

UCR INTERNATIONAL SCHOLAR NEWSLETTER

Happy February!



Thank you, Dr. Wei Guo!

Thank you so much to Dr. Guo for speaking about their journey at the January 28th Meet & Greet! We appreciate everyone who made time out of their day to join us for that event.

Ahead of our next Meet & Greet on **February 25th**, learn a little bit about our next speaker, Pallavi Agarwal, and their journey on page 2!

UPCOMING ISS EVENTS

FEBRUARY MEET & GREET

Where: HUB 265

When: February 25th,

Noon – 1pm

Please come meet our new scholars! As always, we will provide lunch!

MARCH MEET & GREET

Where: HUB 265

When: March 25th,

Noon – 1pm

Please come meet our new scholars! As always, we will provide lunch!

SCHOLAR COFFEE HOURS

What: Meet to chat with other scholars – bring your own beverage and make some friends!

When: Fridays 11 AM – Noon

Where: Outside of The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf

IMPORTANT UPDATE FROM THE ISS OFFICE

Scholars who are already at UC Riverside are advised to avoid international travel unless absolutely necessary.

H-1B visa holders seeking a new visa are currently subject to increased social media vetting, which may result in significant delays in visa processing.

Q&A WITH FEBRUARY MEET & GREET GUEST SPEAKER

Dr. Pallavi Agarwal

Please tell us about your pre-UCR background.

Before coming to UCR, I led a government-funded project. I was a young scientist Principal investigator for the SEED project.

Please briefly describe your role at UCR.

I am a passionate Sustainable Agriculture scientist with my expertise in plant - microbe interaction, transcriptomics and metabolomics-driven crop improvement. My research bridges biotechnology, soil microbiology and sustainable agriculture.

What are some of your favorite memories at UCR?

I have enjoyed International Scholar Coffee Hours, interactions with people from around the world, and of course sun sets over the Box Springs Mountain and my walks through palm-lined paths.

Do you have any advice for incoming international scholars?

A clear mindset to adapt to a new place would help to adjust better. Build hobbies, explore and meet people outside academia too.



CULTURAL CONVERSATION CLASS

If you or your spouse is interested, please participate in the Cultural Conversation Class to help improve your English and to meet new friends. Thank you to the regular attendees for helping us make CCC successful!

Student Services Building 2nd
Floor, Conference Room
Every Tuesday, 1-2PM

Instructor Sandra Ingram
Sandra Ingram is a Riverside native whose interests include cross-cultural communication, visiting national parks, and theater arts.

This Month's Headline Scholar

Dr. Mahoubeh Ahmadi

Molecular Cell & Systems Bio Department

The Scholars team at the International Office would like to congratulate Dr. Mahboubeh Ahmadi on receiving the Taking Flight Award from CURE Epilepsy.



I am a postdoctoral researcher at the University of California, Riverside, with research interests centered on hippocampal circuit mechanisms underlying epilepsy. My work focuses on the input-specific recruitment and synaptic dynamics of dentate gyrus CCK interneurons, with the goal of elucidating how neuromodulatory regulation of inhibition influences seizure burden and associated behavioral comorbidities.

I received my doctoral from Tarbiat Modares University, Iran where my research examined the role of dopamine in synaptic plasticity and spatial memory in hippocampal circuits following epilepsy.

My postdoctoral training at Institute of Experimental Medicine in Budapest and Inserm institute in Paris expanded my technical expertise to include patch-clamp electrophysiology, two-photon imaging, and behavioral analyses, allowing me to investigate circuit mechanisms across multiple hippocampal subregions, including CA3 and CA2, in models of epilepsy and neuropsychiatric disorders. Collectively, these experiences inform my long-term objective of developing mechanistic, circuit-based therapeutic strategies to alleviate seizures and improve behavioral outcomes in epilepsy.

To read more about Dr. Ahmadi's success, please read the article attached below:

<https://insideucr.ucr.edu/awards/2026/02/03/postdoc-receives-cure-epilepsys-taking-flight-award>

WHAT TO DO THIS MONTH IN RIVERSIDE

WOMENS TENNIS VS UC SAN DIEGO

WATCH OUR HIGHLANDERS TAKE ON UC SAN DIEGO.

SRC TENNIS COURTS
WEDNESDAY MARCH 4, 2026
12:00 PM

RIVERSIDE LAWN BOWLING CLUB 100TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

THIS SPECIAL EVENT WILL FEATURE ORGANIZED LAWN BOWLING GAMES,
LIGHT REFRESHMENTS.

FAIRMOUNT PARK
SATURDAY FEBRUARY 28, 2026
8:30 AM - 3PM

UCR CHOIRS: CHAMBER SINGERS AND CHORALE:

ENJOY A RELAXING EVEING WITH THE UCR CHOIRS.

UNIVERSITY THEATRE
SUNDAY MARCH 8, 2026
7 PM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I NEED TO LEAVE THE U.S. AND THE ISS OFFICE HAS NOT SIGNED MY DS-2019 DOCUMENT! IS THAT OK?

Please know that you do not need a travel signature on your DS-2019 document to either remain in or to depart the U.S. You do need a valid travel signature to return to the U.S. in J-1 status. A valid travel signature must be no more than twelve months old on the date that you return to the U.S.

If you are departing the U.S. soon and know that your travel signature will expire by the time you expect to return to the U.S., please contact our international scholar's office at internationalscholars@ucr.edu. If your DS-2019 is going to expire soon, please consult with your department to extend your stay and then contact our scholar advisor. **Please remember that travel at the current time carries abnormally high risk.**

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I END MY UCR APPOINTMENT EARLY AND/OR DEPART THE UNITED STATES AND DO NOT INTEND TO RETURN TO THE U.S. FOR MY J PROGRAM?

If you are a scholar and you depart the U.S. early (more than 15 days before your DS-2019 end date) and you do not intend to return to the U.S. for the remainder of your J- program, please discuss this with your faculty sponsor. Please also email our advisors so that they can advise you on the steps and the visa implications of ending your program early.

PICTURES FROM OUR EVENTS

Thank you, as always, to participants in scholar events.

