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## Professor receives grant to support breast cancer research

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## Professor receives grant to support breast cancer research

Dr. Maggie Louie, director of the Chemistry and Biochemistry Program and an associate professor of biochemistry, has been awarded a grant from the Lorri Painter Philanthropic Organization in support of breast cancer research at Dominican.

Dr. Louie's lab is examining the role certain heavy metals play in the development of breast cancer. Her [research](#) is focused on how cadmium, a toxic metal found in contaminated food and water and cigarette smoke, contributes to the development and progression of breast cancer. In recent years Dr. Louie has received funding from both the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation in support of her work.

Dr. Louie, a faculty member in the [Department of Natural Sciences and Mathematics](#), has shown that breast cancer cells become increasingly aggressive the longer they are exposed to small concentrations of cadmium. While other studies have shown links between acute cadmium exposure, Louie's study is one of few to focus on chronic cadmium exposure and breast cancer.

"This relationship between cancer and chronic exposures at low levels is important to understand because most people are not exposed to high levels of heavy metals," Dr. Louie said. "Understanding the role that cadmium plays in the progression of breast cancer is critical research for finding better ways to prevent the disease from advancing."

Dr. Louie involves both her undergraduate and graduate students in this important research. In the past decade, Dominican has developed a research-intensive curriculum raising the bar for undergraduate science education. Dr. Louie and her Dominican colleagues train students to work independently on specific research topics early in their freshman year. This provides a unique experience for undergraduates contributing to the success of faculty research programs.

[CLICK HERE](#) to read a Marin Independent Journal story about Dr. Louie and her work.

The Lorri Painter Philanthropic Organization was created in the name of Bay Area resident Lorri Painter. She died of cancer in 2002 at age 59. Friends and family formed the Lorri Painter Philanthropic Organization to raise funds to fight breast cancer.