Shannon Bennett, PhD
California Academy of Arts and Sciences
Chief of Science, Harry W. and Diana V. Hind Dean of Science and Research Collections

Doctor’s Bennett received her Bachelor of Science from McGill University and her doctorate degree in from the University of British Columbia. As the Chief of Science and Harry W. and Diana V. Hind Dean of Science and Research Collections, Dr. Shannon Bennett is responsible for the Academy’s programs of scientific research and exploration, as well as overseeing the Academy’s priceless collection of nearly 46 million scientific specimens from around the world. In this role, she helps to shape bold new research initiatives and oversees an excellent team of explorers and scientific leaders who are working to explore, explain, and sustain life on Earth. Bennett also holds an appointment as one of the institution’s Patterson Scholars in Science and Sustainability.

Bennett joined the Academy in 2011 as the institution’s first-ever Associate Curator of Microbiology, where she broadened the Academy’s research scope to include a dedicated focus on viruses and bacteria. Her specialty lies in infectious diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans. Prior to her work at the Academy, she was an Associate Professor at the Asia-Pacific Institute of Tropical Medicine & Infectious Diseases, part of the School of Medicine at the University of Hawaii. During her seven years at the Pacific Institute, she led a number of research projects on virus evolution, identification, and transmission with funding from the National Institutes of Health. She combines advanced technologies from genomics and bioinformatics to study dengue, hantavirus, influenza, and other viruses, and also bacteria such as leptospirosis and those found in mosquito vectors. Prior to her work in Hawaii, Bennett researched the dengue virus in Puerto Rico and parasitic roundworms in Texas and Vancouver.