Berkeley Center for Green Chemistry Newsletter

Greener Solutions Presentations on December 10th

In this fall’s Greener Solutions course, two interdisciplinary teams of UC Berkeley graduate students have been investigating safer alternatives for preservatives and safer methods of designing spray polyurethane foam insulation. They will present their findings on the Berkeley campus in 714c University Hall at 9am on December 10th, 2014. To RSVP or learn more about the Greener Solutions Program, email Megan Schwarzman.

BCGC Trains Department of Toxic Substance Control Employees

BCGC Executive Director Marty Mulvihill, Associate Director Meg Schwarzman, and post-doc Heather Buckley visited Sacramento on November 17 and 21 to provide training sessions for California DTSC employees. These were the fourth and fifth meetings in a series of trainings BCGC faculty have provided as California unfolds its Safer Consumer Products program. In this month’s sessions, Meg, Marty, and Heather reviewed obtaining, evaluating and interpreting the scientific evidence needed to support selection of a “priority product.” Priority products are product-chemical combinations that the DTSC determines to be unsafe, and once they are named manufacturers must find safer alternatives. The DTSC selected three priority products this year, and will nominate more over the next three years. The three BCGC staff will continue to provide consultation to DTSC employees through the spring of 2015.

Summer Research and Graduate Funding for Students

NASA and the NSF are reaching out to college students with plenty of information. For undergraduates, next summer there are Undergraduate Research Placements in over 800 programs, including REU, NASA and other paid summer research opportunities. For financial support in graduate school, there are fellowships and graduate programs in a wide variety of STEM disciplines. For NASA-supported internships, fellowships and scholarships, visit their website for internships. For tips on applying and associated resources, visit the Pathway to Science toolbox. For opportunities specifically in the Ocean Sciences, visit this page. For opportunities specifically in Engineering, visit their page on engineering.

Undergraduate Research Opportunity: Modular Roofing

The Berkeley Center for Green Chemistry is seeking an undergraduate student to design and test greener, safer materials for use as low-cost roofing in India and throughout the developing world. This research is a partnership with the startup company ReMaterials, who offer a modular roofing solution made from waste materials. This researcher will work in the laboratory making and testing sample composite panels and will partner with a postdoctoral fellow to develop an understanding of what properties are necessary to enhance waterproofing, mold resistance, and overall durability of composites made from waste. The student will receive Chemistry research credit (10-15 hours per week, 2-3 credits) for Spring 2015, with the intention that this position will continue as a research assistantship for ~20 hours per week in Summer 2015. For more information or to sign up, email Heather Buckley.
ACS Video on the Importance of Green Chemistry by BCGC

Marty Mulvihill of BCGC joined the American Chemical Society’s Chemistry Ambassadors video project at the 248th ACS National Meeting in Dallas, where he talked about the Berkeley Center for Green Chemistry and his work with students at the center. For more information about Chemistry Ambassadors or to become one yourself, visit the ACS website.

GC3 Education Webinar on building market share for green products

Many companies have begun using green chemistry principles in designing their products and manufacturing processes, but the conversation about how best to leverage green practices to build market share is ongoing. Is it better to advertise oneself as a green company, or to focus exclusively on product performance? In this webinar from the ongoing GC3 Education series, Steve Davies from NatureWorks, Saskia Van Gendt from Method, and Dave Veeneman from Steelcase will share their approaches to marketing their sustainable practices. Topics will include opinions on green labels on product packaging, attending conferences to highlight sustainable innovations, and philosophies on expanding sustainability beyond green chemistry. Register here for the Webinar, to be held Tuesday, December 16 at 11 AM Pacific.

Registration open for presentation on assessing safer product design

Concern for the human health effects of building materials has spurred concerted industry efforts to identify potentially hazardous ingredients and limit their use in a timely manner. Join Drs. Adelina Voutchkova-Kostal of George Washington University and Jakub Kostal of Sustainability A to Z to learn about the development of a unified alternatives assessment strategy (described in the 2014 National Research Council report "A Framework to Guide Selection of Chemical Alternatives") and novel types of computational tools and techniques for assessing chemical toxicity and opportunities for designing new, safer chemicals when no appropriate substitute is available. The presentation will be held Monday, December 15 from 12 to 1:30 PM at the U.S. Green Building Council Offices in Washington, DC at 2101 L St. NW, Suite 500, preceded by a half-hour networking lunch. Call-ins welcome. Register for the event here or email rsvpevents@usgbc.org with any questions.

Schmidt-MacArthur Fellowship applications now open

The Schmidt-MacArthur Fellowship is an international fellowship program for postgraduate students and their university tutors on creative and innovative thinking around the circular economy. The program takes a multi-disciplinary approach with input across design, engineering, and business. Graduate students in design, business, or engineering are eligible for the fellowship worth £10,000. For more information or to apply, visit the Ellen MacArthur Foundation website. Applications close February 15.

San Francisco Estuary Institute seeks Environmental Analyst

SFEI is seeking an Environmental Analyst to work on the Regional Monitoring Program for Water Quality in San Francisco Bay (RMP). This is a full-time position for a candidate with a Bachelor’s degree or higher in a pertinent scientific field and work experience in water quality issues, particularly environmental chemistry. The
Environmental Analyst will be a member of the Clean Water Program at SFEI and will support diverse monitoring and research activities undertaken by the RMP and other Clean Water projects. SFEI is the premier aquatic science institute in the San Francisco Bay Area. For more information about this opportunity, visit SFEI’s listing on their website.

California Science, Technology, and Policy Fellowships.

The California Council on Science and Technology (CCST), the CCST Science and Technology Policy Fellowship places professional scientists and engineers in the California State Legislature for one-year appointments. The program is designed to enable Fellows to work hands-on with policymakers in addressing complex scientific issues as well as assume all the other legislative responsibilities of full-time legislative staffers. The Legislature benefits from having the expertise of a trained Ph.D.-level scientist, who brings significant analytical, problem solving, research, and communication skills applied through the lens of the scientific method and the Fellows gain an invaluable, hands-on learning experience about the intersection of science, technology, and policy. Click here to learn more about this program.