

UC SANTA BARBARA

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## **UCSB Postdoctoral Researcher Wins Fellowship**

Tina M. Trnka, a postdoctoral researcher at the University of California, Santa Barbara, has won a fellowship awarded by the Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation, among only fourteen awarded nationally.

According to the foundation, "The recipients of this prestigious award are outstanding young scientists conducting theoretical and experimental research that is relevant to the study of cancer and the search for cancer causes, mechanisms, therapies and prevention."

Trnka works in the lab of Galen Stucky, professor of chemistry and materials. She explained that there is a great need for improved chemotherapy treatments to combat cancer. "One strategy, the targeted delivery of drug molecules to specific cancer cells, aims to both enhance the effectiveness of these drugs and alleviate their toxicity to healthy cells. However, this concept has been difficult to implement because of problems with the stability, activity, selectivity, or delivery of many drug carrier combinations."

Trnka's research is an attempt to use state-of-the-art, nano-sized, composite materials for the delivery of drugs to cancer cells. The goal is to load nano-scale hollow spheres with doses of chemotherapy agents. Trnka's research proposal targets cocktails of multiple drugs to ovarian cancer cells.

She will receive \$128,500 over a three year period, with some of the money going toward travel to professional meetings and research equipment and supplies.

"It's a real honor and incredible opportunity to have the support of the Damon Runyon foundation," said Trnka.

Some awards are sponsored by specific donors, and Trnka's sponsor is Cheryl Breetwor, founder of ShareData, Inc., which was acquired by E\*Trade in 1998. Trnka has already met with Breetwor and with the executive director of the foundation.

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## **About UC Santa Barbara**

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.