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LA-SiGMA Excites with the Hire of Eleven Professors

Exciting things are happening in the world of computational materials in Louisiana, specifically among the Louisiana Alliance for Simulation-Guided Materials Applications (LA-SiGMA) member institutions. A mix of extremely distinguished senior faculty and up-and-coming junior faculty has recently joined the LA-SiGMA team. These eleven professors (see list in sidebar) will bring new blood to the group of 70 LA-SiGMA faculty.

These eleven professors have recently started teaching or will begin this fall at Tulane University, Xavier University, Louisiana State University, Louisiana Tech University, and UNO.

Among this impressive group are a Chemical and Biomolecular Department Chair at Tulane (Robinson), an LSU recipient of the Ralph E. Powe Junior Faculty Enhancement Award (Brylinski), and a previous Associate Director of the Environmental Molecular Sciences Laboratory at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (Shelton). Other notable achievements of the new hires include: postdoc work at the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague and an assistant professorship at the University of Puerto Rico (Riley); the first recipient of the William Wiley Distinguished Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Department of Energy's Environmental Molecular Sciences Laboratory (Lopata); and Ph.Ds from Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland (Brylinski); UCLA (Lopata); Florida State University (Whaley); the University of Wisconsin-Madison (Kumar); the University of Virginia (Chrisey); and the University of Florida (Chakravory) to name a few.

William Shelton, Ph.D., who in the fall of 2013 will become a professor of Computational Physics and Chemistry at LSU, is completing his role as the Associate Director of the Environmental Molecular Sciences Laboratory at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, a U.S. Department of Energy government research laboratory in Richland, WA. Shelton received his Ph.D. in theoretical condensed matter physics from the University of Cincinnati.

> ***"LA-SiGMA provides a very unique environment that spans many disciplines and promotes highly interdisciplinary collaborations facilitating research of individual groups."***
>
> ***- Michal Brylinski***

Shelton is internationally recognized for his contributions in the field of computational materials and chemical sciences. Most of his work has been in collaboration with experimental groups, focusing on the iteration between theory and experiment. Shelton has authored over one hundred peer-reviewed papers, has been an invited speaker at numerous national and international meetings and has won the following high performance computing awards: The Gordon Bell (three times), The Computerworld Smithsonian, and The Supercomputing High Performance Computing Challenge (three times).

Another award winner, Michal Brylinski, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Chemistry and The Center for Computation and Technology (CCT) at LSU.

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2013 LA-SiGMA Hires

Anne Robinson (Tulane)
Chemical & Biomolecular Chair

Kevin Riley (Xavier)
Computational Chemistry

Michal Brylinski (LSU)
Biology

Bill Shelton (LSU)
Chemical Engineering

Kenneth Lopata (LSU)
Chemistry

Revati Kumar (LSU)
Chemistry

Ye Xu (LSU)
Chemical Engineering

Clint Whaley (LSU)
Computer Science

Doug Chrisey (Tulane)
Materials Engineering Chair

Prabhu Arumugam (LA Tech)
Carbon Nanomaterial Chemistry

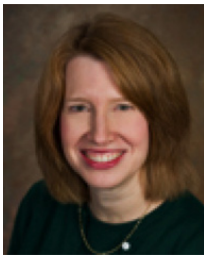
Dhruva Chakravory (UNO)
Chemistry

To read more about the ten LA-SiGMA hires, go to: http://www.institute.loni.org/lasigma/people_la.php

Brylinski received the Ralph E. Powe Junior Faculty Enhancement Award last summer, which recognizes exceptional academic work by university junior faculty within several disciplines. The nationally administered award comes with a grant, which the recipient's institution matches. This award is designed to enhance the recipient's professional growth in the early stages of his or her career.

Brylinski, who received his Ph.D. from Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland, says professional growth is part of what drew him to LSU and ultimately led to a position with LA-SiGMA. "Association with LA-SiGMA gave me a great chance to move my research to a new level, by exploring sophisticated scientific computing areas," said Brylinski. "LSU and LA-SiGMA provide a very unique environment that spans many disciplines and promotes highly interdisciplinary collaborations facilitating research of individual groups."

Anne Robinson, Ph.D., also appreciates the collaboration among



different disciplines. Robinson is a professor at Tulane and Chair of the Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering. The approach her lab takes in its major research initiatives uses techniques in molecular biology, genetic engineering, and biophysical chemistry to identify and study macromolecules at both an atomic and cellular level. Ultimately, the Robinson laboratory is interested in understanding the fundamental interactions between molecules, both in isolation and in the complex environment of the cell.

Robinson earned her title of department chair in January of 2012; prior to her time at Tulane, she was a professor and associate chair at the University of Delaware (UD), where her academic career began. A Johns Hopkins University graduate, she earned both her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Chemical Engineering before also earning her Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Robinson also held the title of National Institute of Health postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Biology at MIT before her first faculty position.

The hiring of such senior faculty and rising junior faculty helps LA-SiGMA in living out its science, computational science and recruiting missions. With various research and education backgrounds, the LA-SiGMA faculty helps to build statewide interdisciplinary research collaborations among other experts in their fields, which will ultimately effect a transformative and sustainable change in computational materials research, education and applications throughout the State of Louisiana.

LA-SiGMA is in the third of five years of forming a highly focused statewide research consortium which capitalizes on intellectual talent, combines the pertinent elements developed under previous RII awards, and leverages the state-of-the-art Cyberinfrastructure (CI) that has recently become available to position Louisiana as a major hub of innovation in computational materials science. LA-SiGMA features comprehensive plans for diversity, education and workforce development, cyberinfrastructure, and external engagement.

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