
Kaushik Venkiteshwaran, Ph.D., EIT

Assistant Professor

Department of Civil, Coastal and Environmental Engineering

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Research Interests

Developing chemical and biological processes for sustainable water and wastewater treatment

Novel bio-adsorbent development for nutrient recovery and emerging contaminant removal

Modelling microbial interactions in natural and engineered environments

Relating microbial community structure to biological process performance

Developing novel microbial cultures for bio-energy production

Advanced oxidation targeting organic contaminant destruction and pathogen disinfection

Education

Ph.D. in Civil Engineering, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI, USA.

Graduated in Summer 2016, CGPA: 3.85/4.

Masters in Civil Engineering, Clarkson University, Potsdam, NY, USA.

Graduated in Spring 2010, CGPA: 3.4/4.

Bachelors of Technology in Biotechnology, The ICFAI University, Dehradun, India.

Graduated in Spring 2007, CGPA: 8.87/10.

Employment History

Assistant Professor, University of South Alabama, Mobile, AL, USA. 2021 to Present

Post-Doctoral Researcher, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI, USA. 2016 to 2021

Research Experience

Post-Doctoral Research (Marquette University - 2016 to 2021)

- *Research focus: Modelling microbial interactions for sustainable wastewater treatment.*

Project 1: Developing quantitative artificial neural network (ANN) model and relating microbial communities of 50 anaerobic digesters to their function.

Project 2: Monitoring microbial community dynamics of activated sludge process and developing a quantitative ANN model to predict foaming events.

- *Research focus: Improving sustainability through nutrient recovery.*
 - Project 3: Investigating phosphorus recovery using a phosphate binding protein.
 - Project 4: Applying ammonia binding protein for ultra-low ammonia recovery.
 - Project 5: Mineralizing dissolved organic phosphorus using advanced oxidation for increased phosphorus recovery.
- *Research focus: Developing novel microbial cultures for bio-energy production.*
 - Project 6: Developing microbial cultures for improved bio-methane production during anaerobic digestion of phenolic wastewaters.
 - Project 7: Developing microbial cultures for anaerobic digestion of bioplastics.
 - Project 8: Culturing anaerobic microbes capable of tolerating drying (heat or freeze) and storage in ambient air.

Doctoral Research (Marquette University 2010 to 2016)

- *Research focus: Modelling microbial community for increased bio-energy production.*
 - Project 1: Examining the role of propionate degrading microbial communities in improving anaerobic digester function.
 - Project 2: Developing a regression model relating microbes to digester function.

Masters Research (Clarkson University 2008 to 2010)

- *Research focus: Investigating bio-energy production from high strength dairy waste.*
 - Project 1: Investigating anaerobic co-digestion of dairy manure, cheese whey and biodiesel glycerol in single and two-phase digester configuration.

Funding History

I served as a PI* and Co-PI in the following successful grants. Total research funds secured is \$390,000.

Funding Source: Lafferty Family Foundation.

- *Project: Closing the Phosphorous Loop: Characterizing the potential of green infrastructure for phosphorous removal and recovery (Jan to Dec 2021).

Awarded amount \$50,000.

Funding Source: Water Coordinated Activities on Research for the Environment Project - Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District.

- Project 1: Novel algorithm to increase anaerobic co-digestion renewable energy (Jan to Dec 2020).

Awarded amount \$96,000.

- Project 2: Understanding microbial community dynamics of activated sludge to predict and mitigate foaming events (Jan to Dec 2020).

Awarded amount \$94,000.

Mentoring Experience

Marquette University

- Member of thesis advisory committee for Nicholas Benn (PhD candidate) on his Doctoral thesis project: Novel algorithm to relate microbial community to anaerobic digestion function. Ph.D., ongoing.
- Mentoring Seyedehfatemeh Seyedi (PhD candidate) on her Doctoral thesis project: Anaerobic co-digestion of aqueous pyrolysis liquid from wastewater solids and synthetic primary sludge. Ph.D., ongoing.
- Mentoring Synthia Parveen Malick on her Doctoral thesis project: Conversion of organic nitrogen in wastewater to recoverable inorganic forms using electro-oxidation. Ph.D., ongoing.
- Mentoring Faten Hussein on her Doctoral thesis project: Cell surface-expression of the phosphate-binding protein PstS for phosphorus removal and recovery. Ph.D., ongoing.
- Member of thesis advisory committee for Nicholas Benn on his Masters thesis project: Biomethane production from biodegradable plastics. Defended in 2019.
- Mentored Eileen Kennedy on her Masters thesis project: Chemical pretreatment and dewaterability of anaerobically digested bio-solids. Defended in 2019.
- Member of thesis advisory committee for Seyedehfatemeh Seyedi on her Masters thesis project: Anaerobic co-digestion of aqueous liquid from wastewater. Defended in 2018.
- Member of thesis advisory committee for Dylan Fryss on his Masters thesis project: Effect of low aeration and heat drying on anaerobic digester performance and microbial community. Defended in 2018.

Clarkson University

- Mentored senior undergraduate students Mariadina DiGennaro in 2009 and Ryan Zeils in 2010 in environmental engineering projects under the Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program.

- Mallick, S.P., Ryan, D.R., **Venkiteshwaran, K.**, McNamara, P.J., Mayer, B.K., 2021. Electro-oxidation to convert dissolved organic nitrogen and soluble non-reactive phosphorus to more readily removable and recoverable forms. *Chemosphere* 279, 130876. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chemosphere.2021.130876>
- **Venkiteshwaran, K.**, Wells, E., Mayer, B.K., 2020. Kinetics, affinity, thermodynamics, and selectivity of phosphate removal using immobilized phosphate-binding proteins. *Environ. Sci. Technol.* <https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.est.0c02272>. (Impact Factor: 7.7)
- **Venkiteshwaran, K.**

- **Venkiteshwaran, K.**, Pokhrel, N., Hussein, F., Antony, E., Mayer, B.K., 2018. Phosphate removal and recovery using immobilized phosphate binding proteins. *Water Res. X*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.WROA.2018.09.003>. (Impact Factor: N/A).
- **Venkiteshwaran, K.**, McNamara, P.J., Mayer, B.K., 2018. Meta-analysis of non-reactive phosphorus in water, wastewater, and sludge, and strategies to convert it for enhanced phosphorus removal and recovery. *Sci. Total Environ*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2018.06.369>. (Impact Factor: 6.55).
- Bhattad, U., **Venkiteshwaran, K.**, Maki, J.S., Zitomer, D.H., 2017. Biochemical methane potential assays and anaerobic digester bioaugmentation using freeze dried biomass. *Environ. Sci. Water Res. Technol.* 3, 1152–1161. <https://doi.org/10.1039/c7ew00203c>. (Impact Factor: 3.45).
- Bhattad, U., **Venkiteshwaran, K.**, Cherukuri, K., Maki, J.S., Zitomer, D.H., 2017. Activity of methanogenic biomass after heat and freeze drying in air. *Environ. Sci. Water Res. Technol.* 3. <https://doi.org/10.1039/c7ew00049a>. (Impact Factor: 3.45).
- ***Venkiteshwaran, K.**, Milferstedt, K., Hamelin, J., Fujimoto, M., Johnson, M., Zitomer, D.H., 2017. Correlating methane production to microbiota in anaerobic digesters fed synthetic wastewater. *Water Res.* 110. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.watres.2016.12.010>. (Impact Factor: 9.13).
- ***Venkiteshwaran, K.**, Milferstedt, K., Hamelin, J., Zitomer, D.H., 2016. Anaerobic digester bioaugmentation influences quasi steady state performance and microbial community. *Water Res.* 104, 128–136. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.watres.2016.08.012>. (Impact Factor: 9.13).
- **Venkiteshwaran, K.**, Bocher, B., Maki, J., Zitomer, D., 2016. Relating anaerobic digestion microbial community and process function. *Microbiol. Insights* 8, 37–44. <https://doi.org/10.4137/MBI.S33593>. (Impact Factor: 4.2).

Conference Presentations

- **Venkiteshwaran K.**, Lang N., Dong H. Y., Zitomer D. Deep neural network algorithm can predict methane production using microbial community composition of anaerobic digester – selected for oral presentation (virtual) at Water Environment Federation's Technical Exhibition and Conference 2020 in New Orleans, LA, USA.
- **Venkiteshwaran K.** poster presentation at International Water Association - Leading Edge Conference 2019 in Edinburgh, UK.
- **Venkiteshwaran K.** Methane production correlates with bacterial community shift during PHB bioplastic anaerobic co-digestion – poster presentation at International Water Association - World Conference on Anaerobic Digestion 2019 in Delft, The Netherlands.
- **Venkiteshwaran K.**, Pokhrel N., Antony E., McNamara P., Mayer K. B., Phosphorus removal and recovery immobilized phosphate binding proteins – oral presentation at the Association of Environmental Engineering and Science Professors conference 2017 in Ann Arbor, MI, USA.

- **Venkiteshwaran K.**, Johnson M., Zitomer D., Methane production rates can be predicted from anaerobic digester microbial community structure oral presentation at the Residual and Biosolids Conference 2016 in Milwaukee, WI, USA.
- **Venkiteshwaran K.**, Milferstedt M., Hamelin J., Zitomer D. Bioaugmentation of anaerobic digesters for increased methane production oral presentation at Water

Fall 2019: Collaborated with faculties in the College of Engineering to develop engineering education scholarships and implementing Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT) in the classroom.

Spring and Fall 2020: This session was focused on the impacts of COVID 19 on engineering education. The faculty group designed a comprehensive survey and received over 400 responses from students. The group collaborated to critically analyze the data and implement measures to improve remote/hybrid learning in engineering education. The faculty group also raised awareness to help minority students whose education was affected from the COVID 19 pandemic due to lack of technological resources.

Journal Reviewer

- Served as a reviewer for journals such as *Biochemical Engineering Journal*, *Environmental Science & Technology*, *Environmental Science Water Research & Technology*, *Science of the Total Environment*, *Waste Management*, *Water Environment Research*, *Water Research and Water Science & Technology*.

Professional Certification

USA Engineer in Training certification (October 2012).
