



Society of Toxicology Midwest Regional Chapter

**2022
Fall Newsletter**

November 9th, 2022



Midwest Regional Chapter OF THE SOCIETY OF TOXICOLOGY

President's Message

Dear MRC/SOT Members,

Operating virtually the last few years and slowly moving back to in-person activities has required all of us to think on our feet and find opportunities to collaborate in different ways – MRC/SOT has continued to adapt to an ever-changing situation and has had a very successful 2022. Highlights of our year include:

- Our first in-person meeting since the pandemic, the **2022 Fall Meeting, “Food Safety in Toxicology”**, which featured a tour of the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene, three speakers, and three trainee flash talks. We had **36 registrants** join us in Madison.
- A well-received virtual **2022 Spring Meeting, “Toxicology as a Multi-Disciplinary Field: Regulation, Communication, and the Path to Certification”**, which featured three speakers and four trainee flash talks.
- Publishing our **2022 Spring Newsletter** this past April and our **2021-2022 Annual Report** this past August.
- Encouraging trainee involvement with our chapter by continuing to **waive all student and postdoc membership dues as well as student and postdoc Fall Meeting registration fees**.
- Starting our **second year of the MRC/SOT Mentoring Program!** Special thanks to Dr. Ellen Baker and Thomas Peterson for leading this initiative.
- Continuing our newsletter special feature, **“Chat with a Toxicologist”!** Special thanks for Dr. Alison Neff and Anita Waye for leading this initiative.
- Offering a virtual webinar organized by our friends at **Midwest SETAC**, entitled, **“Recruitment Pathways that Lower Barriers to Inclusivity and Belongingness”**.

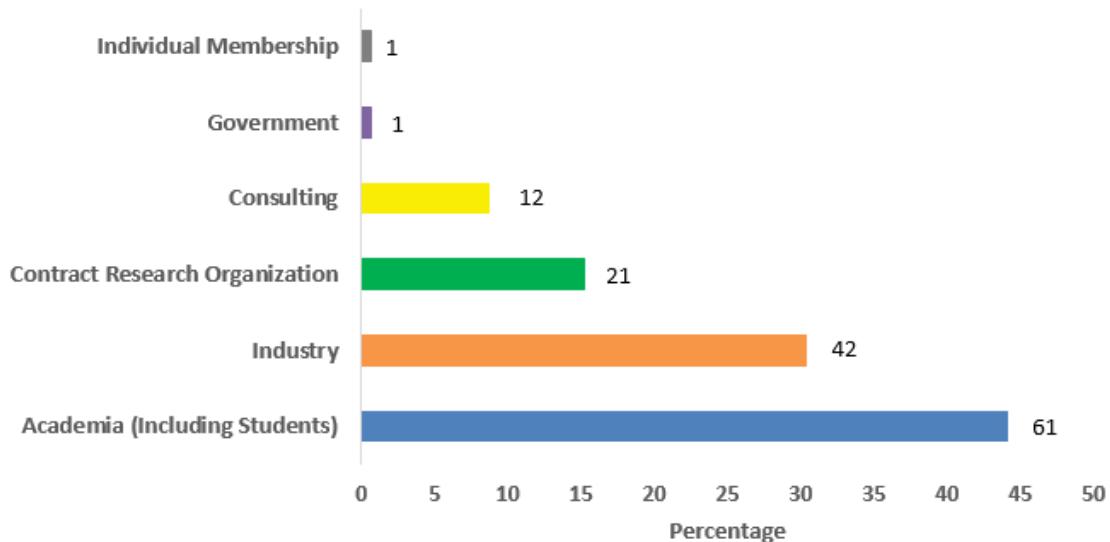
On behalf of the MRC/SOT Executive Committee, I would like to thank you for your continued support and interest in our regional chapter. As always, we welcome any of your suggestions on improving how MRC/SOT enriches your experiences in toxicology at the regional level. As the year draws to a close, we'd like to wish all of you happiness and health during the holiday season. Cheers to a wonderful 2023, see you then!

Kind regards,
Ashley Brinkman, PhD, DABT
MRC/SOT President 2022-2023

About the Midwest Regional Chapter

The Midwest Regional Chapter of the Society of Toxicology (MRC/SOT) has served its Illinois and Wisconsin members for over 40 years, since 1981. Our chapter is currently comprised of **138 members** with a professional interest in toxicology, and we continually accept new members. Our membership by affiliation for 2022 was 44% from academia, 30% from industry, 15% from consulting firms, 9% from contract research organizations, 1% from Government, and 1% from individual membership.

MRC/SOT Membership



One of our main objectives is to facilitate professional interactions amongst toxicologists in industry, academia, and government. To accomplish this, we host two scientific programs annually, in the spring and fall, with invited speakers from across our represented areas, host trainee poster sessions and talks, and support career outreach, both during our chapter meetings and at the National SOT meeting.

Want to know more about the Midwest Regional Chapter?

Regional Chapter newsletters, information pertaining to membership, MRC-SOT awards, and nomination/application forms may be viewed or printed from our website:

<http://www.toxicology.org/groups/rc/midwest/index.asp>

MRC-SOT Executive Committee (2022-2023)



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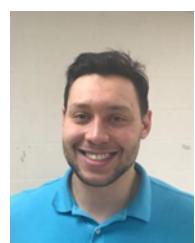
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Want to become an MRC-SOT Executive Committee Officer?

We will have five vacant positions on the EC that will need to be filled by May 1, 2023:

- **President-Elect (1)**
- **Secretary (1)**
- **Councilor (1)**
- **Student representative (1)**
- **Postdoctoral representative (1)**

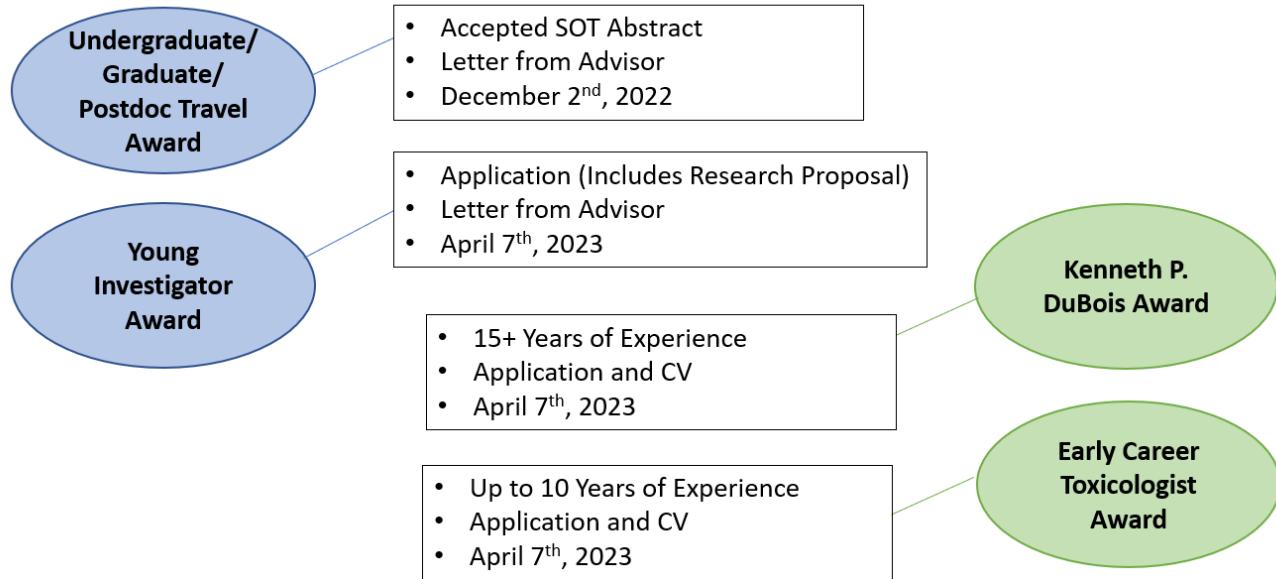
See below high level role information, details about all role and responsibilities can be found within our Chapter's [bylaws](#) on our webpage.

- The **President-Elect** is a three-year commitment, as this individual serves as the President-Elect during Year 1, President during Year 2, and Past-President during Year 3. The primary responsibility of the President-Elect is to serve as the Chair of the Program Committee for the MRC/SOT Fall and Spring meetings.
- **Councilors** serve a two-year term and provide assistance in governing the activities and affairs of the MRC/SOT and/or participate in committees as assigned by the President.
- The **Secretary** is a two-year term, and this individual develops meeting agendas, takes meeting minutes, and coordinates development and publication of MRC/SOT newsletters.
- The **Student Representative** and **Postdoctoral Representative** shall serve for a one-year term (may be extended to two years if no other nominees are present at the time of the election). This position will give candidate visibility across the regional chapter and provide excellent opportunity to increase professional involvement.

If you are interested in this potential opportunity, please send Dr. Smita Salian-Mehta (smita.salianmehta@gilead.com) your current CV and a brief biosketch **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**. Please indicate which position you are interested in.



Call for MRC/SOT Award Applications



We will also be hosting a student poster competition for the Victor A. Drill Award at our upcoming 2023 Spring Meeting!

Please see the [awards](#) page on our website for additional information. All application materials can be sent to Dr. Matt Wolter (MWolter@scj.com).



MRC/SOT Members have had some wonderful accomplishments this year!

Please join us in recognizing:

- **Dr. Smita Salian-Mehta** for her publication, entitled, “Toxicologic Pathology Forum: Opinion on Not Euthanizing Control Animals in the Recovery Phase of Non-Rodent Toxicology Studies”. Janardhan KS, Sura R, Salian-Mehta S, et al. *Toxicologic Pathology*. Oct 2022.
- **Charles Mattis** for his publication, entitled, “Increasing the Reuse of Protein Non-Naive Nonhuman Primates in Pharmaceutical Drug Discovery and Development: An Overview and Industry Position on the Challenges and Benefits”. Mattis C, et al. *International Journal of Toxicology* 2022, Vol. 41(4) 291–296
- **Anita Waye** for passing her preliminary exam and for her publication, entitled, “Sex-specific extracellular matrix remodeling during early adipogenic differentiation by gestational bisphenol A exposure”. Pu Y, Ticiani E, Waye AA, et al. *Chemosphere*. 2022 Sep;302:134806
- **Dr. Brita Kilburg-Basnyat** for being chosen as an Early Career Representative for the Science Policy Committee for FASEB and for her publication entitled, “Emerging Insights into the Impact of Air Pollution on Immune-Mediated Asthma Pathogenesis”. Tuazon JA, Kilburg-Basnyat B, et al. *Current Allergy and Asthma Reports* (2022): 1-16.

MRC/SOT Event Updates

Annual Fall Meeting

Committee: Tracy Henriques (Chair), Ellen Baker, and Alison Neff

The 2022 Annual Fall MRC/SOT meeting was our first in-person meeting since the pandemic, and we were joined by 36 registered participants. The Program Committee, under the direction of President-Elect Tracy Henriques, organized a tour of the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene and assembled a diverse group of speakers whose talks were all well received and inspired many questions from the audience. The theme of this year's fall meeting was "Food Safety in Toxicology". Multiple perspectives were presented, with talks highlighting *analytical uncertainties* (**Dr. Paul Hanlon** from Abbott Nutrition, "Addressing Analytical Uncertainties in Food Risk Assessment) and *foodborne pathogens* (**Dr. Kristin Schill** from UW-Madison's Food Research Institute, "Historical Perspectives and Current Concerns on the Control of Toxigenic Foodborne Pathogens), as well as *food contact risk assessment* (**Mr. Matt Savidge** from knoell USA, "Risk Assessment of Non-Intentionally Added Substances Migrating from Food Contact Materials"). The MRC-SOT Executive Committee would like to thank all of our wonderful speakers as well as all attendees! **If you have ideas to propose for the Spring 2023 Meeting theme, please contact Dr. Tracy Henriques.**

Flash Talks at the Annual Fall Meeting

Committee: Tracy Henriques (Chair), Ellen Baker, Alison Neff, and Matt Wolter

A 3-minute platform talk opportunity for students and postdocs to showcase their work and presentation skills was included in our Fall 2022 Meeting. Abstracts were submitted by presenters prior to the meeting and our committee selected three abstracts for presentation. Each selected speaker gave a 3-minute flash talk. **Monica Ridlon** (graduate student, University of Wisconsin – Madison), **Kenneth Sandro Rivera-Gonzales** (graduate student, University of Wisconsin – Madison), **and Sri Vidya Dangudubiyam** (graduate student, University of Wisconsin – Madison) gave well-received flash talks that generated great discussion. A

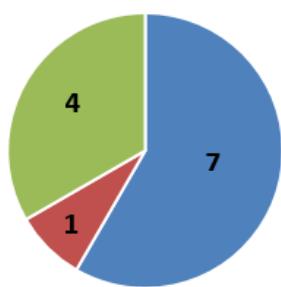
monetary \$50 award was provided to the selected flask talk presenters after the meeting. This event enabled the students to develop their communication skills, build their confidence for longer platform talks and provided opportunity to highlight their PhD/project work. **The MRC-SOT Executive Committee encourages all students and postdocs to consider presenting their work as part of our Victor A. Drill award poster competition at our upcoming Spring 2023 meeting (additional information forthcoming).**

MRC/SOT Mentoring Program

Committee: Ellen Baker (chair) and Thomas Peterson

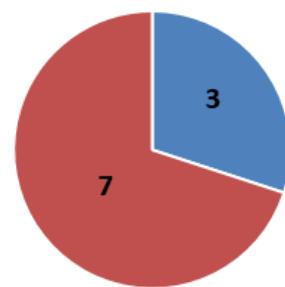
MRC/SOT is in its second year of the mentoring program. The program runs from October 2022 through March 2023 and brings together professionals in the field of toxicology with mentees (students, postdocs, and early career scientists) considering a career in toxicology. These meetings are meant to provide valuable career information to participants, develop professional relationships, build strong networks, and foster a sense of community at MRC/SOT. This year's mentees and mentors are from industry/consulting/CRO (Central Garden & Pet, Lovelace Biomedical, knoell USA, ReproTOX, ToxStrategies, Robin Guy Consulting, Labcorp, SC Johnson, Stryker) and academia (University of Wisconsin, University of Illinois-UC, University of Illinois-Chicago, Purdue University, University of Iowa, Boise State University, University of New Mexico). The mentoring program is led by Councilor, Ellen Baker, with help from MRC/SOT Graduate Student Assistant, Thomas Peterson. **12 mentees and 10 mentors** have been matched. The team also plans to conduct workshops/informational events for mentoring program participants. These career-related webinars or informative meet and greet events will be led by mentors, career coaches, etc.

Mentee Demographics



■ Graduate Student ■ Postdoctoral Fellow ■ Early/Mid-Career

Mentor Demographics



■ Academia ■ Industry/Consulting/CRO

Special Feature:

Chat with a Toxicologist: Tracy Henriques, PhD, DABT

Q. How did you become interested in toxicology?

A. In undergrad I was a chemistry major. We had a senior seminar series where people from different areas in science came and spoke to us. One of the people that came to speak was a forensic toxicologist, and I was interested. When I did more research I realized it was a little too analytical, but toxicology in general was still of interest to me so I decided to go to graduate school and study toxicology. In the first year, we had to do three rotations to select our lab to go through the program. I joined a lab that was in the College of Pharmacy at the University of Kentucky, and the area of drug development and therapeutics became interesting to me. At Abbvie, I lead our toxicology group within preclinical safety.



Q. Briefly describe your career path so far and what role toxicology plays in it.

A. During graduate school I did an externship at Merck. I went up to West Point Pennsylvania and I shadowed a Toxicology Study Director in their safety assessment group. That was in my last year of graduate school. From then I realized this was the direction I want to go, but I was in a lab where there was limited support to leaving academia and work for industry. That put doubt in my mind, so I decided to pursue a postdoc in academia. I realized in the first year that this was not the direction I wanted to go. I left academia and went to Covance, now Labcorp, and I was a Study Director in safety pharmacology for 5 years. Then I moved to Abbott in 2012 as Study Director/Study Monitor, and we became Abbvie a year later. In 2016, I took on more operations management responsibilities where I had oversight of toxicology operations including our technical staff, our dispensing lab, and our associate toxicologists. In July of this year, I became the Director of Toxicology and a Test Facility Management, so I have a broader oversight of our area.

Q. What are some challenges and opportunities you faced en-route to your current position?

A. My postdoc was definitely a challenge. After graduate school I did a postdoc in the Division of Nephrology at Duke University. The facility we housed our animals was in the VA hospital which had a whistleblower policy and someone reported the mistreatment of animals in the facility (not our lab) and so they shut down the facility while they conducted an investigation. My work was primarily based on generating knockout mouse models and being able to study the impact of the genetic modification on renal function. I essentially couldn't do any work other than breeding to maintain the line. Six months into that shut down I realized that this was not the path I wanted to go and decided to look for jobs. A personal obstacle I had to overcome was regarding obtaining sponsorship for my greencard...but that's a story for another time! I have had the opportunity to be part of a lot of mentoring programs both for women and minorities. I think the mentorship that I have gained through internal leadership courses, from organizations like Women United and Women in Bio, and from individual mentors and sponsors has given me a lot of good guidance, resources, and knowledge to help me continue to progress and accelerate my career. My former boss, Lori Gallenberg and my mentor Helen Garley, who both recently retired, gave me a lot of guidance over the past several years (I miss them!!). I am also getting mentorship and leadership development through Women United which is part of the United Way, as part of the first cohort of the Future Corporate Leaders of Color.

Q. What skills did you find necessary to establish a career in industry?

A. People skills. A big part of the reason I didn't want to be a medical doctor was because I didn't want to be around people all of the time, yet here I am, being around people all of the time. I think being approachable, authentic, motivated, and open-minded are important.

Q. What aspects do you enjoy most about your career?

A. One thing I enjoy about my job is that I get to interact with people with diverse backgrounds; education, age, and ethnicities. We have a diverse group, and we come from such different backgrounds that you continue to learn both professionally and personally. Also, I enjoy

knowing that we are bringing important medicines to people, and that we are keeping medicines that are not safe off the market.

Q. What advice do you have for trainees/early career scientists interested in pursuing a career in toxicology?

A. Don't let anyone steer you in a direction you don't want to go. Be true to your interests and seek mentorship from other people in careers that you are interested in. Reach out to people and don't be afraid to advocate for yourself to get that mentorship that you need to make sure it is really the right career path for you. Most of us are willing and excited to speak to trainees. Also, take advantage of the networking opportunities within MRC-SOT and other organizations (enter plug for becoming a student and post-doc rep here!!).

Q. As President-Elect, what would you like to achieve during your presidency?

A. I would like to continue to encourage in-person meetings. We are noticing, in general, some reluctance to go back to in-person meetings, but I think there is value to being in-person. It promotes networking and conversation opportunities that you might not have in a virtual space. Bringing back that in-person presence is important. I would also love to talk more about diversity and inclusion in our chapter and within toxicology. During undergrad we had a seminar series that was interesting and of value to me as someone who didn't really know where I wanted to take my career. Maybe we can have a seminar series where people from different areas in toxicology can speak to trainees in the chapter. Who knows....the possibilities are endless!

Q. What is your favorite event at the national SOT meeting?

A. I don't go to the national meetings now, but when I did, my favorite aspect was the networking. There is value in networking. It is good to see people and where their careers are taking them.

Q. If you were not a toxicologist, what would you be and why?

A. I would be an event planner. I love planning events. I love logistics. I love themes. All the work you put in and then seeing the final end-product and seeing people happy and enjoying their event seems so rewarding. I would probably be a wedding planner. If I could do that on the side now, I would do it.

Q. What do you like to do outside of work?

A. I love to travel. I would travel the world. I am originally from Canada, but my family is from Jamaica. I've been to a lot of countries in Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean. I would love to go to Thailand and see more of Europe. I just want to go everywhere and enjoy good food, embrace the culture, and learn the languages.



Interested in being featured in our Special Section?

Reach out to Alison Neff, Postdoctoral Representative (hantak@illinois.edu) or Anita Waye, Graduate Student Representative (awaye3@uic.edu)