

# THE *Current*

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## **Award Lecture by Distinguished Chemist Examines Nanostructures and Energy**

Thuc-Quyen Nguyen, an assistant professor of chemistry and biochemistry at UC Santa Barbara and a specialist in the area of organic optoelectronic materials, has received the campus's coveted 2007-08 Harold J. Plous Memorial Award. She will give the annual Plous Lecture at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, May 7, in the Engineering Science Building 1001. The lecture, titled "Nanostructures in Organic Semiconductors and the Energy Challenge," is free and open to the public.

Nguyen, who came to UCSB in 2004, has established a highly recognized research program on campus in the area of organic optoelectronic materials, with special emphasis on characterization of nanoscale electronic properties, according to Alice O'Connor, chair of the Plous Memorial Award Committee. One example of how her work has made significant academic and applied contributions is in the area of light harvesting materials, which is an attempt to imitate photosynthesis. Nguyen's work in this area is specifically aimed at improving organic semiconducting polymers, one of the most promising classes of materials for these uses. Following groundbreaking research in which she found ways of bringing more stability to these materials, Nguyen has recently published work showing how to develop photovoltaic devices which are designed to absorb a broader than usual range of the solar spectrum.

At the graduate level, Nguyen developed a class on nanoscience and nanotechnology that quickly became popular among students in physics, chemistry and biochemistry, and engineering. The course was featured in a presentation to the State of California Education Subcommittee panel of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Nanotechnology. She is the recipient of several awards and honors, including the 2005 Office of Naval Research Young Investigator Award and the 2006 National Science Foundation CAREER Award.

The Harold J. Plous Memorial Award was established in 1957 to honor the memory of Harold J. Plous, assistant professor of economics. The award is given annually to a faculty member of the rank of assistant professor or instructor who has demonstrated outstanding performance by creative action or contribution to the intellectual life of the UC Santa Barbara community.

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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.