

August 9, 2023

CSUBIOTECH is pleased to announce the 2023 Faculty-Graduate Student Research Collaboration Program awards. CSUBIOTECH is making 20 awards totaling \$196,725.98 to CSU faculty-graduate student teams at 16 CSU campuses.

(CSUBIOTECH) aims to support faculty-graduate student research collaborations across the California State University (CSU) system.

Awardees of the Faculty-Graduate Student Research Collaboration Program are supported by up to a total of \$10,000 for student salary and of which \$2,500 can be used for supplies, equipment and services to support the faculty mentor's laboratory.

The 2023 Faculty-Graduate Student Research Collaboration Program awardees are (in alphabetical order):

- 1. Romualda Aquino** (Chemistry & Biochemistry, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona)  
Award: \$10000 for the proposal titled "Effect of modifying nickel catalyst wingtips for C-F activation in pharmaceutical synthesis"  
Mentor: S. Chantal E. Stieber
- 2. Dennis Ashong** (Chemistry & Biochemistry, California State University, Fresno)  
Award: \$10000 for the proposal titled "Fighting Prostate Cancer with JJ-450 Based PROTACs"  
Mentor: Qiao-Hong Chen
- 3. Ryan Bench** (Biological Sciences, California State University San Marcos)  
Award: \$10000 for the proposal titled "Exploring the influence of adipocytes on breast cancer metastasis"  
Mentor: Carlos Luna Lopez
- 4. Justin Brasil** (Biology, Sonoma State University)  
Award: \$10000 for the proposal titled "Phenotypic Consequences of Variation at a Metabolic Gene, Succinate Dehydrogenase, Involved in the Response to Stress in a Montane Leaf Beetle"  
Mentor: Nathan Rank
- 5. Zikai Kevin Chen** (Animal Science, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo)  
Award: \$10000 for the proposal titled "Integrated OMICs and Machine Learning Approaches to Understand Mastitis Development in Dairy Cows"  
Mentor: Mohammed Abo Ismail

- 6. Ulysses Hernandez** (Biological Sciences, California State University, Los Angeles)  
Award: \$10000 for the proposal titled “Improving environmental DNA (eDNA) detection of California marine ostracod crustaceans.”  
Mentor: Elizabeth Torres
- 7. Noorhoda Kazemi** (Physics and Astronomy, California State University, Northridge)  
Award: \$10000 for the proposal titled “Optical studies of microplastics with optical tweezers and Raman spectroscopy”  
Mentor: Anna Bezryadina
- 8. Ellen Kuang** (Chemistry and Biochemistry, San Diego State University)  
Award: \$10000 for the proposal titled “Elucidating the biochemical mechanism behind the non-lethal intercolony inhibition (“sibling rivalry”) in *Marinobacter* and its effects on harmful algal blooms”  
Mentor: Christopher Harrison
- 9. Giuseppina Lanzilli** (Biological Sciences, California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt)  
Award: \$10000 for the proposal titled “The molecular and cellular basis of olfaction in salamanders with diverse life histories”  
Mentor: Karen Kiemnec-Tyburczy
- 10. Laura Martins** (Biological Sciences, San José State University)  
Award: \$10000 for the proposal titled “Identifying Proteins that Mediate Cellular Behaviors in Response to Higher Intracellular pH”  
Mentor: Bree Grillo-Hill
- 11. Christopher Nunez** (Chemistry and Biochemistry, California State University, Fullerton)  
Award: \$10000 for the proposal titled “Determining the role of acetylation in PTBP1 RNA binding affinity”  
Mentor: Niroshika Keppetipola
- 12. Janelli Pineda** (Chemistry and Biochemistry, California State University, Northridge)  
Award: \$10000 for the proposal titled “Investigation of Yen1-RFP in Double Strand Break Repair in *S. cerevisiae*”  
Mentor: Paula Fischhaber
- 13. Melanie Ponce** (Biological Sciences, California State University San Marcos)  
Award: \$10000 for the proposal titled “Bioprospecting for Multi-functional Cellulases in the Cow Rumen Microbiome”  
Mentor: Matthew Escobar
- 14. Dikshant Sagar** (Computer Science, California State University, Los Angeles)

Award: \$10000 for the proposal titled “Unsupervised Deep Learning-Based Clustering of Cytometric Data for Identification of Multiple Myeloma Blood Cancer Cells”

Mentor: Navid Amini

**15. Preeti Sundaramurthi** (Biology, California State University, East Bay)

Award: \$10000 for the proposal titled “Octopamine-mediated circuits and molecular basis of sleep and wakefulness”

Mentor: Divya Sitaraman

**16. Andrew Tompkins** (Psychology, California State University, Dominguez Hills)

Award: \$10000 for the proposal titled “Changes in neuroproteomics associated with drug abuse”

Mentor: Philip Vieira

**17. Grace Tuthill** (Biology, San Francisco State University)

Award: \$10000 for the proposal titled “Elusive and Vulnerable: Evaluating spatial and temporal variation in the distribution of the Reef Manta (Mobula alfredi) using Environmental DNA”

Mentor: Karen Crow

**18. Kameron Wong** (Biological Sciences, California State University, Long Beach)

Award: \$10000 for the proposal titled “Sex specific responses of adult zebrafish exposed to tetrobromobisphenol A”

Mentor: Erika Holland

**19. Joseph Yull** (Biological Sciences, California State University, Sacramento)

Award: \$10000 for the proposal titled “Determining the neurodevelopmental impact of bisphenol S exposure using Drosophila melanogaster as a model”

Mentor: Kimberly Mulligan

**20. Shengpeng Zhuo** (Chemical and Materials Engineering, San José State University)

Award: \$10000 for the proposal titled “Production of alpha-ionone from baker’s yeast”

Mentor: Katy Kao

For more information about this program, see the program portfolio at the CSUBIOTECH website (<https://www2.calstate.edu/impact-of-the-csu/research/CSUBIOTECH/Pages/grants-and-awards-programs.aspx>) or contact Ikhide Imumorin (Executive Director, CSUBIOTECH; [iimumorin@sdsu.edu](mailto:iimumorin@sdsu.edu)). All CSUBIOTECH grants and awards can be searched at the program’s database: <http://CSUBIOTECH.org/grants/database/>. Program impacts, including student outcomes and annual reports, can be found at the program dashboard: <https://CSUBIOTECH.org/grants/CSUBIOTECH-data-dashboard/>.