

March 2020



SMS Connects

SMS Community Newsletter

We are TOGETHER!

A Special Message from Interim Director Ian Gould

Dear Friends,

SMS has responded to the COVID-19 threat by fully implementing ASU's policies and guidelines for both administrative and teaching operations. All teaching is now online and will be for the remainder of the semester. Telework is now the first choice and priority for as many of our staff, faculty, graduate students and post-docs as possible. Although we are committed to social distancing, our faculty, students and staff are still finding ways to work together and we are far from dormant.

These changes represent one of the largest upheavals to the teaching and administrative operations in the School's history. The transition to fully online teaching, including all laboratory courses, was accomplished in four short and remarkable days. I congratulate our amazing faculty, graduate students and staff for the way they stepped up and worked together to make all of this happen. Class attendance if anything has increased since the move to fully online, and class participation has been maintained at the highest level possible.

Our research efforts have also adapted and rescaled, with a greater emphasis on data analysis, manuscript preparation and other remote activities.

We are committed to the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff, and to ensuring they have the best environment we can manage for them to continue to thrive. Unfortunately, we have had to cancel Sun Devil Giving Day and the Eyring lectures, and our annual Student Awards Ceremony has morphed into a web-based showcase which will be featured in the next newsletter.

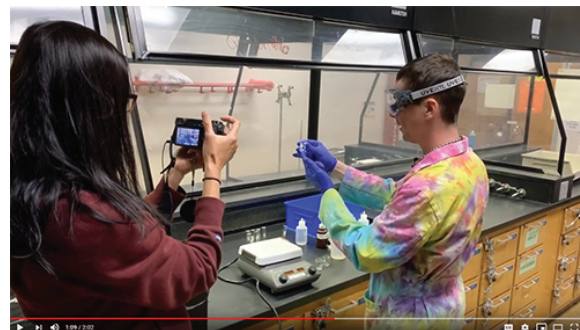
I need to thank the entire SMS community for their magnificent response to minimize the impact and threat of this pandemic. I urge as many of you as possible to stay home, stay safe and stay healthy!

Thank you!

Ian Gould
President's Professor
Interim Director

SMS Delivering 200 Lab Sessions Online to Students

How do you move nearly 200 lab sections for 4000 SMS students online in just four days? Through teamwork. Graduate students, Teaching Assistants, staff and faculty cut their spring break short to record, edit and upload new video content for the online labs without missing a beat. The new labs are a success, with nearly 8000 students participating successfully in the first week. Teamwork, innovation and hard work have allowed thousands of students to continue their semesters uninterrupted toward their educational goals.



[Read full article](#) || [Watch video](#)

News and Research Highlights



Arizona State University Professor Alexandra Navrotsky will be honored with the European Materials Research Society (E-MRS) 2020 Jan Czocharlski Award.

[read more...](#)

X-ray eyes peer deeper into deadly pathogen

Tularemia is a rare but often lethal disease. It is caused by one of the most aggressive pathogens on Earth, the bacterium *Francisella tularensis*.

In a new study, researchers at Arizona State University's Biodesign Center for Applied Structural Discovery and the School of Molecular Sciences examine a key membrane protein responsible for the bacterium's prodigious ability to infect the body and cause illness.

SNIPRs take aim at disease-related mutations

In a new study, lead author Alex Green and his colleagues describe a new method for detecting point mutations. The method can be used in conjunction with paper-based diagnostic tests (developed by Green and his colleagues), capable of pinpointing mutations and displaying a color-based readout in reactions powered by human body heat.

ASU scientists utilize nonconventional techniques to make new materials

Christina Birkel, an inorganic chemist and assistant professor in the School of Molecular Sciences at Arizona State University, is diligently working to create new materials that can be used for renewable energy, catalysts and permanent magnets.

[Read more SMS News and Research](#)

SMS Alumni Highlight

Evan Darzi: BS and MS in medicinal chemistry

SMS alumnus Evan Darzi had a rocky start at ASU initially pursuing a pharmacy degree. It wasn't until he took an organic chemistry class taught by the late professor Edward Skibo that he was inspired and found his passion.

"I took a weed-out class for medical school," Darzi explained. "Professor Skibo took me under his wing, I started doing research in his lab and realized that I really loved making molecules!"

Listen to professor Ara Austin's fascinating podcast with Evan, who ultimately received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in medicinal chemistry from the School of Molecular Sciences. He is currently working as a chemist at Icagen, a pharmaceutical biotech company focused on early drug discovery.

[Click here to listen: Drug Development and Research](#)



Featured Story: The Art and Craft of Scientific Glassblowing

Recently Verge Science published a video along with a story entitled "The Art and Craft of Scientific Glassblowing" which features scientific glassblowers Christine Roeger (who currently leads SMS and ASU's Glassblowing Facility) and Michael Wheeler (her father- retired from SMS/ASU).

"My dad always had a little shop at home. He would do side work, and my sisters and I would go out to his shop and just watch him. When I was 7 or 8, he would let us blow into the glass and blow big bubbles. Then when I was 10 to 12 years old, he would have me helping him do basic cutting and getting jobs ready for him," Roeger said.



Employment Opportunities

Teacher, Chemistry - Queen Creek Unified School District, Queen Creek, AZ

Chemist II (Job Id 901190) - City of Tempe, Tempe, AZ

Assistant Professor - Department of Biochemistry, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Please follow us on the SMS LinkedIn page for more job opportunities. Please also check Chemistry Job Resource: Chemjobber for more chemistry jobs.

Please feel free to send email to ASUSMS@asu.edu at any time with questions, concerns, or suggestions. You can visit our website at sms.asu.edu or connect with us by liking our Facebook page! Stay Safe!