric Mooney who conducts research in the Nieuwkoop Lab and is interested in pursuing a Ph.D. with a focus in synthetic biology after graduation!

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Office for Diversity and Academic Success in the Sciences (ODASIS)

Jayanne Pierre, member of the Cell Biology and Neuroscience class of 2021 and current Columbia University dental student, shares the impact of ODASIS on her professional career.

[Read more](#)



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