Message from the President

Dear WIT members,

Time runs very quickly, and it is surprising that five months have already passed since the 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting of the Society of Toxicology. I am delighted to welcome Prathibha Rao, Sharmilee Sawant and Kristy Kutanzi, newly elected to the WIT Executive Committee. At the same time I would like to very much acknowledge the contributions of Laura Andrews, Leigh Ann Burns Naas and Louisa Hooven who rotated off the WIT Executive Committee.

At the 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. we had a full house at the reception indicative of the interest, support and kinship of WIT. The Student Representative of WIT, Jennifer Head, very enthusiastically prepared a bingo game to enhance networking at the reception and it was a big hit! The reception began with a welcome note by Suzy.

It is an honor and a privilege to be following Suzy Fitzpatrick as the President of WIT. Suzy was very instrumental in casting light on the four women who have been Presidents of SOT in previous newsletters and if you haven’t had a chance to read about them, do visit the WIT webpage or ToXchange to read their amazing stories with their mentoring nuggets.

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I look forward to working with our Executive and other Committees this coming year with a commitment to sowing the seeds for the next fifty years with a focus on mentoring and leadership, keys to building the next generation of toxicologists.

Best regards,

Brinda Mahadevan, Ph.D.
President, Women in Toxicology Special Interest Group
Awards Committee

By Leigh Ann Burns Naas

The Awards Committee is responsible for the following: 1) review and selection of the Mentoring, Student, and Postdoctoral Awards; and 2) review and recommendation to the Executive Committee of up to 4 finalists (2 minimum) for the Hudson-Weisburger Award. Last year was the first year that WIT has had a formal Awards Committee outside of the Executive Committee so there was much work to be done in addition to reviewing and selecting the nominees for each award. Last year the Awards Committee (2010-2011) comprised the following individuals: Abby Benninghoff, Leigh Ann Burns Naas (WIT Sr. Councilor & Chair), Sushmita Chanda, Fran Crofts, Michelle Horner, and Tao Wang (WIT Jr. Councilor & Co-Chair).

Right out of the gate, the Committee was made aware that the AAAS provides a Lifetime Mentoring award each year. So a nomination package was developed for Linda Birnbaum and submitted in July on behalf of WIT. The Committee is grateful to all those who contributed to getting the package together. The Committee then set about developing formal scoring sheets for each award. For each award, criteria were established based on the award descriptions on the website, and a point range placed on each one. A minimum score to receive an award was also defined. After reviewing candidates for each award, the Committee held teleconferences to discuss the nominees and determine the winners. This process continues to be very difficult as all of our nominees are clearly outstanding mentors and students with well-thought-out research projects. Pictures of the winners and their abstract titles (students and postdocs) from the 2011 Annual Meeting are provided later in this newsletter. Finally, over the course of this first year, we have identified areas for continuous improvement of our processes and will continue to work on these over the coming year.

Suggestions are welcome and can be sent to Tao Wang at tao.wang@novartis.com.

If you are interested in serving on the Awards Committee but were unable to sign-up at the WIT Reception at SOT, send a message to Tao and let her know.

Award Deadlines

Due to the overwhelming response to the WIT Awards and the time it takes for the committee to effectively review each application for each award, the deadline for the WIT awards was changed in 2010. Please note the following deadlines not ed in the side panel for applications/nominations for awards to be given at the WIT Reception during the 2012 SOT Annual Meeting.

Information on these awards can be found at http://www.toxicology.org/isot/SIG/WIT/index.asp and award applications should be sent to the Senior Councilor, Tao Wang (tao.wang@novartis.com) by the appropriate deadline.
Congratulations to the 2011 Women in Toxicology SIG Award Winners

**Mentoring Award**

Louise Winn, PhD
Queen’s University

**Student Achievement Award**

Azita K. Cuevas
New York University

“Ambient Particle Composition and Mechanisms of Endothelial Dysfunction in a Murine Model”

**Vera W. Hudson and Elizabeth K. Weisburger Scholarship Fund Student Award**

Alexandria Lau
University of Arizona

“Arsenic activates the Nrf2 antioxidant response pathway via autophagy”

**Postdoctoral Achievement Award**

Pei-Li Yao, PhD
University of Texas at Austin

“C/EBP and C-MYC cooperate for the transcriptional suppression of sertoli cell TIMP-2 in rodents following MEHP exposure”
It was a wonderful honor to be awarded the 2011 Mentoring Award from the SOT Women in Toxicology Special Interest Group. It is truly a pleasure to work with trainees and have an opportunity to mentor them. Here is some of the motivational advice I give to my trainees:

1) Yes you work hard, but it is worth it and you will easily end up loving the work you do;
2) Get involved. Make the memories of your training experience the best it can be by getting involved not only with the day to day research of your own and your lab mates’ projects but also in other things, whether it be getting together to play softball or acting as a student representative on various committees. Make the most of your training experience - you won’t regret it;
3) Be persistent, whether you are working on a difficult dissecting technique or a challenging molecular biology protocol – it pays to be persistent. Everyone experiences days or sometimes weeks (I’ve even heard of months) when nothing seems to be working and it’s easy to get discouraged. Sometimes you have to try something new but sometimes things sort themselves out. Don’t give up, persistence has benefits including wonderful opportunities to not only present your research, but to also meet new people who are also interested in toxicology;
4) Don’t be afraid to ask for help. Most people love to be helpful; and
5) Don’t be afraid to take risks!

Finally: Have fun!
We can improve communication across our membership via active use of ToXchange on the SOT Web site. We encourage each of you to access this tool, set up your profile and select your Communities, including WIT-SIG. The site can be used by all to create discussion threads and the WIT-SIG officers can post relevant documents for information and comment. Set up your profiles and commit to using it as a key communication vehicle, so please do so upon reading this newsletter.

Leadership

WIT Sponsored Informational Session

Toxicological Considerations of Pharmacotherapy During Pregnancy

Chair by Susan Laffan (GSK) and Ofelia Olivero (NCI)

The Session took place on Wednesday March 9th and focused on considerations for both the mother and the fetus during drug treatment of pregnant women. The topic was relevant since almost every pregnant woman is exposed to some type of medication during pregnancy and many are prescribed drugs deemed “safe” despite evidence of possible teratogenicity and/or genotoxicity. The session began with an overview of the proposed new pregnancy labeling categories based on reproductive toxicology and present results of pharmacokinetic studies in pregnant women funded by the FDA Office of Women’s Health, presented by Dr. Margaret Miller from FDA, National Center for Toxicological Research. A medical perspective on the challenges involved in treating pregnant and lactating women as a population and as individuals was covered by Dr. Catalin Buhimschi, from Yale University. That presentation introduced a new scientific field of “theranostics”, a method to tailor medical treatments for individual patients. This presentation was followed by a talk by Dr. Richard Miller, from University of Rochester on maternal pharmacotherapy and role of the placenta in modulation and transfer of agents to the conceptus. The presentation covered a range of in vitro assessments for studying the human placenta and animal models as well as investigating maternal and fetal advantages of novel nanomedicines. Dr. Dinesh Stanislaus, GlaxoSmithKline brought to the attention of the audience the development of novel medicine for pre-term labor and the challenges in supporting clinical trials in pregnant women. Finally, research on the transplacental carcinogenicity of nucleoside analogs in rodents and implications on the therapeutic use of anti HIV drugs was discussed by Dr. Ofelia Olivero, National Cancer Institute. The session was well attended and a Q&A segment allowed the speakers to engage and expand on their presentations.

“…almost every pregnant woman is exposed to some type of medication during pregnancy and many are prescribed drugs deemed “safe” despite evidence of possible teratogenicity and/or genotoxicity...”

Toxicological Considerations of Pharmacotherapy During Pregnancy. Speakers, from left to right: Susan Laffan, Dinesh Stanislaus, Catalin Buhimschi, Ofelia Olivero, Margaret Miller and Richard Miller.
50 Years of “the Pill”: Risk Reduction and Discovery of Benefits Beyond Contraception

*Chaired by Brinda Mahadevan (Abbott) and Kristina Chadwick (BMS)*

This session took place Wednesday in the early morning hours (6:30 am to be exact!) and focused on the history of the oral contraceptive (the Pill), the scientific background, safety concerns that were encountered and resolved, and future prospects for new contraceptives. Dr. Kristina Chadwick of Bristol-Myers Squibb started off the session with a historical overview of the Pill, including the cancer and thrombosis scares and how they were addressed, and contraceptives options beyond the Pill. Dr. Ronald Burkman, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Tufts University School of Medicine and Baystate Medical Center in Springfield, MA presented on the use of combined (estrogen and progestin) oral contraceptives and their association with a low attributable risk of deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary thromboembolism and to a limited extent with increased risk of stroke and myocardial infarction. Dr. Belen Tornesi of Abbott Laboratories closed out the session by providing a look into the future of contraception and how recent scientific and technological advances in genomics, proteomics, new materials, and new drug delivery systems, along with a new understanding of reproductive biology offer the promise of new, safe, and effective forms of contraception. Despite the early hour, the session was well attended and sparked a lot of good discussion during the Q&A.

In addition, with the financial support and encouragement of SOT this proposal was submitted and accepted for presentation at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in Vancouver next February!

50 Years of “the Pill” Session, focused on the history of the oral contraceptive. Speakers, from left to right: Brinda Mahadevan, Kristina D. Chadwick, Belen M. Tornesi, and Ronald Burkman.

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Want to learn more about WIT Featured Leaders?
Visit the [February 2011 WIT Newsletter](#)
SOT 2011 Time Capsule

At the 50th Anniversary of SOT a Time Capsule was prepared which will be opened in 25 years on year 2036. WIT was proud to submit two items that were placed in this time capsule. One was a poster of Women in SOT Leadership Positions featuring Meryl Karol, Marion F. Ehrich, Linda S. Birnbaum and Cheryl Lyn Walker. The second item was a poster featuring “The PILL.”

First Female Runners at the 50th Anniversary Fun Run

SOT Past President’s 5K Fun Run, held on March 6th at scenic Hains Point in East Potomac Park in Washington, D.C., was a great success and every one reported having fun!

For the top female runners, the three fastest races times were clocked by:

1. Monika Rönn, Uppsala University
2. Christi Schulte, Iowa State University
Paracelsus Goes To Washington

“Protecting You and Your Pet through the Science of Toxicology: Paracelsus Goes to Washington” was the title for the event held Saturday, March 5, during which SOT provided free admission to the Koshland Science Museum of the National Academy of Science (KSM). Toxicologists from government, academia, and industry demonstrated and engaged the public in various practical examples of how toxicologists provide protection for the health of humans and pets. This event was a success since 97 percent of participants indicated that the event was “very useful” or “useful” for learning about toxicology in everyday life. View the Koshland Pet Food recorded presentation given by Renate Reimschuessel.

Call for Volunteers for WIT Awards Committee

Last year was a banner year for applications for the WIT Awards! We had 12 nominations for the Mentoring Award, 9 for the Postdoc Award, 14 for the Student Awards, and 7 for the Hudson-Weisberger Scholarship Award! It is time to create a WIT Awards Committee for this year. The committee will be responsible for the following: 1) review and selection of the Mentoring, Student, and Postdoctoral Awards; and 2) review and recommendation to the Executive Committee of up to 4 finalists (2 minimum) for the Hudson-Weisberger Award. The Awards Committee will be chaired by the Senior Councilor Dr. Tao Wang, and co-chaired by the Junior Councilor Dr. Sharmilee Sawant. If you would like to serve on the WIT Awards Committee, please send your name to Tao Wang at tao.wang@novartis.com.

SOT 2013 Meeting-WIT Call For Submission of Proposals

As we prepare for the 51st Annual Meeting in San Francisco, it is time to start planning for the 2013 Annual Meeting to continue the tradition of good robust science and knowledge-sharing. The Women in Toxicology Special Interest Group (WIT-SIG) would like to invite you to submit your proposals for the 2013 Annual Meeting, to be held in San Antonio, TX, March 10–14. Submit a proposal and share your expertise with an elite group of international scientists, present cutting edge research, and discuss emerging global issues in areas of Women and Children’s Health.

The goals of WIT are to present and promote “state of the art” and break-through research in areas related to Women and Children’s Health, promote and encourage women and young investigators in scientific arenas, and impact the field of toxicology to improve human health.

Recommended approaches include alignment with the theme, topic relevant to Women and Children’s Health, emerging issues, new technologies, and wide array of speakers. If you are interested in submitting a proposal for 2013 annual meeting, please contact prathibha.rao@sanofi-aventis.com.

SOT CCT Meetings Eligible for Seed Money and Profit Sharing

SOT Sponsors two types of meetings outside of the SOT Annual Meeting: Contemporary Concepts in Toxicology (CCT) and Non-SOT meetings. CCT meetings are one- to two-day focused, open registration, scientific meetings in contemporary and rapidly progressing areas of toxicological sciences. Non-SOT meetings are sponsored by other not-for-profit organizations and SOT will either endorse or provide sponsorship money to toxicology-related meetings.

The Society will underwrite all the liabilities of the CCT meeting with the expectation that the meeting will at least break even financially. The goal of providing $25,000 seed funds is to stimulate the creation of CCT meeting proposals. For more information about CCT meetings, please visit the SOT Web site.