

Summer Newsletter 2025



Dear Colleagues,

I hope this message finds you well as the summer draws to a close. I'm writing to share some recent highlights from the UC Santa Barbara Department of Chemical Engineering, as well as two significant developments at the college and university levels that reflect our ongoing growth and commitment to excellence.

First, UC Santa Barbara's College of Engineering has been named **The Robert Mehrabian College of Engineering**, honoring our former dean whose visionary leadership helped lay the foundation for our current national prominence. Dean Mehrabian established the internationally recognized Materials Department and recruited a remarkable cohort of faculty—nearly one-third of whom have been elected to the NAE, NAS, and/or the Royal Society. His legacy also includes a transformative endowment supporting 17 endowed chairs and providing flexible funding to recruit and retain world-class faculty across disciplines.

Second, the **UC Board of Regents has appointed Dennis Assanis**, a member of the National Academy of Engineering, as UC Santa Barbara's sixth chancellor. Dr. Assanis brings an impressive record of academic leadership, having served as president of the University of Delaware (2016–2025), provost and senior vice president at Stony Brook University, and as a faculty member at both the University of Michigan and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. We look forward to welcoming him when he begins his tenure on September 1.

These milestones mark an exciting new chapter for both UCSB and the Robert Mehrabian College of Engineering, reinforcing our tradition of innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and academic excellence.

Below, you'll find recent accomplishments by our faculty and students that reflect the strength and vitality of our department.

I look forward to connecting with many of you at the upcoming AIChE Annual Meeting—or sooner.



Michael Gordon

Chair, Chemical Engineering Department at UC Santa Barbara

UCSB Chemical Engineering Ranked in Top Ten for 24th Straight Year



UCSB's Chemical Engineering PhD Program was ranked ninth among all public universities by U.S. News & World Report.

[Read more](#)

Professor Rachel Segalman Named UCSB's Vice Chancellor for Research



The chemical engineering professor and NAE member assumed the critical position July 1.

[Read more](#)

AIChE Honors James B. Rawlings for Extensive Contributions



The UCSB professor received the 2025 John M. Prausnitz Award, one of the institute's most prestigious annual accolades.

[Read more](#)

Professor James B. Rawlings Receives Top Honor for Control Systems Engineers



The National Academy of Engineering member is only the fifth chemical engineer to receive this award in its 47-year history.

[Read more](#)

Distinguished Contributions: Rachel Segalman Elected AAAS Fellow



Professor Segalman was recognized for advancing the discipline of chemistry by identifying fundamental polymer-ion interactions and developing design rules for materials for energy and environmental applications.

[Read more](#)

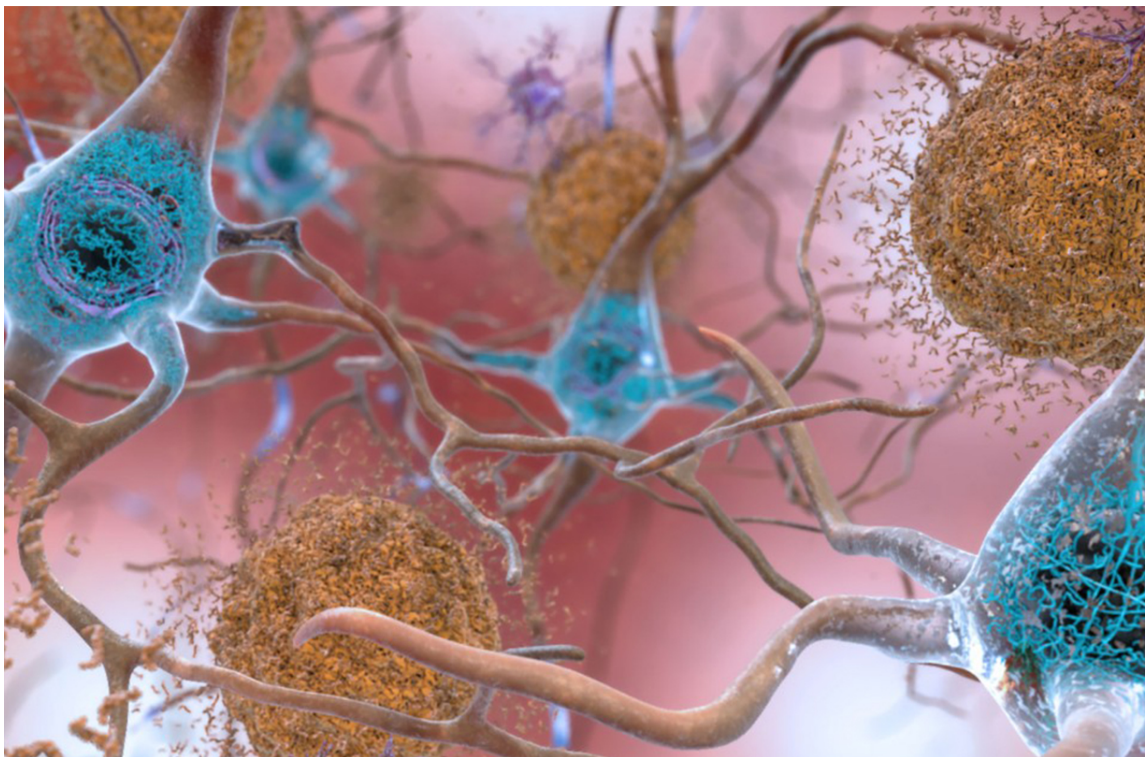
M. Scott Shell Elected AIChE Fellow



The chemical engineering professor was recognized for his pioneering relative entropy coarse-graining approach to modeling and molecular simulations.

[Read more](#)

Unfolding the Mystery of Neurodegenerative Disease



UCSB researchers and collaborators created the first synthetic fragment of tau protein, which could lead to tools for diagnosis and therapy for neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer's.

[Read more](#)

UCSB Researchers Win 2025 Journal of Rheology Publication Award



The award-winning study reveals how flow-induced “demixing” alters polymer behavior.

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