

# SMS Connects - December 2021



## Congratulations to Class of 2021!

The School of Molecular Sciences congratulates its fall 2021 graduates for their hard-earned academic achievements! 91 students graduated this fall, of these, 9 earned PhD degrees, 1 earned a Master's degree, and 81 undergraduates earned Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees in chemistry, biochemistry, medicinal chemistry and environmental chemistry. We are proud of our graduates and are happy to share in the excitement of their graduation day. We look forward to hearing about their continued successes in the future!

[SMS Fall 2021 BS and BA Graduates](#)|| [SMS Fall 2021 MS and PhD Graduates](#)

## Our Students

### Jacob Garcia, PhD Chemistry

PhD chemistry graduate Jacob Garcia (Mentor: Dr. Scott Sayres) has been awarded a NRC postdoc to work on





atomic probe tomography.



**Zorica Gusic, BS Biochemistry**

Serbian native Zorica Gusic just graduated with a BS in Biochemistry. "ASU was my choice because it is one of the best universities for my biochemistry major."



**Michael Sauer, BS Biochemistry, Computational mathematical sciences**

SMS Dean's Medalist Michael Sauer conducted research with Mark Hayes on the dielectrophoretic particle capture and bolus sequestration of COVID-19 particles in a microfluidic device.

## In the News



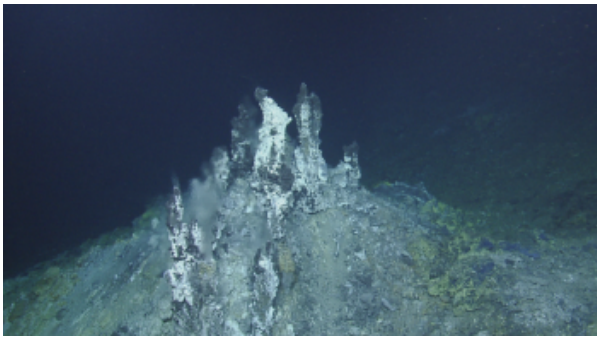
## [Christina Birkel Receives NSF CAREER award](#)

The Birkel group's work on materials for renewable energy, catalysts and permanent magnets is recognized with an NSF CAREER award.

## [The New Buseck Center for Meteorite Studies](#)

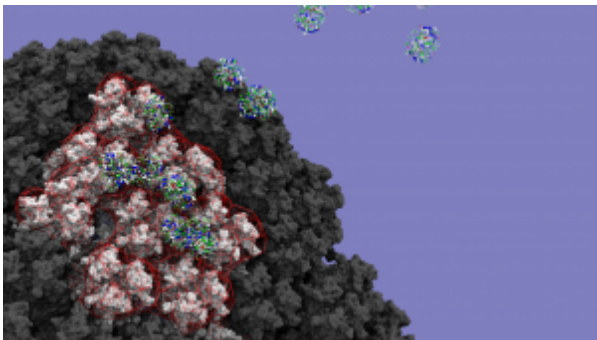
The Center for Meteorite Studies has been renamed "The Buseck Center for Meteorite Studies" in honor of Professor Peter Buseck.

## Research Highlights



### [New possibilities for oceanic life on Earth and other planets](#)

Biogeoscientists Jeffrey Dick and Everett Shock have shown that specific hydrothermal seafloor environments provide a unique habitat where organisms can thrive.



### [Rare blood clots linked to adenovirus COVID-19 vaccines.](#)

SU scientists are part of an international team that may have found a molecular mechanism behind blood clots linked to adenovirus COVID-19 vaccines.

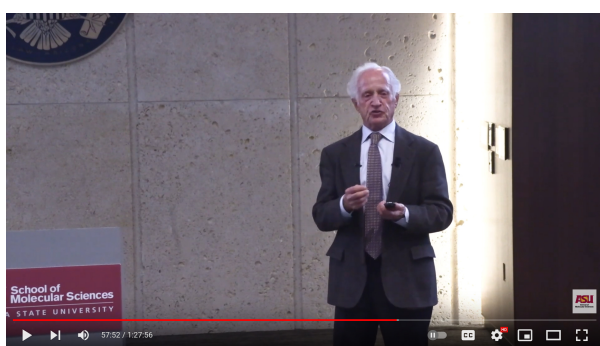
[Read more SMS News and Research](#)

## Eyring and O'Keefe Lectures

### [Fall Eyring Lecturer Mario Capechhi](#)

"The Making of a Scientist: The Unlikely





Journey of a Young Street Rogue in War-torn Italy to Stockholm"



**Inaugural O'Keeffe Lecturer Omar Yaghi**  
"Reticular Chemistry and Materials for Water Harvesting from Air Anytime Anywhere"

## Graduate Students Describe Their Research

**SMS Graduate Students**  
7 videos · 8 views · Updated today  
Public  
No description

ASU School of Molecular Sciences

- Surface-modification chemistry and photoelectrochemistry | Nghi Nguyen (1:04)
- TRPV1 Ion Channel by Nuclear Magnetic Resonance | Aerial Owens (0:55)
- Ultrafast Dynamics of Transition Metal Clusters | Jacob Garcia (1:42)
- Nanotechnology for drug and vaccine delivery | Skyler Henry (1:03)
- DNA Nanodevices | Leeza Abraham (1:07)

[Watch a new series of videos](#) where SMS graduate students describe their research and talk about why they chose ASU for their PhD.

# The End of 2021!

Dear SMS Community,

The year 2021 was unexpected, exciting and without precedent. After more than a year of teaching constrained by the pandemic, in the fall of 2021 we opened the doors for long awaited classes in person. By carefully measuring the risks and gains we developed a series of guidelines and procedures to keep everyone safe while engaged in learning.

In-person classes brought back recognizable crowds and chatter on our beautiful Palm Walk, enthusiasm for interaction between fellow students, and exchange of ideas in a cross-cultural environment. Again, teacher's messages extended beyond the class being delivered, and teacher's efforts to encourage, motivate and supervise could once again reach every student. We even held in person seminars and lecture series that reminded us how wonderful people's communication can be.

However, we still have to remember that the virus is not gone, new variants are emerging, and we have to remain cautious. The online experiences from the past year taught us that by being adaptive and flexible we can develop a successful hybrid approach to teaching, particularly as we navigate through the end of the pandemic. We can get the best of both worlds: flexibility and adaptivity of online teaching alongside safe social interactions of in person learning.

As a testament to high quality teaching delivered by our faculty, the School of Molecular Sciences continues to prosper with new recognition, discoveries and growth. Despite navigating through the pandemic, this year marks the first year when the number of our students exceeded 2000, and the number of online students bypassed the number of our immersion students. This is also the first year that our online student published a paper in a high impact journal. But best of all, we continue to prosper in graduating great students.

Congratulations graduates, class of 2021! Congratulations on your hard work and well-deserved success!

Happy Holidays and have a safe Winter Break! .

Best Regards,  
Tijana Rajh  
SMS Director

## SMS is Hiring!

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- [Lecturer - General Chemistry\\_\(AY Job #17089\)](#)
- [Instructor – General Chemistry\\_\(AY Job #17066\)](#)

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ASU School of Molecular Sciences

P.O. Box 871604, Tempe, AZ, 85287-1604, United States

