

Dr. Kevin McGraw



I am delighted to have been nominated to serve the International Carotenoid Society as a Council Member!

I am a Professor and Associate Director of Operations and Facilities in the School of Life Sciences at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona, USA. I started my faculty position in 2004 and did my graduate work on the topics of carotenoid coloration and health at Auburn University, Cornell University, as well as my post-doctoral studies at the University of California-Davis. I fell in love with carotenoids in my first graduate studies of colorful birds (house finches), not too unlike what female finches experience when they acquire a mate with intensely red, carotenoid-colored feathers! My students and I continue to pursue and extend these general research themes – how and why birds and other animals are pigmented with carotenoids and acquire and use carotenoids in diverse ways in the body – and, having moved to a densely populated city embedded within a fragile desert ecosystem, we have also expanded our work to investigate how we can use carotenoid colors (and the health states they reveal) to learn about human and urban impacts on native wildlife.

One of my favorite elements of carotenoid science and the ICS is its transdisciplinary and collaborative nature. I originally trained in behavioral ecology – to study how animals like birds send messages with their vibrant colors about their quality to mates or rivals – but to appropriately dig into how and why animals communicate with carotenoid colors I’ve partnered with experts in and learned more about diverse fields including endocrinology, nutrition, biochemistry, sperm biology, sleep biology, and immunology. I’ve collaborated with carotenoid researchers in Argentina, England, Scotland, Spain, France, Monaco, Italy, Belgium, Norway, Germany, Switzerland, Hungary, Estonia, South Africa, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, and I have no doubt that the quality and impact of our science has been enriched by this diversity. I would continue to bring this transdisciplinary, collaborative approach to my work on the Council, including in important outreach, communication, and social-media efforts across the globe.

I had the incredible fortune of receiving excellent early-career mentoring by several key contributors to the carotenoid fields (both applied and basic) – Dr. Geoffrey Hill, Dr. Bob Parker, Dr. Kirk Klasing, and Drs. Tom and Ana Moore. As such, **I have a passion for ‘giving back’ and ensuring that the Society prioritizes development, recruitment, and opportunities for young carotenoid scientists-in-training.** I’ll never forget my first ICS talk as a graduate student in Hawaii in 2002 – the projector failed, IT spent many minutes trying to get it running, I started giving my talk without slides, and when the slides came back on in the last 3 minutes the screen colors were off and my colorful orange birds appeared magenta. I was devastated to say the least, but Norman Krinsky came up to me afterwards and made me feel so welcome and so good about the challenging experience – since this time the Society has always felt like family, and *at each meeting I attend I make a point to seek out students and support their emerging contributions to our field.*

I’ve since attended the ICS meetings in Scotland, Poland, Utah, Switzerland, and our first ever VICC two months ago. I was struck at how **unique and inclusive the online meeting format was** and am very enthusiastic about considering how the Council can innovate with diverse in-person and online formats for our future meetings, so that *we maximize meeting attendance and accessibility but also still assure the personal connections that so many of us value about meeting up in 3D.* Thank you for considering me for a position on the ICS Council!