

Careers in Molecular Biosciences Mini-Course

Speaker Biographies



Scott Saracco, Ph.D. **Team Lead, Protein Analytics Team, Monsanto**

After obtaining a B.S. in Biotechnology from the University of Delaware and a short time at DuPont examining plant gene expression, Dr. Saracco started his Ph.D. research on ascorbate mutants and oxidative stress tolerance in *Arabidopsis* with Dr. Rob Last at the Boyce Thompson Institute at Cornell University. He moved to Dr. Tom Fox's lab to study yeast mitochondrial protein import using genetics and cell biology and graduated in 2002. Dr. Saracco returned to the plant field for his postdoctoral research with Dr. Rick Vierstra at the University of Wisconsin – Madison. Dr. Saracco used proteomics to identify and characterize ubiquitinated proteins in *Arabidopsis* and further elucidated the Small Ubiquitin-like Modifier (SUMO) pathway and co-discovered a class of novel Membrane-anchored Ubiquitin-fold proteins (MUB).

Dr. Saracco joined Monsanto in Saint Louis in 2007 where he worked on projects to improve yield and stress tolerance in corn and soybeans. After six years in early-phase discovery, Dr. Saracco moved to enabling technologies teams – first leading the Nucleic Acid Analytics team and currently as Protein Analytics team lead. Both teams function as core facilities to deliver data to project groups across Monsanto.



Lou Walcer **Director, McGovern Family Center for Venture Development in the Life Sciences, Cornell University**

Lou Walcer was appointed in June 2011 as the first Director of the Kevin M. McGovern Family Center for Venture Development in the Life Sciences at Cornell University. Lou came to this role with a track record of building and launching new products and new ventures as a Marketing/Business Development/New Product Development Director and Consultant to Merck, Schering-Plough and Wyeth; as Officer and Consultant to many Biotech/Medical Device companies; as President of the medical device drug delivery company Medimop USA; and as a Consultant to and Senior Commercialization Officer at Cleveland Clinic Innovations.

Lou earned a B.A. degree from Cornell University's College of Arts & Sciences, and a Master of Business Administration from New York University's Stern School.



Jeff Fearn, Ph.D. **Senior Technology Licensing Officer, Cornell University**

Jeff manages a diverse portfolio of life sciences, biomedical engineering, nanotechnology and polymer chemistry technologies.

Jeff spent five years at Fisher Scientific where he was a Life Sciences Product Manager overseeing a portfolio of over fifteen well known life science vendor partners. He was responsible for the sales, profitability and marketing of these products through Fisher. Previously, he spent almost ten years at Upstate Biotechnology in various capacities of new product development, quality assurance and product marketing. He obtained a PhD in Biological Chemistry from the University of Illinois - Chicago and a BS in Biochemistry from Cornell University, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. He is a member of the Licensing Executives Society and the Association of University Technology Managers.

Kristina Blake-Hodek, Ph.D. **Assistant Professor of Biology,** **Department of Biological and Chemical Sciences, Wells College**

Kristina Blake-Hodek is an Assistant Professor of Biology in the Department of Biological and Chemical Sciences at Wells College in Aurora, New York. After receiving a dual B.A. in Biology and Chemistry from St. Olaf College in 1999, Dr. Blake-Hodek completed her Ph.D. research in the lab of Dr. Tim Huffaker at Cornell University. She received her Ph.D. in Genetics in 2009.

Dr. Blake-Hodek has worked in her current position at Wells College since 2009, focusing her research on understanding the regulation of microtubule dynamics by plus-tip tracking proteins. In addition to her position at Wells College, she currently works in Dr. Mike Goldberg's lab at Cornell University. Her research there focuses on understanding the role of kinases and phosphatases in entering, maintaining, and exiting both mitosis and meiosis (M. phase).

Speaker Biographies (Continued)



Krishna Ramanujan **Life Sciences Writer, Cornell News Service**

Krishna Ramanujan has covered Life Sciences research for the Cornell News Service since 2005. He writes on a wide range of topics, including genetics, biological sciences, ecology, veterinary sciences and ornithology.

Prior to Cornell, Ramanujan was a science writer at NASA, where he wrote about climate change research from 2001-2005. He has an MA in science journalism from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where his advisor was Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Deborah Blum. While in graduate school, he wrote for the local newspaper, The Capital Times, and Earthwatch Radio, an environmental radio program. He has written over 1,500 news stories.

Jan Allen, Ph.D. **Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs,** **Cornell University Graduate School**

Jan Allen is Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs in the Graduate School at Cornell University. Her research in graduate education and graduate student development focuses on mentoring and ethics. From 2005 to 2012, she was Associate Dean for Ph.D. Programs at Columbia University in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. From 2002-2005 she was Associate Dean in the Graduate School at Northwestern University. For 20 years she was a faculty member at the University of Tennessee (College of Human Ecology) and Assistant Dean of UT's Graduate School (1997-2000). As a faculty member her research and writing focused on children's cognition and moral reasoning, children's political socialization, and children and stress. She is the author of The New Faculty and Graduate Mentor (Stylus). She presents workshops on mentoring, teaching, and graduate student "survival skills."

Allen's Ph.D. is from Purdue University and her M.S. is from the University of Oklahoma, both in child development. Her B.S. degree is in education from Oklahoma Baptist University.



Anne Poduska, Ph.D. **Graduate & International Student Career Advisor, Cornell Career Services**

As the Graduate & International Student Career Advisor, Anne Poduska provides career support for three populations of students: graduate students seeking careers outside of academia; international students conducting a global job search; and domestic students pursuing international work opportunities.

Poduska consults with students on their career questions and job-search documents and educates students on resources and approaches for career development. She also collaborates with Cornell's career offices, graduate fields, and student groups to increase awareness of career resources for graduate and international students. In 2012, she co-authored a book chapter on non-academic science careers for the National Science Teacher's Association's Exemplary Science for Building Interest in STEM Careers.

Poduska draws upon her five years of international experience, which includes teaching English in Guangdong, China, and conducting graduate and postdoctoral chemistry research and science outreach activities in Bangalore, India. Prior to joining Career Services and the Graduate School, she worked at the American Association for the Advancement of Science's Research Competitiveness Program, where she oversaw the peer review process for grant competitions. Poduska received a M.S. and Ph.D. from Cornell University in theoretical chemistry and science communication, and a B.A. in English and chemistry from Macalester College.

