

Allegheny-Erie Regional Chapter

**ANNUAL REPORT: 2023–2024**

May 1, 2023 to April 30, 2024

**I. Officers:**

<b><u>2023–2024</u></b>	<b><u>2024–2025</u></b>
President: Elaine Freeman Vice President: Weimin Gao Secretary: Robin Gandley Treasurer: William Mackay Past President, Councilor: Elizabeth Bowdridge Councilor: Aaron Barchowsky Councilor: Bharat Bhushan Councilor: Marisa Kreider Councilor: Britt McAtee Councilor: Timothy Nurkiewicz Councilor: Todd Stueckle Postdoctoral Representative: Albert Pilkington Graduate Student Representative: Zachary Clemens Graduate Student Representative: Beethi Sinha	President: Ivan Olfert Vice President: Todd Stueckle Secretary: Robin Gandley Treasurer: William Mackay Past President, Councilor: Elaine Freeman Councilor: Adams Amantana Councilor: Aaron Barchowsky Councilor: Britt McAtee Councilor: Julie Miller Councilor: Timothy Nurkiewicz Councilor: Winnie Wan-ye Tang Postdoctoral Representative: Russell Hunter Graduate Student Representative: Amber Mills Senior Student Representative: Beethi Sinha

**Committees:**

Todd Stueckle was appointed in the Vice President role for the 2024-2025 term.

Russel Hunter was appointed in the Postdoc role for the 2024-2025 term.

**II. 2024 Membership total: 69**

**III. Key Outcomes and Accomplishments in 2023–2024:**

The Allegheny-Erie Regional Chapter accomplished the following activities throughout the year.

- In-person Regional Chapter meeting/mixer
- Social event at SOT Annual Meeting
- Mentoring/career development events
- Poster session for trainees
- Trainee awards conferred
- Business meeting (communicated operations/finances to members)

**IV. Collaborative Partnerships with Other SOT Organizations:**

The Allegheny-Erie Regional Chapter collaborated with the following organizations within SOT.

- Michigan

**V. Communication Methods:**

The Allegheny-Erie Regional Chapter stayed in contact with its members throughout the year through the following mechanisms.

- ToXchange
- Regional Chapter website
- Through Graduate Student/Postdoc Representatives

#### **VI. Promotion of Inclusivity**

The Allegheny-Erie Regional Chapter maintained an inclusive organization through the following activities.

- Nominate a diverse slate of candidates for elections
- Solicit equitable input from all executive committee leaders
- Utilize virtual meetings for convening Regional Chapter leadership
- Prioritize diversity in selection of speakers/panelists
- Highlight trainee research
- Use multiple approaches to communicate with membership

#### **VII. Mentoring and Career Development Activities:**

The Allegheny-Erie Regional Chapter hosted the following mentoring activities throughout the year for its membership.

- Chat with an expert
- Lunch with Expert at RC meeting designed for students and postdoc fellows.

#### **VIII. Activities Supporting Undergraduate Students:**

The Allegheny-Erie Regional Chapter engaged undergraduate students with the following activities:

- Attendance at Regional Chapter meeting
- We promote and allow students at all levels to apply for MaryAnne Stock Award.

#### **IX. Awards Given:**

<b>Trainee</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Early Career</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Mid Career</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Late Career</b>	<b>0</b>

#### **X. Key Outcomes and Improvements:**

- Members of our RC have successfully integrated environmental justice into academic programs in our region, and help drive toxicology-related community-engaged research initiatives.
- Increased interest in serving in A-E SOT leadership positions has resulted in more applications to serve in councilors positions, and for our local chapter meeting moving to online only for schedules/abstracts reduces our carbon footprint.

#### **XI. Strategic Plan:**

The Allegheny-Erie Regional Chapter supported the following SOT Strategic Priorities.

- Proactively pursue impactful scientific content
- Develop a talent pool of toxicologists for the future

## **XII. Regional Chapter Meeting Highlights**

The Allegheny-Erie had the following highlights from their Annual Meeting:

Our meeting showcased a symposium centered on environmental justice and highlighting how toxicological research can address disparities in environmental health. Keynote speakers, included Dr. James Fabisiak (University of Pittsburgh, Center for Health Environments and Communities, Environmental and Occupational Health), Dr. John Stolz (Duquesne University Biological Sciences), and Dr. Danelia Stricklin (Branch Chief of the Pathology and Physiology Research Branch NIOSH). It is notable that students from the Systems Toxicology (syTOX) NIH T32 fellowship program (T32-ES032920) at West Virginia University were instrumental in selecting and requesting Dr. Stricklin as one of our keynote speakers. Indeed, we continue to develop and have very strong student involvement last year that provided a well-attended and productive student poster session and well-attended “lunch with an expert” designed for undergraduate and graduate students. We are disappointed that resources continue to be pulled back by National which challenges our ability to give student awards at our regional meeting. We still try to recognize as many students as we can. Recognition for best oral and poster presentation (undergraduate, graduate student and postdoctoral fellow for each), best methodology, and best overall abstract were presented.

## **XIII. Scientific Topics of Interest:**

The Allegheny-Erie Regional Chapter is interested in seeing the following topic areas developed into sessions at future SOT Annual Meetings.

- Topics of interest based on a query within our RC; include toxico-exposomic, genotoxicity and food safety, science and policy, toxicology related to genetically engineered foods or medicine, toxicology of chemicals across biological jurisdictions (dsRNA, microbial, proteins/peptides), and geospatial trends in toxicology.

## **XIV. Feedback to the Society:**

- A. What is the one thing the Society should be doing that it currently does not do (or does not do effectively) that would be of importance/benefit to the members of the Regional Chapter?

Speaker lists for local or regional meetings to help with planning, and more resources from national to support grassroots regional or local efforts for RC annual meeting or webinars. Part of this includes could a mechanism that promotes crosstalk between regional chapters (perhaps financially incentivizing two RCs to have a joint meeting rather than separate meetings). While the national meeting is great, the smaller RC meetings are optimal in their size and venues to promote collaborations between trainees and early-stage investigators via more focused connections that are often difficult in the high-traffic environments and the multitude of excellent competing events occurring at the national meeting

- B. What is the one thing the Society is currently doing that impacts the Regional Chapter that should be changed (e.g., stopped, modified, etc.)?

With a significant drop in the financial support from National SOT for Component Groups (approaching -67% in some cases), both RCs and SS are asked to be creative to keep the current level of activity high with drastically reduced financial support. We are no longer able to support travel of more than one promising student to the Annual Meeting. It is forcing Component Group leadership to search out donations or sponsorship from companies, individuals, etc. With the current rules that National SOT has on who we can and cannot ask for sponsorship, it makes it difficult to identify, engage with, and pursue willing sponsors. This problem is amplified for those of us in leadership positions on several Component Groups. National SOT should consider loosening their sponsorship rules to allow Component Groups more latitude. Some of the more financially healthy Component Groups are seeing significant financial stresses and are having to scale down their activities, both throughout the year and at the Annual SOT meeting.