

Dr. Mina Sumita, Assistant Professor of Chemistry at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, is the winner of the FY2020 Annette and Henry Baich Research Award from the SIUE Graduate School. The Baich Award is given annually to the most outstanding STEP grant proposal for basic research conducted within the parameters of the Sigma Xi Society. Disciplines include the physical sciences, life and medical sciences, earth science, engineering, psychology and mathematics.

Dr. Sumita joined SIUE in 2015 after serving as a Visiting Assistant Professor at the California University of Pennsylvania. She received her B.A. in chemistry from the University of Colorado at Boulder, M.S. in organic chemistry from the University of Colorado at Denver, and Ph.D. in biochemistry and biophysical chemistry from Wayne State University. She also completed her postdoctoral training in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Michigan State University. Her overall research interests are the incorporation of natural and unnatural modified nucleotides for biochemical and biophysical studies, and the analysis of the structural and functional effects of DNA/RNA modifications.

Dr. Sumita's award-winning proposal, titled "SPR-SELEX: New Method to Determine Nucleic Acids Aptamers" was chosen from a competitive field of submissions. Aptamers are short DNA or RNA sequences that bind to a specific target molecule, and can be essential for biosensor development. Dr. Sumita's proposing method (SPR-SELEX) will improve more time- and cost-effectively compared to the current aptamer identification technique (SELEX). She hopes this SPR-SELEX will be the new method for further aptamer developments with modified nucleotides and her collaborative biosensor projects.

Please join us in congratulating Dr. Sumita on this significant recognition!