

The DEAN'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the April alumni eNewsletter for the College of Physical and Mathematical Sciences. Here at the college we have been keeping busy as we welcome the beautiful spring weather. The warmth outside has reminded us to start gearing up for the end of Winter Semester.

March was as busy as we anticipated it would be on campus; we had several successful events involving the entire CPMS community.

The month kicked off with a remarkably successful Rex Lee Run, which doubled in attendance from last year and raised four times the donations of past years, all of which went to support cancer research at BYU. We also celebrated a special Pi Day with food and rugby.

We were honored to welcome Dr. Alexis T. Bell from the University of California at Berkeley to deliver the annual Izatt-Christensen lecture, and members of our College Volunteer Leadership Council (CVLC), who gathered for their semi-annual meeting.

BYU also hosted students and professors from several universities across the country for the Center for Undergraduate Research in Mathematics' Spring Conference. CURM, as the center is called, was founded by our mathematics professor Michael Dorff.

March was an eventful month for our students as well. Statistics graduate student Jessica Alvey took third place in the University Three-Minute Thesis competition, and students from all disciplines participated in the college-wide Student Research Conference on March 21.

April will bring Easter, finals, and graduation. We look forward to celebrating the accomplishment and contributions of our graduating class and to seeing them off to their next endeavors, whether they begin new careers or pursue further education.

Finals week will be April 17–22, and exams will be followed by University Commencement on April 23 at 4 p.m. in the Marriott Center. We will hold our CPMS Convocation on Friday, April 24 at 8 a.m. in the Wilkinson Student Center Ballroom. We value these events as a time to give our students well-deserved recognition for their academic efforts.

At the end of another school year, we are immensely grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this college at BYU. We have seen great success from our faculty and students, and we are continually blessed by the involvement of our alumni. Thank you for your interest in the college and your support of our work here.

All the best for a wonderful summer!

.....→ **Scott Sommerfeldt, Dean**

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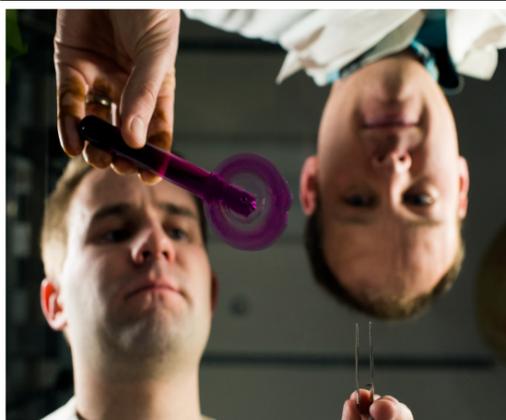
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Undergraduate Stephen Erickson and grad student Trevor Smith are the first and second authors on the study in Nanotechnology.

Student's Nanocrystals Make Him a Wanted Man

From an underground lab on campus, an undergraduate student discovered how to harvest more energy from sunlight.

Stephen Erickson and fellow student Trevor Smith conducted and published research about how nano-sized crystals can improve solar panels.

Their lab experiments suggest that solar cells based on nanocrystals of titanium, iron, cobalt and manganese could achieve up to 38 percent solar energy conversion.

At the same time, Stephen is seeing even higher conversion rates with his graduate school applications. So far he's received offers to seek a Ph.D. from Harvard, Stanford, Caltech, Maryland, Colorado and UC Berkeley. And he credits his good fortune directly to the scientific work he's done as an undergraduate.

"When applying to top schools, everyone has good grades and test scores, so admissions committees weight research experience very heavily in their decision making process," Stephen said.

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