

2026 Microbial Dark Matter Symposium **AGENDA**

SEPTEMBER 16-17 | LAGUNA BEACH, CA



DAY 1

Wednesday,
September 16th

8:00 AM	REGISTRATION AND BREAKFAST
9:00 AM	Welcome & Opening Kris Locken, Zymo Research
	Microbiomes, Human Systems, and Translational Discovery
9:05 AM	Jack Gilbert, UCSD <i>Understanding the impact of Soil Health on Human Health</i>
9:45 AM	Ashlee Earl, Broad Institute
10:10 AM	Anca Segall, SDSU
10:35 AM	Discussion Panel: Jack Gilbert, Ashlee Earl, Anca Segall
11:05 AM	MORNING COFFEE & FRUIT BREAK
	The Virome and Viral Dark Matter
11:35 AM	Katherine Kauffman, University of Buffalo <i>Missed connections - phages and mobile elements in the human oral microbiome</i>
12:00 PM	Forest Rohwer, SDSU <i>Certainty from Uncertainty</i>
12:25 PM	Rob Edwards, Flinders University <i>Beyond sequence similarity: structural approaches to microbial dark matter</i>
12:50 PM	Discussion Panel: Katherine Kauffman, Forest Rohwer, Rob Edwards
1:20 PM	LUNCH
2:20 PM	GROUP PHOTO
2:30 PM	Brett Farthing, Zymo Research
2:50 PM	Genome-Resolved Discovery in Low-Biomass and Complex Systems Camilla Urbaniak, NASA JPL
3:15 PM	AFTERNOON COFFEE & FRUIT BREAK
	Genome-Resolved Discovery in Low-Biomass and Complex Systems
3:45 PM	Ivan Liachko, Phase Genomics <i>Linking the Virome, the Resistome, and the Plasmidome to the Microbiome using Hi-C metagenomics</i>
4:05 PM	Dan Portik, PacBIO
4:30 PM	Discussion Panel: Camilla Urbaniak, Ivan Liachko, Dan Portik
5:00 PM	HAPPY HOUR POSTER SESSION
6:30 PM	HOSTED DINNER

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DAY 2

Thursday,
September 17th

8:00 AM BREAKFAST & REGISTRATION

Deep Biosphere, Metabolism, and Environmental Dark Matter

9:00 AM Kelly Wrighton, Colorado State University

9:25 AM Victoria Orphan, Cal Tech

9:50 AM Fatima Hussain, Tufts University

10:05 AM **Discussion Panel:** Victoria Orphan, Kelly Wrighton, Fatima Hussain

10:35 AM MORNING COFFEE & FRUIT BREAK

Functional Dark Matter Across Microbial and Eukaryotic Systems

11:05 AM Stephen Mondo, JGI

Steve Biller, Wellesley College

11:30 AM *Extracellular dark matter: vesicles, microbial exchanges, and mysteries of the ocean's dissolved information pool*

Nassos Typas, EMBL

Establishing model species for the human gut microbiome

12:40 PM **Discussion Panel:** Stephen Mondo, Steve Biller, Nassos Typas

1:10 PM LUNCH

Funding, Translation, and Future Directions for Microbial Dark Matter

Discussion Panel: Elodia Ghedin, Denise Kelly, Ryan Ranallo, Vanessa Riduara, Scott Jackson

3:00 PM Ilana Lauren Brito, Cornell University

3:25 PM AFTERNOON COFFEE & FRUIT BREAK

Keynote Address

3:55 PM Jonathan Eisen, UC Davis

Hello Darkness My Old Friend: Where do the Prophets, Street Lamps, and Neon Lights Tell us to Look for Dark Matter?

Discussion Panel

4:35 PM Ilana Brito, Jonathan Eisen

5:05 PM CLOSING & POSTER AWARDS

5:15 PM CLOSING HAPPY HOUR RECEPTION

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