



SCIENCE STORIES

FROM

CAL STATE EAST BAY



DEAN CARMEN BUSTOS-WORK'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

Spring has been an energizing and inspiring semester for the College of Science at Cal State East Bay. Across campus, we've seen the power of student achievement, faculty excellence, and community connection come together in meaningful and energizing ways.



We celebrated our students through events like the OSCAR Student Showcase and Honors Convocation, where their research, creativity, and dedication to being a scholar were on full display. Please see the photos from the Honor's celebration. From three-minute research presentations at Grad Slam to hands-on innovation at Innovation Fest, where our students turn ideas into cool start-ups. Students are participating in research, internships, volunteer work, and startup ideas. There are numerous ways our students are applying what they learn through hands-on opportunities and applying these experiences to make a change in the real-world.

Our faculty continue to make an impact in teaching, research, and service. This semester, we celebrated a wide range of recognitions and milestones. Among them, Dr. Julie Glass was named an American Council on Education (ACE) Fellow, Professor Divya Sitaraman received both an ARIS Research Fellowship and a STEM-NET Faculty Fellowship, and Dr. Moayed Daneshyari was selected for the CSU Faculty Showcase for his work on AI and social justice. Teaching excellence was recognized with Dr. Mikahl Banwarth-Kuhn receiving the MAA Henry L. Alder Award, and research advanced through new grant fund

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ing, including Dr. Hongye Wang's work on food safety and environmental health and a Presidents' Commission Scholar award supporting research on disease in amphibians led by Dr. Thomas Jenkinson and Ms. Julie Ann Oropesa.

We also recognized the careers of Professors Kevin Brown and Leann Christianson from Computer Science, who will retire at the end of this semester. Their years of teaching, mentorship, and service have had a lasting impact on generations of students and alumni.

We are also strengthening pathways for students through expanded internships, career connections, and partnerships across the region. Events like our STEM Career Fair, alumni panels, and outreach to local high schools are helping us build a stronger pipeline and ensure our students are prepared for what comes next.

The Green Biome Institute (GBI) has expanded its footprint and now has native plants in front of the Braddock Building. The Biology Club also came to fill the planter boxes outside of Science with edible plants that we will foster over the summer.

As we look ahead, we are focused on growing opportunities for students through innovation, research, and community-engaged learning. One important way we are doing this is through the Dean's Innovation Fund, which supports new ideas, student-led projects, and emerging programs that would not otherwise be possible.

Warm regards,
Carmen
Dean, College of Science

Stay Connected



Science Stories Podcast

Science Stories from CalState East Bay brings scientists together in human conversation. From first-generation students to faculty researchers, each episode explores the people and ideas shaping science in the Bay Area. Hear the stories behind the research, the curiosity behind the questions, and the community driving discovery at Cal State East Bay.

[Listen to Science Stories](#)



Celebrating College of Science Graduates

On May 16, more than 1,000 College of Science graduates crossed the commencement stage, celebrating years of resilience, curiosity, and dedication. Surrounded by proud families, faculty, and supporters, graduates marked not only the completion of their degrees but the beginning of new possibilities as future clinicians, engineers, scientists, researchers, and tech leaders ready to make an impact in the East Bay and beyond.

[View Graduate Celebrations](#)

Faculty Spotlight:

Chris Baysdorfer **A Statewide Effort to Protect Endangered California Plants**



“What can we do at CSUEB that other Universities can’t do?” The year was 2019 and the “we” in this case being Chris Baysdorfer, Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences and Randy Davis, cofounder of the DNA sequencing company Genia and former student at CSUEB. Since our work through the Green Biome Institute (GBI) would be privately funded, we could break free from scientific ‘fashion’ and pursue goals that other universities and organizations were unable or reluctant to explore.

The goals we settled on were as follows: First, we would sequence the genomes of all endangered California plants. Second, we would assist the California botanical community with tasks they need to complete. We would also pursue individual, specific research interests and we would center student involvement in all work that we did.

How have we done? Well, we have sequenced the genomes of over 220 individual species as of May 2026 with another 20-30 in the pipeline. We have joined with 10 different botanical partners to perform population genetics studies, a way to determine genetic relationships and gene pool depth. We have done extensive work on specific groups of plants, the manzanitas and fritillaries being the most studied. As for student involvement, over the past 6 years more than 1200 students have worked on GBI projects in class, over a dozen graduate students have done their thesis work on GBI projects and more than 100 high school students have worked on GBI projects during the summer.

What about the future? There are an additional 400 or so endangered species to sequence and now that population genetics is available to the community free of charge, there is no shortage of projects for us to work on. And since every year there are new students coming to campus, we always have a motivated and willing group of younger researchers to work with.

Student Spotlight:

Julie Ann Oropesa **Finding Purpose Through Research**



Julie Ann Oropesa, a sophomore studying Ecology and Evolution, returned to East Bay after a three-year gap with renewed ambition and a clear sense of direction. While she initially aimed for a career in wildlife conservation, she discovered an unexpected passion in the lab.

Now a member of the Jenkinson Lab, Julie has immersed herself in hands-on research working to protect frogs and salamanders from a deadly pandemic disease. This shift has not only reshaped her academic path but also fueled her drive to grow within the scientific community.

Beyond research, Julie is committed to giving back. She volunteers at Science Olympiads and serves as the Biology Club's event coordinator, creating opportunities for others to engage in science. She is also a recipient of the STEM Pathways scholarship and was recently accepted to the Priority Recruitment Scholar program in her national research society. Through these experiences, she has found a strong sense of belonging and values the supportive campus community.

Outside the classroom, Julie enjoys nature hikes and solo road trips, embracing both adventure and discovery. Looking ahead, she hopes to deepen her research experience and continue pursuing opportunities in science driven by curiosity, resilience, and purpose.

2026 College of Science Distinguished Alumni

Brad McCullough

Advancing Systems and Support That Endure



From shaping global systems at Chevron to supporting students at Cal State East Bay, Brad McCullough has built a legacy rooted in impact that lasts. Over a 36-year career, he worked at the intersection of finance, technology, and operations—quietly helping power complex transformation at scale.

Today, his focus has shifted closer to home: mentoring, community leadership, and opening doors for the next generation through scholarships and service.

How does a career in systems turn into a lifelong commitment to people?

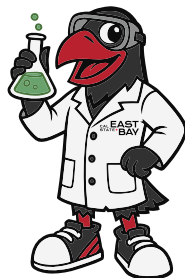
[**Read more here.**](#)

Research Highlights



The College of Science values and celebrates hands-on experience, real-world applications, and opportunities to work closely with faculty on research projects. Research experiences help students develop critical reasoning skills and deepen their understanding of the course content. These research experiences benefit our students academically and professionally, enabling them to engage in meaningful work and make valuable contributions to their communities and society.

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