

Member Profile: Corine Lau
by Alyson Smith

Corine Lau's love of science began during her high school biology coursework. Encouraged by her college professor, Dr. Bonita Brewer at the University of Washington, she began her training as a scientist studying DNA replication in yeast. She contributed to two peer-reviewed articles during her three years of working in Dr. Brewer's laboratory.



Lau obtained her Ph.D. from the University of Colorado, Boulder under the guidance of Dr. Mark Winey. For her thesis work, she studied spindle pole body duplication in yeast. Spindle pole bodies are the yeast equivalent of centrosomes (cellular structures that play a critical role in the cell cycle in higher eukaryotes) and are essential for proper cell division. Lau's positive experience in graduate school continued to motivate her to pursue a career in science.

She moved to San Diego in 2004 for postdoctoral studies in the lab of Dr. Douglass Forbes at the University of California, San Diego. There she studied the regulation of assembly of the cell nucleus using extracts of *Xenopus* frog eggs and mammalian cells. After completing her postdoctoral training, Lau decided to take some time off to transition into industry and to take care of her family. She desired to translate her scientific training into a field with a direct impact on healthcare.

While taking caring for her daughters, Lau began part-time work from home for [BioMed Bridge](#), a scientific writing and editing firm. Through BioMed Bridge, she worked for Nature Education as a team member for the "[Ask an Expert](#)" column, writing answers to questions on a broad range of topics in biology posed by undergraduate and graduate students. A couple years later, she took on additional part-time work for [BioBase](#), a bioinformatics company focused on scientific databases, working as a curator for the yeast database. In this position, she stayed up to date on the current literature and curated relevant results into database annotations.



About six months ago, Lau began her first full-time position outside of academia as a scientific writer for [Pathway Genomics](#). Pathway uses cutting-edge technology to provide genetic testing with the aim of

promoting patient health. Lau enjoys the new challenges involved in being a part of this company, where she is responsible for writing scientific content for genetic reports and marketing materials. She also has the opportunity to interact with multiple groups, including the genetics, marketing, and software engineering teams.

Lau first joined AWIS-San Diego when she was invited by a colleague to attend the Open House in 2006. As she had some web design experience, she decided to join the Website Committee, where she served as a committee member, then as co-chair. She was also co-chair for the Working Moms Coffee Club. She helped organize the Scholars celebration in 2008 and the Women in Science and Technology (WIST) conference in 2009. In 2012, she joined the AWIS-SD board, serving as treasurer and currently as past treasurer. She is grateful for her involvement with AWIS-SD, where she has met and worked with many supportive and inspiring women. As an advocate for AWIS-SD and women in science, she has also gained public speaking and leadership skills through the various events in which she has participated.

For students and postdocs hoping to transition out of academia, Lau advises exploring opportunities as soon as possible. In addition, she recommends becoming involved with organizations such as AWIS-SD, as this experience helps to establish connections, gain confidence in public speaking, and develop good teamwork, all important skills that employers look for. For those seeking a position as an industry researcher, she recommends focusing on acquiring skills during your post-doc that are commonly required in industry labs. For aspiring science writers, she recommends building a writing portfolio through volunteer work, blogging, or freelance work so that writing ability can be demonstrated to potential employers.

When she is not working, volunteering with AWIS-SD, or taking care of her family, Lau enjoys singing with the Pacific Women's Chorus and indoor rock climbing at the Vertical Hold gym.