

BioNews – June 2020

Students and staff, the Biology faculty misses seeing you all. We especially miss the hum of the Science Center in the summer! We hope everyone is coping as well as can be expected, and we look forward to seeing you in person soon. In the meantime, here's some good news to celebrate....

Congratulations to Biology major Stanley Dunwell III '20 for being selected as the student speaker at the [virtual celebration for the Class of 2020](#). He did an amazing job. We can't wait to hear Stanley speak at the in-person Commencement in 2021!

Prof. Nidanie Henderson-Stull will be starting a position as a founding tenure-track Assistant Professor of Biochemistry in the new Life Sciences Concentration at Soka University of America, in Aliso Viego, CA. We will miss Nidanie tremendously as a colleague and friend, but we wish her and her family the very best in this new and exciting adventure!

Emily Park '19, Kaitlyn Tsuyuki '18, Elizabeth Parsons '20, and Prof. Jeeyon Jeong recently published [the paper](#) "PRC2-mediated H3K27me3 modulates shoot iron homeostasis in *Arabidopsis thaliana*" in the journal *Plant Signaling & Behavior*. They showed that histone 3 lysine 27 trimethylation modulates iron regulation in roots, in part by targeting the genes *YSL1* and *IMA1*. This has consequences for understanding iron limitation in plant growth. Great work everyone!

Big news from Prof. Michael Hood's lab: his grant entitled "Resistance Variation to Endemic Disease as a Risk Factor to New Disease Emergence" has been funded by the National Institutes of Health! Amherst College is the lead institution, with collaborators from the University of Maryland and the Parco Naturale del Marguareis in Italy. This grant will create laboratory and field research opportunities for Prof. Hood and his students for the next four years. Congratulations!

In other news, a huge THANK YOU to Prof. Caroline Goutte for serving as department chair for the past 2.5 years. She has taken on more challenges than anyone could have anticipated! And welcome to Prof. Joe Trapani, who will be stepping into the role on July 1.

News of Biology alumni

Caitlin Niesen-Blank '14 recently defended her Ph.D. dissertation entitled ""Activating DNA Unwinding for Eukaryotic Replication Initiation" in the Bell Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Congrats Dr. Niesen-Blank!

Have a news item to share? Please send it to Prof. Clotfelter at edclotfelter@amherst.edu.