

## John and Joan Fiddymment Chair in Agriculture

Dr. Mary Delany, Professor of Developmental Genetics and Executive Associate Dean, CA&ES  
Animal Science

[animalscience.ucdavis.edu](http://animalscience.ucdavis.edu) • [medelany@ucdavis.edu](mailto:medelany@ucdavis.edu)

---

### ENDOWMENT PURPOSE

The John and Joan Fiddymment Endowed Chair in Agriculture was established in 1998 by John and Joan Fiddymment. The purpose of the gift was to provide a permanent source of funding to endow a chair in the general area of research, teaching and outreach in agriculture. Given that the rate of change and innovation in agriculture are occurring so rapidly, the specific designation of the Fiddymment Chair is left to the discretion of the dean and should evolve as challenges facing agriculture evolves.

### RESEARCH

My research is in avian development and genetics, with a focus on the chicken because of its significance in agriculture (a worldwide source of protein via meat and eggs) and in health (important model for human diseases and congenital birth defects). Our studies employ the tools of molecular, cellular and organismal biology. We engage in the genetic mapping of single gene mutations affecting development and growth. We also study a herpesvirus that causes a disease negatively impacting commercial chicken production as well as backyard flocks of chicken.

### TEACHING

The funding is used to support the training of my two Ph.D. graduate students studying in genetics and genomics.



**College  
Celebration**

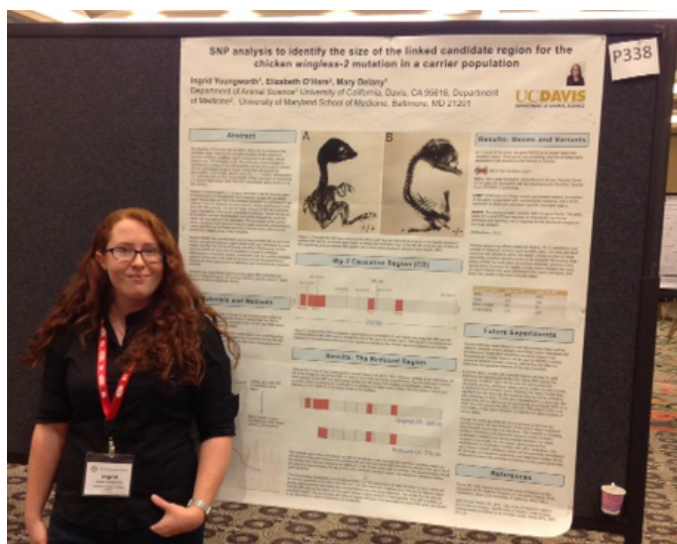
**Friday  
OCTOBER  
14  
2016**

**5:30 - 8:00 p.m.**

**Pavilion  
UC Davis**

**We hope you will be  
able to join us.**

## STUDENTS



Two PhD students in the Integrative Genetics and Genomics Graduate Group were supported by the proceeds of the endowment:

1. Marla McPherson's dissertation topic is: Role of virus-host genome interactions in Marek's disease.
2. Ingrid Youngworth's dissertation topic is: Genetic analyses of chicken developmental mutations affecting craniofacial and limb development.

## OUTREACH

This year we took on a project to study the developmental mutation causing a wingless condition in a genetic line of chickens. Such a mutation is very important in contributing to our understanding of the involved genes and pathways in limb development. This is important with regard to defects in wings that can be found in commercial bird populations and further advances our understanding of congenital malformations in human populations. We used the funds to sequence a candidate region of the chicken genome that is causative for this trait.

## THANKS

I am honored by the support of the Fiddymment endowed chair which invests in my mission-oriented research and educational programs. The support allows us to branch out and conduct important projects that would languish otherwise. It supports the training of the students who are very dedicated and committed to their work and who will contribute long into the future beyond the reach of my program!

