Each month ACN asks a team member to provide a profile of themself that takes us behind the scene on what are the influences that encouraged their career choices.

April 2014

**Q&A with Hien Duong**

Hien Duong was awarded a highly competitive Endeavour Postgraduate Scholarship and joined The Centre of Advanced Macromolecular Design (CAMD) in 2007 to undertake her PhD. She completed her PhD in March 2011, and commenced her postdoctoral academic career in the newly established Australian Centre for NanoMedicine (established by UNSW in 2011). Her research area is focused on the cutting-edge interdisciplinary approach of converging nano-and medical research. Her interests include polymer synthesis, characterization of multifunctional nanostructures and their properties, and *in-vitro* studies of the efficacy of nanostructures and materials for therapeutic delivery. She pioneered application of advanced techniques including Fluorescence Lifetime Imaging Microscopy (FLIM) and Raster Image Correlation Spectroscopy (RICS) to monitor the dynamics of encapsulated drug in the nanoparticles and the released drug in the cellular level.

**What was your inspiration on becoming a chemist?**

Chemistry, math and science were three of my favorite subjects at school. I decided to major in chemistry at high school and university as I wanted to be a chemist like my mother. My mother was my inspiration; she was a great chemistry teacher and explained to me that chemistry has a role in all aspects of daily life including our food, clothes, housing and medicine. At that time, I did not really understand what she meant but I was amazed that we could make products with totally different property by mixing different materials together. I love chemistry and for me, chemistry is life changing. I am now using my polymer chemistry to prepare nanoparticles for biomedical applications. My job is more engineering around the chemistry than traditional chemical research, but chemistry knowledge is crucial.

It is very interesting that cooking is my passion. Cooking and chemistry have many things in common. For example, after baking, the taste of the cake is much better than individual ingredients. The texture and the colour are different too. From my experience, if you are a good chemist, you have a good chance of being a good cook, and vice versa.

**What inspires you about ACN?**

The great thing about the Australian Centre for NanoMedicine is that it brings together researchers from the faculties of Medicine, Science and Engineering to deliver therapeutic solutions to research problems in
medicine. I strongly believe that the nanotechnology will allow us to develop smart nanocarrier for drug delivery especially with application on hard to cure disease such as cancer. At ACN we work on lung cancer and the children’s cancer neuroblastoma, I would love to be part of a team that brings us a step closer to finding a cure.

Tell us about your current research interests
My research interests are focused on the design and preparation of multifunctional soft and hybrid polymeric nanoparticles as vehicles for therapeutic delivery. I am also interested in using advanced microscopy techniques to better understand the fate of nanoparticles after being uptaken by cells.

At which upcoming conferences have or are you presenting in 2014?
I have submitted an abstract for MACRO 2014 conference in Chiang Mai, Thailand. ACN will be hosting its 5th International Nanomedicine conference in July and I will definitely be submitting an abstract for that.

How do you spend your spare time?
I love spending my spare time with my family and friends. After a busy work week, we normally bring our son to the beach and park for a picnic. I usually cook Vietnamese traditional food during the weekend and I am very happy when everyone enjoys my food.

Which profession would you choose if you were not a scientist?
Without a doubt a chef! Let’s imagine if I were not a scientist, I would be a famous chef in a five star hotel! But I’m happy working at ACN and cooking Vietnamese food when we have a Team ACN social function.