



**ALLEGHENY-ERIE REGIONAL CHAPTER
of the
SOCIETY OF TOXICOLOGY**

**ANNUAL REPORT: 2020–2021
May 1, 2020–April 30, 2021**

I. Officers/Committees:

<u>Officers</u>	<u>2020-2021</u>	<u>2021-2022</u>
President:	Vamsi Kodali	Britt McAtee
President-Elect:	Britt McAtee	Elizabeth Bowdridge
Vice President:	Todd Stueckle	Julie Miller
Secretary:	Robin Gandley	Robin Gandley
Treasurer:	William Mackay	William Mackay
Past President:	Marisa Kreider	Vamsi Kodali
Councilors:	James Fabisiak	Aaron Barchowsky
	Timothy Nurkiewicz	Timothy Nurkiewicz
	Ivan Olfert	Ivan Olfert
	Alexander Ufelle	Alexander Ufelle
	Mark Weisberg	Mark Weisberg
PDA Representatives:	Avinash Kumar	Avinash Kumar
	William Mandler	Mackenzie Newman
Grad Student Representatives:	Rachel Baur	Julie Griffith
	Regina Schnegelberger	Regina Schnegelberger

Committees:

	<u>2020-2021</u>	<u>2021-2022</u>
Awards	Vamsi Kodali	Julie Miller
Communication	William Mandler	Julie Griffith
Education	Aaron Barchowsky	Aaron Barchowsky
Finance	William Mackay	William Mackay
Membership	Tim Nurkiewicz	Tim Nurkiewicz
Nominating	Jim Antonini	N/A
Program		Britt McAtee
RC4/FUTURE Representative	Todd Stueckle	Elizabeth Bowdridge
Web	William Mandler	Mackenzie Newman

II. 2020 Membership total: 85

III. Key Outcomes in 2020-2021:

- A. This year has been very challenging due to the ongoing pandemic; however, A-E SOT was still able to hold all activities successfully including a virtual meeting in October 2020.
- B. This year is the 20th anniversary of our chapter's student research award, the Maryanne Stock Student Research Award. The award has supported numerous undergraduate and graduate students' toxicology research projects.

- C. We increased our membership last year by ~10%. This was achieved by increasing the advertising of various awards and activities at local institutions.

IV. Activities

- A. The 2020 Allegheny-Erie Society of Toxicology Annual Meeting was held virtually on October 13, 16 and 19, 2020. The meeting had three plenary presentations by Dr. Kent Pinkerton, University of California, Davis; Dr. Olivier Jolliet, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; and Dr. Aleksandr Stefaniak, CDC-NIOSH, Morgantown. The keynote speakers were followed by 5-minute “Rapid Fire” presentations by undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and young investigators. The meeting was well attended, with ~70 attendees each day.
- B. 2021 SOT Virtual Annual Meeting Activities (e.g., courses, scientific sessions, or virtual receptions): Hosted a joint reception on Monday, March 23 from 4:30–5:30 PM with the Lake Ontario Regional Chapter, featuring short presentations, games, and trivia. This reception was organized by the A-E SOT student leadership together with LORC.
- C. 2021 Awards Information:
 - 1. **2021 RC4 Undergraduate Merit Award:** Kallie Schafner, A-E SOT’s nominee for the undergraduate SOT Regional Chapter Communication and Collaboration Committee (RC4) award won the 2021 RC4 Undergraduate Merit Award. A-E SOT has been continually working on increasing our undergraduate outreach. A-E SOT has been supporting undergraduate research through various activities including research awards (Maryanne Stock Student Research Award) and provided a platform to present and discuss their research at the chapter’s annual meeting. Thanks to this continued outreach, A-E SOT’s nominees have won the national RC4 award repeatedly.
 - 2. **2020 Maryanne Stock Student Research Award:** The Maryanne Stock Student Research Award for 2020-2021 had to be postponed from May 1 to September 1, 2020. The award provides the winner with up to \$1000 for student research. Despite the pandemic, we received several outstanding applications. The winner of the 2020–2021 Maryanne Stock award was: Zachary Clemens, Graduate School of Public Health, University of Pittsburgh.
 - Title: “Chronic arsenic exposure causes epigenetic deregulation of autocrine and paracrine NF-kB signaling in skeletal muscle”
 - Mentor: Prof. Aaron Barchowsky, Department of Environmental and Occupational Health, University of Pittsburgh

3. **2021 Maryanne Stock Student Research Award:** In a bid to get back to normalcy, the 2021-2022 Maryanne Stock award reverted back to its original date of May 1, 2021. The winner of the 2021-2022 Maryanne Stock award was Rachel Plants. Rachel is an undergraduate student in Exercise Physiology at West Virginia University in Dr. Ivan Olfert's lab. Rachel's project is entitled the "Effects of vaping electronic cigarettes with different wattage and e-liquid base solution on physical and chemical aerosol properties."
4. **2020 A-E SOT Annual Meeting Awards:** At the A-E SOT virtual annual meeting, apart from talks by keynote speakers, we had presentations by undergraduate, graduate, postdoctoral, and young investigators. Awards were offered for each category. To offset the cost of the awards, sponsorship was obtained from various local institutions and the awards were named after some of the sponsoring institutions. The award winners were:

Session 1 (October 13th)

Undergraduate Student Award

Kallie Schafner, Department of Physiology and Pharmacology, WVU School of Medicine.

RJ Lee Group Inc. Postdoctoral Researcher Award

Gregory Boyce, Allergy and Clinical Immunology, Health Effects Laboratory Division, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

Session 2 (October 16th)

PPG Industries Graduate Student Award

Eiman A. Aboaziza, Clinical and Translational Science, WVU School of Medicine.

Session 3 (October 19th)

PPG Industries Graduate Student Award

Krista Garner, Department of Physiology and Pharmacology, WVU School of Medicine.

RJ Lee Group Inc Young Investigator Award

Nicole Olgun, Pathology and Physiology Research, Health Effects Laboratory Division, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

5. **2020 A-E SOT Graduate Student Travel Awards:** Due to sudden onset of the pandemic, we had already declared the winners for the travel awards prior to the 2020 SOT meeting cancellation. The students had already made their non-refundable travel plans. To honor the declared award and help the students offset some of the expenses, the chapter honored the \$500 travel graduate and postdoctoral travel awards. The award winners were Mariana Farcas (Graduate Student, West Virginia University; NIOSH) and Avinash Kumar (Postdoctoral Scholar, University of Pittsburgh).
6. **2021 A-E SOT Merit Based Professional Development Award:** With the 2021 SOT National Meeting going virtual, in lieu of the Student Travel Award, AE- SOT offered a merit-based professional development award rather than a travel award. The winners of the 2021 A-E SOT Merit Based Professional Development Award were Nairrita Majumder (Graduate Student, West Virginia University. Advisor: Prof. Salik Hussain) and Julie Griffith (Graduate Student, West Virginia University. Advisor: Prof. Timothy Nurkiewicz).

D. Other Educational Activities Conducted (e.g., webinars, in person meetings):

1. Due to the ongoing pandemic, we were unable to hold an in-person meeting; however, we hosted a Virtual Fall Meeting on October 13, 16, and 19, 2020.
2. Although the chapter over the last few years has been actively participating in the ToxScholar program and reaching out to various Undergraduate programs in the region, no outreach activities were conducted last year due to ongoing pandemic and travel restrictions imposed by the institutions.

E. Communication Activities:

1. In 2013, we discontinued our Newsletter and associated committee. All “news-worthy” communication and announcements are posted on our website and distributed via email and ToXchange. This year is the 20th anniversary of the Maryanne Stock Student Research Award. The history of the award and a listing of previous winners was shared via our website, email, and ToXchange.
2. Website: Our website is regularly updated with information about awards, the annual meeting, and changes in officers.

F. New Meetings/Activities:

We are planning to have our 2021 annual meeting October 20–21, 2021, at the Erickson Alumni Center, at West Virginia University. This will be the first live meeting we have held since 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Support for the meeting will be solicited from the University administration and our sponsors. To increase participation and vitality from the two regions, we are rotating the meeting location between Pittsburgh and Morgantown. We intend to host a “Lunch with an Expert” event at the meeting to further encourage student participation.

V. Feedback and Ideas:

- A. In what ways is your group fostering and maintaining an inclusive environment?

A-E SOT, since its inception, has had an open, transparent and inclusive culture. Last year we reached out to the Pittsburgh student chapter of Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) and have invited them to our virtual annual meeting and advertised various mentoring and other opportunities available with A-E SOT.

- B. How might SOT better support your group's activities (perhaps something the Society should be doing that we currently do not do, or do not do effectively, that would be of importance/benefit to the members of your component group?):

Note: If funding is listed, please provide detail on the membership need that the funding would support.

In order to increase membership, A-E SOT and other regional chapters would benefit if SOT could help provide some funds for membership drives. A-E SOT currently has a student membership drive that covers membership fee for the first year. With the help of SOT, we could extend it to regular members. Through this free 1-year membership drive, we hope to showcase the advantages of being a member. This could increase the membership and reach of SOT.

- C. What is one thing that the Society is currently doing that impacts your component group that should be changed (e.g., stopped, modified, etc.)?

None.

- D. What changes do your component group anticipate making in the way in which it operates in the coming year?

We are planning a live (in-person) annual meeting this fall in a bid to get back to normalcy.