



Neurotoxicology Specialty Section

March 5, 2012

Dear NTSS Members:

The **Society of Toxicology** annual meeting begins in less than a week, and we hope that you will be attending the meeting. This newsletter includes information you will find useful as you plan for the meeting. In addition, you will find at the end of this newsletter a [**Table of Neurotoxicology-Related Sessions and Events**](#) occurring during the meeting, which was assembled by NTSS student member Marianna Stamou.

NTSS/SOT Election Results: In the recent NTSS elections **Aaron Bowman** was elected to the position of Vice-President-Elect; **Jason Richardson** was elected to the position of Secretary/Treasurer. **Paul Eubig** was elected to be the postdoctoral representative; **Josh Allen**, the student representative. NTSS membership also voted overwhelmingly to support the proposed revisions to the NTSS by-laws, which will now go to SOT Council for final approval. Congratulations also to NTSS member Mary Gilbert, who was elected by the general SOT membership as a member of the SOT Awards Committee (2012-2014).

Poster Competition: For those of you who have graduate students or postdocs participating in the poster contest (or who are serving as judges for the contest), the judging will take place from **4:45-6:00 pm on Monday March 12** in the Moscone Convention Center Exhibit Hall. Candidates and judges have received specific information and should enter the Tox Expo through the main entrance and proceed to the far right to the poster board 600 locations. **Steve Lasley** is coordinating the contest this year, so please contact him directly if you have any questions prior to the meeting (sml@uic.edu). Good luck to all students and postdocs who are participating, and a special thanks to all who have agreed to help with the judging! Prizes will be awarded at the **NTSS Reception**.

NTSS Reception: This year our specialty section reception will be held **Tuesday, March 13 from 6-7:30 pm** in **Golden Gate Ballroom B of the Marriott Marquis Hotel**, which is within walking distance of the convention center. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend to enjoy the food and drink and visit with your NTSS colleagues. A short business meeting will be held at approximately 6:45 PM. An agenda outline is provided below. Please contact **Gary Miller (gary.miller@emory.edu)** if you would like to make an announcement at the business meeting.

NTSS Business Meeting Agenda

- Welcome and opening remarks
- Introduction of new officers
- Recognition of outgoing officers
- Secretary-Treasurer's report
- NTSS Endowment Fund
- Poster competition awards
- 2012 Continuing education and program proposals
- Announcements/new business
- Funding Challenges for Neurotoxicology at NIH
- Closing remarks

NTSS Endowment Fund: The **Neurotoxicology Fellowship Award Fund** was initiated at last year's Annual meeting ("\$50 for 50 Years"). We hope to reach the 2/3 mark at this year's Annual meeting (we have 3 years to reach the minimum of \$25,000 required by SOT to establish an endowment). Donation forms and information will be provided at the NTSS Reception, and Gary Miller will make a short presentation with more details. An NTSS endowment fund logo is needed for signage, stationery, etc. We will either have to re-size the logo at the top of the previous page for signage, or design a new logo. Members interested in helping design a new endowment fund logo should contact **Gary Miller** (gary.miller@emory.edu).

CE and Program Proposals for 2012: As we prepare for the 2012 meeting, the NTSS Executive Committee invites you to submit proposals for the 2013 annual meeting for NTSS sponsorship and endorsement. We recommend that those interested in submitting proposals speak to current NTSS officers at the Annual Meeting to further develop your idea. An NTSS pre-review committee (consisting of Gary Miller, outgoing NTSS president, Pam Lein, incoming NTSS president and Anu Kanthasamy, incoming NTSS vice-president) will review all proposals emailed to Pam Lein (plein@ucdavis.edu) by **April 15** and offer suggestions for strengthening the proposal prior to submission to the SOT Program Committee. **Themes for the 2013 meeting** are listed below:

Scientific Program Themes

- Application of Systems Biology to Toxicology
- Biomarkers for Exposure Assessment, Safety Evaluation, and Translational Medicine
- Effects of Nanomaterials on Biological Systems
- Molecular Basis of Genetic Variability and Susceptibility to Toxicants
- Regulatory Science: Advancing New Approaches for Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment
- Detailed information can be found at https://www.toxicology.org/ms/SciSess_proposal.asp

CE Target Areas

- Developmental Origins of Health and Disease (DOHaD)
- Molecular Imaging
- Personalized Toxicology

Tips for Submitting More Competitive Session Proposals

- Review the requirements on the SOT web site [SOT Web site](#) before developing the proposal
- Submit well-developed proposals aligned with the theme and proposed session. Include details to provide clarity of the topic and the content
- Include a diverse array of speakers from different institutes
- Minimize non-member speakers to subject experts
- Contact sponsors and endorsers (Special Interest Groups, Specialty Sections etc) by April (or earlier) to request sponsorship/endorsement, and help with the proposal(s) development.

The SPC has scheduled a webinar to discuss best practices for developing and submitting a proposal on March 22, 2012, from 12:00 noon to 2:00 pm. The details for connecting to the session can be found on the [SOT website](#), and you are encouraged to participate in this session if have any questions or concerns about how to submit a high quality proposal.

Additional tips for submitting competitive session proposals are attached.

Thanks! Hopefully our paths cross in San Francisco!



NTSS Vice-President

Submitting More Competitive Session Proposals

By **Leigh Ann Burns Naas**, Pfizer Global Research and Development

So you're thinking about submitting a program proposal for the 2012 Annual Meeting in San Francisco, but you're unsure about getting it accepted by the Scientific Program Committee (SPC). Each year, the review process is becoming more competitive as more and more program proposals are received, yet the number of proposals that can be accepted continues to remain somewhat similar due to the availability of rooms at the venue for the SOT Annual Meeting, which can be determined up to 5 years in advance. So how do you make your proposal more competitive? Start with the [SOT Web site](#) that tells you about the types of proposals, how many speakers in each, the duration, and the focus of each type of session. Pick the right one for your topic. And look at the bottom of the page to see examples of some high quality proposals that have been submitted. Additional information can be found at the [SOT Forms and Applications page](#). Now for a few specifics:

1. *Proposal Quality:* Proposals submitted with general topics for speakers, no proposed speakers, no description of what each speaker will cover, and/or 1–3 general sentences about the topic for the proposal (or speaker) generally don't fare well. There are two primary reasons for this. First, the SPC gets many well-developed proposals that clearly state the importance/relevance of the topic, the relevance of the speakers to the topics, and how the speaker talks fit into the overall proposal as well as how they complement each other. The second reason likely has to do with how the proposals are reviewed.

Typically, each member of the SPC is given all proposals to review and they do this over about a 2-week period on their own time, and provide an overall score for each proposal (1 thru 5 where 1 is best and 5 is lowest). These scores are sent to SOT executive staff where they are combined and averaged with scores from each SPC member, generating a composite score for each proposal (SPC members do not know how other SPC members scored a proposal). Proposals with a composite score lower than a median and determined cut-off based on the composite scores for that year are typically not considered further unless an SPC member feels strongly that the composite score is unjustified. It can happen, but it isn't common. *A key point then is that your proposal should stand out to each SPC member so that they can independently determine the significance of the topic, the relationship of each talk to the topic, and the inter-relationship of the talks to one another.* Remember that the SPC is selected with an effort to have a broad expertise across toxicology specialties and to be equally representative of job sectors (e.g., industry, academia, government, etc.) and gender. So don't assume that everyone will "get it," but do the best you can to help everyone understand regardless of their background and expertise.

2. *Breadth of Topic and Speakers:* The SPC is charged with developing the best program with the broadest appeal to all members of the SOT. You've no doubt seen that focus may shift from year to year, and this is more typically driven by the proposals submitted. SPC generally does not select what were considered lesser proposals simply to have more of a specific sector or topic represented at the Annual Meeting. The primary focus is on the highest quality science and proposals. *That said, one thing that SPC sees sometimes are proposals that may be good topics, but most (or sometimes all) speakers are from a specific institution. This doesn't allow for much in the way of diverse opinion to be presented. Also, when most of the speakers are from a specific institution or all the speakers presentations (regardless of institution) are on a single topic (e.g., an assay), then the proposal begins to read like an 'infomercial,' which is specifically undesirable.* Make sure the scope of your topic isn't too narrow or too broad. If the topic is only of interest to a small proportion of the membership or if it is so broad as to be a 'survey of the literature,' for example, it may not be viewed as favorably.
3. *Minimize Non-Member Speakers Where Possible:* One question that often arises is the participation of non-members in SOT sessions. Absolutely you can have non-members participate, especially if

they are the best presenters for that specific talk. But unless the topic of the session is really novel to toxicology, it is better to have no more than 1-2 non-member speakers. One consideration is that SOT will only cover some travel support for a defined number of speakers. SOT members participate at their own expense. Non-members receive complimentary registration, and SOT will provide limited travel support for 1-2 non-members for symposia, workshops, and regional interest sessions, and 1 non-member for roundtables, informational sessions, historical highlights, and educational-career development sessions. If your session topic is really novel or toxicology is beginning to move into a novel field where most of the key players are not necessarily toxicologists, you can apply for Innovations in Toxicological Sciences (ITS) or Innovations in Applied Toxicology (IAT) designation. A short single-page rationale is needed to justify this category designation. If accepted, more than 1-2 non-members can get travel support. But remember: the proposal must be accepted by the SPC before the designation can be considered.

4. *Sponsorships and Endorsements:* Your Sponsor is the Specialty Section (SS), Special Interest Group (SIG), etc. which is the primary group supporting the proposal. Your Endorsers are the other groups who think your proposal is important and will add their support (endorsement) to having it presented. Sponsors have a key role in helping the SPC with their review and selection of proposals. After the submission site closes at the end of April, each Sponsor goes into a dedicated site and ranks the proposals they have been asked to Sponsor. They rank each proposal category (Symposium, Workshop, Roundtable, etc.) 1-x which tells the SPC that #1 is their top proposal in a specific category. SPC is considering a change whereby Sponsors rank proposals regardless of category but as of the writing of this article, this hasn't happened.

Don't surprise Sponsors and Endorsers. Ask them early for their support (like, within the first 2 weeks of April or earlier!), providing your proposal and a rationale why you think their SS, SIG, etc. would be interested in Sponsoring or Endorsing the proposal. Particular to Endorsers, each group may have different reasons for being interested so think about this and make it personal to each group you ask. One thing you have no control over is where a Sponsor ranks you relative to other proposals they have been asked to sponsor—some Sponsors have been asked to Sponsor over 50 proposals in a single year and so have to review and rank each one themselves. All you can do is focus on quality and assuring that they understand the significance of your proposal to both SOT and their members in particular. While you should contact them early, don't worry too much if the Sponsor you are seeking doesn't get back to you immediately. Each group has a different process (including timing) they use for making these determinations, some not even beginning the process until May 1. Others, though, are increasingly asking for proposals to be submitted early so they have a chance to review and provide input for improvement prior to the closure of the submission site and the submission of the final rankings.

Finally, Sponsors are asked to add specific comments to each of the proposals they are Sponsoring. Endorsers are not required to enter comments, but often they do. All of these comments are very important to SPC. Sometimes a Sponsor provides comments that are seemingly neutral about the proposal, or they provide critical evaluation that suggests the proposal is not very strong. Each SPC member has all comments on all proposals when they are reviewing the proposals and these comments are taken seriously. If you hear from SPC that your proposal did not have adequate support from the Sponsor, you can bet the comments (or lack thereof) from the Sponsor were a factor in that decision.

Understand that taking some of these tips into account won't guarantee acceptance of your proposal. There will always be the unforeseen and intangibles. For example, sometimes the SPC receives multiple competitive proposals for the same or a similar topic and then it becomes a selection between those proposals. In addition, if the topic was presented the previous year, it is less likely to be competitive. However, embracing these tips can improve your chances. The submission site will be open soon (before the Annual Meeting!) so there's no time like the present to get started!

Session or Event Date	Start Time	End Time	Session or Event Type	Session or Event Title	Session or Event Location
Monday, March 12	6:00 AM	7:30 PM	Ancillary Event	International Neurotoxicology Association Business Meeting	Pacific Suite H (Marriott Marquis)
	9:15 AM	12:00 PM	Platform Session	Nanotoxicology: Nanogold or Nanosilver	Room 309 (Convention Center)
				Risk Assessment: Case-Specific Characterizations	
	9:30 AM	12:30 PM	Poster Session	Fukushima Radiation Toxicity and Global Toxicology Issues	Exhibit Hall
				Nanotoxicology: Environmental Toxicology, Zebrafish, and Nanoparticles	
				Epidemiology: Assessments and Approaches	
				Developmental Basis of Adult Disease	
Tuesday, March 13	1:00 PM	4:30 PM	Poster Session	Biomarkers of Organ Damage by Drugs and Xenobiotics	Exhibit Hall
				Inflammation in Disease	
				Children's Health and Juvenile Toxicity	
	2:00 PM	4:45 PM	Symposium Session	Toxic Cell Death: Signaling Pathways, Cross-Talk, and High-Throughput Analysis	Room 308 (Convention Center)
Wednesday, March 14	9:00 AM	11:45 AM	Platform Session	Cardiovascular Toxicity of Nanoparticles	Room 310 (Convention Center)
				Disease Prevention and Clinical and Translational Toxicology	
				Neurodegenerative Disease	
				Neurotoxicity: Metals	
	9:00 AM	12:30 PM	Poster Session	Neurotoxicity: General	Exhibit Hall
				Inhalants and Cardiopulmonary: Chemical Agents	
				Pharmaceutical Safety Assessment: Methods and Mechanisms	
				Oxidative Injury	
				'Omics in Toxicology	
				Nanotoxicology: Nanoparticles II	
Thursday, March 15				Chemical and Biological Weapons: Agents and Countermeasures	
				Nanotoxicology: Nanoparticles III	
	1:00 PM	4:30 PM	Poster Session	Pesticide: Toxicology	Exhibit Hall
				Pesticides: Exposure and Hazard Assessment	
				Exposure Characterization: New Analytical Sampling Methods, Biomonitoring, and Assessment Applications	
				Cardiovascular Toxicity II	
				Biotransformation/Cytochrome P450	
Wednesday, March 14	1:30 PM	4:15 PM	Workshop Session	Nonclinical and Clinical Applications of Translational Organ-based Imaging	Room 104 (Convention Center)
	1:30 PM	4:15 PM	Platform Session	Advances in Developmental Neurotoxicity: Stem Cell, High-Throughput, and Alternative Species Approaches	Room 302 (Convention Center)
				Risk Assessment Approaches: Data-Derived Extrapolations, QSAR, <i>In Silico</i> Strategies, and Surrogates	Room 310 (Convention Center)
Wednesday, March 14	6:00 PM	7:30 PM	Reception	NTSS reception	Golden Gate Ballroom B
Thursday, March 15				Disposition and Pharmacokinetics	
				Developmental Toxicity II	
	9:00 AM	12:30 PM	Poster Session	Developmental Neurotoxicity I	Exhibit Hall
				Cell Death Pathways	
				Exposure Assessment: Case-Specific Characterizations	
Thursday, March 15				Pharmaceutical Safety Assessment: Novel Therapeutics and Preclinical Safety Assessment	
				Animal Models in Pharmaceutical Toxicology	
	1:00 PM	4:30 PM	Poster Session	Metals	Exhibit Hall
Thursday, March 15				Persistent Organic Chemicals	
				Neurotoxicity: Pesticides	
	8:30 AM	12:00 PM	Late-Breaking Poster Session	Late-Breaking Poster Session 2	Gateway Ballroom (Convention Center)
Thursday, March 15				Late-Breaking Poster Session 3	
				Late-Breaking Poster Session 4	
Thursday, March 15	9:00 AM	11:45 AM	Symposium Session	Emerging Evidence for Novel Noncholinergic Mechanisms of Organophosphate-Induced Neurotoxicity	Room 102 (Convention Center)