

Brown Bag Lunch This Friday to Feature the SWOSU Neuroscience Lab

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A research interest group brown bag lunch at Southwestern Oklahoma State University will take place this Friday, February 1, and will feature a presentation on the SWOSU Neuroscience Lab.

The public is invited to the 12-1 p.m. event in the East Ballroom of the Memorial Student Center on the Weatherford campus. Drinks and dessert will be provided; bring a lunch or purchase one on the main floor of the center and bring it to the second floor.

Friday's topic will be the SWOSU Neuroscience Lab, presented by Dr. Andrea Holgado of the Department of Biological Sciences. In August 2008, Dr. Holgado established a research laboratory at SWOSU. In the last four years, she has mentored 33 undergraduate students, many of whom were awarded intramural and extramural scholarships, including NSF-REU, NIH-OK INBRE, NASA and Tri Beta awards.

The students in her lab represent a diverse population of women, minorities and first generation college students. Research from the lab has been published in peer-reviewed scientific journals and presented at regional, national and international meetings. Many of the graduates of the program have continued their education at numerous prestigious graduate and professional schools.

The long-term goal of Dr. Holgado's research is to elucidate the molecular mechanism underlying synaptic function.

"My current focus is to determine the molecular mechanism underlying synaptic vesicle fusion and synaptogenesis," Holgado said. "As a predoctoral student, I studied the transport of calcium in brain cells called astrocytes. During my postdoctoral training, I focused on neurons and studied synaptogenesis, membrane trafficking, synaptic vesicle endocytosis and exocytosis using hippocampal neurons in culture and the genetic model organism *C. elegans*."

Dr. James South, dean of the SWOSU College of Arts & Sciences, said the Brown Bag Lunch Series is for the purpose of celebrating and discussing research at SWOSU. The research will be explained in layman's terms, with the focus on making the work accessible to everyone present.

Although SWOSU's primary mission is teaching, a large amount of research is conducted on campus, much of it involving undergraduate students working alongside faculty members. This valuable research experience is typically available only to graduate students in larger institutions, but SWOSU has worked very hard to make research an integral part of many majors, and several faculty members at SWOSU have won national awards as research mentors.

The next Brown Bag Lunch Series will be Thursday, February 28.