

Report from San Diego Meeting 2004

The Education Committee was extremely busy at the San Diego meeting this year with running events and planning future direction of the committee. Here is a summary of events, discussions and meetings.

Educator's Luncheon

The Education committee organized a workshop on the integration of computational methods into Biochemistry curriculum, chaired by Jacob Lebowitz, NIH, and Ellis Bell. Speakers included Stephen Harvey from Georgia Institute of Technology and Sharon Hammes-Schiffer from Pennsylvania State University. The workshop was filled to capacity and very much a success. Ellis Bell and Jacob Lebowitz will write a detailed report in manuscript form for BAMBED. Future workshops are planned for the Barcelona and Boston meetings in 2005 (see below).

Education Committee Members

Leigh Plesniak, Chair
University of San Diego

Ellis Bell
University of Richmond

David Bevan
Virginia Tech

Robert Fairman
Haverford College

Angela Lombardi
Universita di Napoli Federico II

John J. Osterhour
Univeristy of Arizona

Lisa Unico
Edinboro University of Pennsylvania

Brian Hnatkovich
Pennsylvania State U.
Graduate Student

Taylor Williams
U. of San Diego
Undergraduate Student

PUI Mixer A mixer for undergraduate students and their mentors was held at the home of Leigh Plesniak. Approximately 40 people were in attendance for food, beverages and seaside views. A good time was had by all. The bus from the hotel worked well. For future mixers, we'll send out advertising emails to undergraduate students (getting a better list at the time of abstract submission), advertise the departure time of the bus, its location and rename the event to be more descriptive, perhaps "Undergraduate Student and Faculty Mixer" or "Education Mixer".



Above: Spencer Anthony-Cahill and Rob Fairman at the Mixer. Below: Students mixing at the social event.

Career Teaching Panel (co-hosted with YPS)

The Education Committee and the YPS committee co-hosted a panel forum "New to Teaching?" for the discussion of the trials and tribulations of starting to teach at the University level. Panelists included Blake Hill, Johns Hopkins University, Carla Mattos, North Carolina State University, Spencer Anthony-Cahill, Western Washington University, Leigh Plesniak, University of San Diego, and Judith



Klein-Seetharaman, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, and was chaired by Annet Pasternak. Panelists discussed mistakes and successes in their careers, offered suggestions for those who are interested in pursuing a career in education and answered questions from the audience. Several members of the audience had additional suggestions for techniques to enhance teaching efficacy. Blake Hill listed several websites for teaching resources. These will be listed on the Protein Society Education & Outreach Web Page.

Undergraduate Poster Award

The committee and attendees of the San Diego Meeting were disappointed to discover that undergraduate poster awardees could not be identified because students were not queried for their undergraduate status during the online abstract submission process. After discussion within the committee and with poster judges, we decided to take the following actions to assure a fair process for Boston 2005: (i) Making sure that the “undergraduate” option exists for abstract submission, and that choosing the presenting author becomes more flexible in the process. This will also provide an immediate list of undergraduate students that will attend the meeting regardless of the timing of registration. (ii) The Education committee will seek a more active role in shepherding the process through direct communication with members of the meeting organizers, executive council and poster judges. (iii) We have assigned Education committee member, John Osterhout, and working group member, Smita Mohanty, to follow-up on the progress during the year. (iv) Peter Kahn (Abstract Review Committee, Chair) and John Osterhout will work be in regular communication with the committee.

Open Meeting of the Education Committee (see Minutes at the Education WebSite)

The open meeting was held following the Educator’s luncheon. We were fortunate to have both Peter Kahn and John Osterhout in attendance so that we could address the Undergraduate Poster issues directly (see minutes and above). Leigh Plesniak assumed Chair of the committee and new members, Taylor Williams (undergraduate), Lisa Unico (not in attendance) and David Bevan (not in attendance) were announced. Members of the committee cited the need for regular contact with the meeting organizers and the executive council. It has been suggested that future Symposia will be organized by committees to reduce the workload of Cindy Yablonski and to facilitate communication. Short of this, the Education Committee would like to have a seat on the Executive council (ex-officio) to be more integrated in the scheduling of meetings and regular business of the Protein Society.

Budgetary Developments Due to the financial condition of the Protein Society, the budget for the Education Committee has been discontinued. The committee will have to fund its activities through external sources. Fortunately, Ellis Bell was able to put us directly in contact with Parag Chitnis, NSF program officer, about the possibility of submitting a proposal for \$50k for the Boston 2005 meeting. Several meetings were held with Parag to ascertain what would be an acceptable request and to clarify the process. Rob and Ellis will spearhead the submission of a proposal for the activities at the 2005

meeting in Boston. The proposal should be submitted at least 6 months in advance. It will take approximate one week to hear a response.

Planned future activities

Angela Lombardi and Leigh Plesniak are organizing a workshop for the meeting in Barcelona in May 2005 but need to identify a source of funding. A topic has not yet been determined. NSF and corporate sponsorship will be investigated for potential funding.

Boston 2005

There will be an Educator's Luncheon in Boston in 2005 on System's Biology, in coordination with the theme of the symposium. David Bevan will be organizing this event. As a result of discussions with Parag Chitnis and Bob Matthews, the committee plans (pending funding) to host a workshop on System's Biology, an undergraduate mixer, and a four-hour session of research talks given by undergraduate students and their mentors. Robert Fairman, Ellis Bell and Judith Klein-Seetharanam are submitting a proposal to NSF for all of these events. Ellis Bell and Lisa Unico will be coordinating the session talks that are planned to include presentations from eight undergraduate students and four faculty from predominantly undergraduate institutions.



Sunset over Annette Pasternak's shoulder at the PUI Mixer in San Diego.