

# *THE Current*

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## **Chancellor's Breakfast to Focus on Animal Behavior**

One of the most fascinating goals of biology is to understand the biological basis of behavior. If we knew enough about an animal's genetic makeup, its past experiences and its current environment, would it be possible to accurately predict what an animal will decide to do?

Craig Montell, UC Santa Barbara's Duggan Professor of Neuroscience, will address that question and more at the Chancellor's Community Breakfast on March 13 at 8 a.m. Hosted by Chancellor Henry T. Yang and the [UCSB Affiliates](#), the event will feature Montell speaking on "Genetic Control of Animal Behavior and Decision-Making."

The breakfast will be held at the El Paseo Restaurant, 813 Anacapa St. The \$20 cost includes a full breakfast buffet, and the public is welcome. Payment must be made in advance. Checks should be made payable to the UC Regents and mailed to the Office of Event Management and Protocol, University of California, Santa Barbara, CA 93106-1135.

Montell's lab focuses on a relatively simple animal, the fruit fly (*Drosophila melanogaster*), which exhibits many of the same behaviors as humans and other mammals. This includes selecting a mate, deciding whether or not to be aggressive, choosing what to eat, selecting the ideal environment and determining when to sleep.

The external environment is a major factor that controls what animals decide to do. Also a professor in the Department of Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology, Montell will describe the work his lab is doing to decipher how flies sense and react to the world around them. Experience is also a key factor that modifies behavior, and he will give an example of how he is unraveling the mechanisms through which an animal's past experience affects the decisions it makes today. The long-term goal is to provide a comprehensive cellular and molecular explanation of animal behavior.

Montell is a recipient of a National Science Foundation Presidential Young Investigator Award and an American Chemical Society Junior Faculty Award. He received honorary doctorate degrees from the Catholic University, Leuven, Belgium, in 2010 and from the Baylor College of Medicine in 2011. In 2014, he was elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

For reservations or to make special arrangements to accommodate a disability, please call (805) 893-2877 or email [kimberley.peden@ucsb.edu](mailto:kimberley.peden@ucsb.edu).

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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.