

Life Science Professionals Panel - Tuesday, Feb. 23 5:00-6:30 p.m.

Hear from folks what it is like to work in the life sciences, how they got to where they are, and tricks of the trade to get you to where you want to go. Our panelists will include:

Theodore Zava, '09 Biology, Research Associate/ICP-MS Supervisor, ZRT Laboratory

Mr. Zava has over 10 years of experience bringing new and innovative clinical tests to market. He develops, validates and commercializes clinical laboratory developed tests using dried samples that can be collected and stabilized at home for shipment at ambient conditions back to the laboratory for analysis.

Claire Peterson, Wildlife Veterinarian, Chintimini Wildlife Center

Dr. Peterson has extensive knowledge of domestic, exotic, and wildlife veterinary medicine. Her passion in life has always been birds, specifically wild birds including raptors. She began as a volunteer with Chintimini Wildlife Center in 2009 when she started her veterinary school career (at Oregon State University!) and has continued to refine her expertise in both domestic and exotic animal medicine. She currently provides diagnostic, surgical, and emergency care to our wildlife patients and collaborates with local veterinarians on the medical and preventative care of our non-releasable avian ambassadors. Dr. Peterson is also a falconer and an avid wildlife photographer.

Carlos "Charly" Guardia, Research Associate, National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Dr. Carlos Guardia (aka, Charly, he/him) is a Cell Biologist at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Bethesda (MD) that studied Chemistry at the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina. He did his PhD research in computational chemistry and dynamics of proteins. Then, he moved to the US and now in his postdoctoral studies he's focusing on how organelles move inside the cell. He plays the piano and video games in his free time and also plays field hockey with other adults in Washington, DC.

Matt Bacho, '92 Microbiology, Senior Regulatory Project Manager, U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA)

After graduation from OSU, Mr. Bacho moved to Maryland for a career at the US Food & Drug Administration, starting in a lab doing primarily HIV research. After more than 27 years at the FDA, he now enforces the laws regulating pediatric clinical trials, working from home in Vancouver, Washington.

Justin Hall, '11 PhD Biochemistry & Biophysics, Principal Scientist, Pfizer

Dr. Hall has been with Pfizer since 2010, and currently works on and leads teams of scientists in small-molecule drug discovery. He was recently awarded the College of Science Young Alumni Award, read more about his journey in this [Impact article](#).

Career Pathways & Organization Overview Conversations

Wednesday, Feb. 24, 5:00-6:30 p.m.

Take part in breakout room discussions with people you will love to meet! Hear about their career journey as well as future opportunities at the organizations.

Circe Verba, National Energy & Technology Laboratory (NETL)

Dr. Circe Verba is a research geologist at NETL. An undergraduate alum on OSU, she went on to work for NASA, and complete a PhD in Geochemistry from the University of Oregon. She is passionate about working with STEM students from underserved backgrounds through internships and early career opportunities, and is an avid science communicator through social media. NETL is a national laboratory system located in Albany, Oregon, and is part of the U.S. Department of Energy, which implements a broad spectrum of energy and environmental research and development programs.

Bailey Cain, Wildlife Rehabilitation Assistant, Chintimini Wildlife Center

Originally from San Marcos, CA, Bailey graduated from the University of California, Davis with a Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Science. Bailey began at Chintimini Wildlife Center as an intern in 2019 where she gained experience in wildlife care and handling and developed extensive knowledge of Oregon's native wildlife species. She was recently hired as a Wildlife Rehabilitation Assistant and currently works in CWC's Wildlife Hospital where she provides care to wildlife patients, supervises interns and volunteers, and staffs the Wildlife Hotline.

Miguel Rodriguez, Talent Development & Inclusion Strategist, OMSI

Miguel is a Mexican born immigrant, former undocumented/DACAmented individual, hip-hop and spoken word performer. He received a BS in Mathematics from Portland State University – and even though my profession is not explicitly tied to this field – this overlap, and intersection of identities, has provided me with the skills necessary to be a leader of change of my community. For the past 5+ years, Miguel has actively worked with youth, of varying ages, in the educational sector and provided mentorship, resources, and leadership development. As a Talent Development & Inclusion Strategist at OMSI, his goal is to increase representation of People of Color (PoC) in our staff and volunteers. Concurrently, Miguel analyzes, improves and creates systems that foster a stronger sense of community, while implementing active anti-racist practices into our culture to prevent PoC attrition.

David & Christine Vernier, '76 M.S. (David), Co-Presidents, Vernier Software & Technology

David's early years of teaching physics and the physical sciences in an underserved school in Cleveland, Ohio, taught him that students gain a deeper understanding of science through a combination of daily demonstrations and highly interactive experiments. It was this discovery that drove him to spend his summers trying to come up with new teaching tools to use in the

classroom. David's creativity and his passion for science education, combined with the business acumen of his wife and Vernier co-founder Christine, were the driving forces behind the early years of Vernier Software & Technology, a company they founded in 1981.

Carlos "Charly" Guardia, Research Associate, National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Dr. Carlos Guardia (aka, Charly, he/him) is a Cell Biologist at NIH in Bethesda, Maryland, and studied Chemistry at the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina. He did his PhD research in computational chemistry and dynamics of proteins. Then, he moved to the US and now in his postdoctoral studies he's focusing on how organelles move inside the cell. He plays the piano and video games in his free time and also he plays field hockey with other adults in Washington, DC.

Megan Cook, '09 Biology, Manager of Education Partnerships and Programs, Ocean Exploration Trust

Megan Cook is a 2009 graduate of OSU with a degree in biology and chemistry with an emphasis on marine biology. Megan is the Manager of Education Partnerships and Programs at Ocean Exploration Trust. Her job brings education and science together to inspire the next generation of young explorers. She loves using technology to share ocean stories with new audiences. Megan was an International Scholar studying tropical ecology at James Cook University in Australia and studied oceanography with Sea Education Association. She is also a scuba diving and emergency first response instructor, and is currently a graduate student at Duke University for a Master of Environmental Management degree focused on Environmental Leadership. In her spare time, Megan enjoys reading, traveling, and collecting googled-eyed kitchen gadgets.

Dionné Mejia, Ecological Education Coordinator, Applied Ecology Institute

Dionné is one of the lead instructors and coordinators for the *Aves Compartidas* youth program which connects students from dual-language elementary schools in the Willamette Valley to students in Guanajuato, Mexico through shared migratory birds and cultural connections. Dionné also helps coordinate the Sagebrush in Prisons Program, engaging adults in custody in vocational education training and growing sagebrush to restore habitat for the greater sage-grouse. She also provides science education to teens in juvenile detention. Dionné is a first-generation Mexican-American, born and raised in Los Angeles, California. She obtained her B.S. in Ecology, Behavior, and Evolution from the University of California San Diego and studied rove beetle diversity in the Sonoran Desert for her Master's thesis. She has worked as a teaching assistant, community college instructor, after-school tutor, resident naturalist intern in Costa Rica, and a pollinator research assistant. Dionné is returning to school in 2021 to pursue a teaching license from Oregon State University to become a public school science teacher. In her free time Dionné enjoys sewing, crocheting, riding her bike, gardening, and adventuring outdoors.

Shannon Pedersen, U.S. Dept. of Justice

Shannon Pedersen is a Trial Attorney at the Consumer Protection Branch of the U.S. Department of Justice, where her practice focuses on criminal and civil enforcement of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. Prior to joining DOJ through the Attorney General's Honors Program, Shannon clerked in the Northern District of California and, before starting her law career, worked for a number of years in the biotechnology and medical device industries. Shannon received a B.S., cum laude, from Oregon State University and a J.D., summa cum laude, from Santa Clara University School of Law.

Rita Cervera Juanes, Research Assistant Professor, Oregon National Primate Research Center (ONPRC) at OHSU

Rita Cervera Juanes is a Research Assistant Professor in the Primate Genetics Section, of the Division of Neuroscience at the ONPRC. She earned her Ph.D. in Biology from the Polytechnical University of Valencia, in Valencia Spain, in 2004. She was a postdoctoral fellow at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in San Diego and a Research Associate at the Research Center Prince Felipe in Spain from 2004-2010. Her research was focused on the reprogramming mechanisms occurring during early embryonic development in mammals. In 2011 she was recruited at the Reproductive and Developmental Sciences Division and in 2012 she joined the Division of Neurosciences at the ONPRC to expand her epigenetic studies in the field of substance use disorders.

Alexa Williams, STEM Talent Recruiter, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory

Alexa helps the brightest minds and the future of STEM find their careers! She appreciates understanding each person's values and aspirations to connect them to their next internship or early career opportunity. At PNNL, they conduct research in Earth & Coastal Sciences, Biology, Chemistry, Computational Research, Materials Science, Nuclear & Particle Physics, Quantum Information Science, Environmental Management, Renewable Energy, Computing & Analytics, Cybersecurity, and more!

Chemistry, Math, & Physics Professionals Panel

Thursday, Feb. 25, 5:00-6:30 p.m.

Hear from folks what it is like to work in the with a chemistry, math, or physics background, how they got to where they are, and tricks of the trade to get you to where you want to go.

Kevin DeWhitt, Founder, PDO Technologies

PDO Technologies is developing state-of-the-art conversion technologies that reclaim and repurpose waste plastics before they are discarded into landfills. The company has partnered with best-in-class feedstock aggregators and product offtake distributors in an effort to provide an amazing “circular economy” solution to the problem of waste plastic. Mr. DeWhitt is also the founder and former Chief Technology Officer of Agilyx, now a publicly-traded company on the Norwegian stock exchange.

Juan Aguilera, Organic Chemist, Horizon Discovery

A recent graduate from a local university with a degree in chemistry, Juan currently works as an organic chemist for a biotech company which focuses on RNA and DNA synthesis (mostly CRISPr, siRNA, among others). His work focuses on the modification of nucleotides so that they are ready to be used in oligo synthesis. Currently lives in Denver, CO and uses his time outside of work to do as many outdoor activities as possible.

Scott Crawford, Research Associate, National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL)

Dr. Scott Crawford works out of NETL in Pittsburgh, PA where he develops luminescent sensors for economically critical rare earth elements and also studies quantum materials. Scott received his BS in chemistry and economics from the University of Pittsburgh in 2013, and during this time he interned at LANXESS Corporation and conducted research in chemical engineering in the group of Prof. Sachin Velankar. Scott continued at the University of Pittsburgh for his PhD in Analytical Chemistry, graduating in 2019. During this time, he worked under the supervision of Prof. Jill Millstone, researching the luminescent properties of small coinage metal nanoparticles.

Badari Kommandur, Principal Engineer, Device Development Group, Intel Corporation

A highly accomplished R&D engineer, inventor, and team leader, Mr. Kommandur has extensive experience in business strategy, as well as product planning and development. He has been with Intel for nearly 22 years, and served in a variety of leadership roles, including Director of Strategic Technology Management and Director of Technology Strategy.

Allie Paul, Analytical Chemist, Perfect Day

Allie graduated from Willamette University in 2014 and has worked in the biotech industry as an analytical chemist since. She specializes in liquid chromatography and mass spectrometry and has worked to develop methods for various applications, including biofuels, specialty chemicals, e-cigarette aerosols, and food proteins. Her favorite thing about her job is getting to troubleshoot tricky problems and be hands-on with sensitive instrumentation. She takes great pride in producing high-quality data to further research and development at her company.

Megan Tucker, Technical Writer, Amazon

Megan Lynn Tucker is a Technical Writer at Amazon Web Services (AWS). She graduated in 2020 with a B.S. in Mathematics and a B.A. in Liberal Studies with an emphasis in writing. Prior to working at AWS, she interned with the Department of Energy to research wellbore data. Currently she works as part of the Systems Manager documentation team where she collaborates with engineers, project managers, and software developers to support the launch of new products and features. Her duties include writing content for the user guide--including tutorials and step-by-step guides--API reference, and help panes and reviewing console workflows to ensure they adhere to the AWS style.