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Marine Biologist Receives Fulbright Award

Fulbright's Franco-American Commission will fund UC Merced Professor Mónica Medina's research in France on the codependency of marine algae and tropical coral reefs

MERCED, Calif. — Mónica Medina, a professor in the School of Natural Sciences at the University of California, Merced, has been awarded a Fulbright Scholar grant to conduct research at the Observatoire Océanologique de Banyuls research station in France during the 2012-13 academic year.

Medina's award was presented by the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board's [Franco-American Commission](#), which aims to develop understanding between France and the U.S. through educational and cultural exchanges. The commission grants only about five such awards per year.

The award will allow [Medina](#) to continue her studies into the evolution of symbiotic lifestyles in marine algae — that is, algae that share a codependent relationship with tropical coral reefs. Medina will be hosted in France by researcher Gwenael Piganeau, a member of the Evolutionary and Environmental Genomics of Phytoplankton research group at the station.

Quick Facts

- UC Merced Professor Mónica Medina has been awarded a Fulbright Scholar grant to conduct research in France on algae that share a codependent relationship with tropical coral reefs.
- Medina's award is one of about five each year presented by Fulbright's Franco-American Commission, which seeks to encourage educational and cultural exchanges between France and the U.S.
- The award is just the latest in a growing collection for Medina, a professor in UC Merced's School of Natural Sciences.



“This fellowship provides me with a great opportunity to start new collaborations while also having an important cultural experience in a new country,” Medina said.

The Franco-American Commission provides Fulbright grants to French and American scholars, young professionals and students wishing to expand their educational experience during a year in the host country. Those who receive awards from the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board are expected to become involved in the community in their host countries, helping to establish long-term cooperative relationships.

Fulbright award winners, numbering around 300,000 in the 60 years since the program’s inception, have been awarded 43 Nobel Prizes and have gone on to become heads of state, judges, ambassadors, cabinet ministers, CEOs, university presidents, journalists, artists, professors and teachers.

Medina also earned the National Science Foundation’s Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Award in 2007, the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE) in 2008, and the Guggenheim Fellowship in 2011.

“I am extremely proud of Professor Medina’s accomplishments,” said Juan C. Meza, dean of UC Merced’s [School of Natural Sciences](#). “The Fulbright award is only the latest validation of the high quality of her work, and I look forward to the results of the exciting and important research it will allow her to conduct.”

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UC Merced opened Sept. 5, 2005, as the 10th campus in the University of California system and the first American research university of the 21st century. The campus significantly expands access to the UC system for students throughout the state, with a special mission to increase college-going rates among students in the San Joaquin Valley. It also serves as a major base of advanced research and as a stimulus to economic growth and diversification throughout the region. Situated near Yosemite National Park, the university is expected to grow rapidly, topping out at about 25,000 students within 30 years.