

Biotechnology Specialty Section



Fall 2023 Newsletter

SOT | Society of
Toxicology



Tod Harper
PhD, DABT



President's Message

Dear BTSS members,

Thank you for this great opportunity to serve as the Biotechnology Specialty Section (BTSS) President for the 2023–2024 term.

As we transition to a new term, I would like to congratulate the BTSS Executive Committee and membership on a successful 2022–2023 term and will work to continue this momentum into the new 2023–2024 term. Over the course of the 2022–2023 term, the BTSS sponsored two very well received webinars focused on different sectors of biotechnology, including the new and exciting field of cultivated meat. At the SOT Annual Meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, BTSS sponsored 3 sessions and co-sponsored a networking event for students and early career professionals. There was also a great turnout for the BTSS reception which featured a short presentation by Dr. Siba Das on genetic engineering and its use in society. Furthermore at this year's BTSS reception we presented our annual awards to well-deserving recipients. I would like to specifically mention the Career Achievement award and again congratulate Dr. Michael Leach for receiving the 2023 BTSS Career Achievement award. I would like to give a special thank you to our outgoing president, Nicola Stagg for her tremendous leadership during the 2022–2023 term. I also want to thank our other departing officers for their great contribution to BTSS over the past year: Robert Li (Past President), Saurabh Vispute (Senior Councilor), Muthanna Sultan (Postdoctoral Representative), and Keivy Cannon (Graduate Student Representative).

The 2023–2024 Executive Committee team members, Jason Pinkstaff (Vice President), Ed Dere (Vice President-Elect), René Viñas (Secretary/Treasurer), Jessica Sims (Senior Councilor), Adhithiya Charli (Junior Councilor), Yunjia Lai (Postdoctoral Representative), and Rajat Gupta (Graduate Student Representative) and I are very excited to continue the important mission of BTSS. In the 2023–2024 term we will: 1) Promote inclusion and diversity of our membership as we strive to expand beyond biopharmaceuticals as a focus; 2) Encourage members to recognize their accomplishments to be highlighted in newsletters and nominate members for annual BTSS awards; 3) Continue mentoring to provide guidance and support for scientists seeking to initiate a career in the biotechnology field; 4) Deliver scientific/educational webinars on diverse biotechnology topics; and 5) Prepare for the 2024 SOT Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah!

On this last topic, the 2024 Annual Meeting will be upon us in no time, and there are a few items to point out. SOT has launched a [new online awards module](#) to make the application process more streamlined and a [search tool](#) to find the right awards for you. Please take a moment to check out the BTSS awards and consider applying! Lastly, we will soon begin soliciting nominations for open positions on the BTSS Executive Committee. Positions open will include Vice President-Elect, Secretary/Treasurer, and Junior Councilor. Please consider running for one of these positions when nominations open.

We hope to see everyone in Salt Lake City.

Best Regards,
Tod Harper Jr., PhD, DABT
President, Biotechnology Specialty Section

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Newsletter Editors

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*Interested in contributing to
future BTSS newsletters?
We would love your input!
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BTSS Executive Board 2023–2024



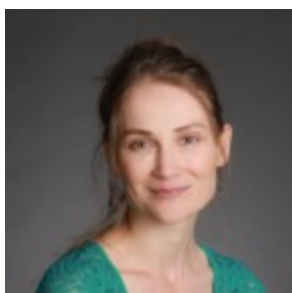
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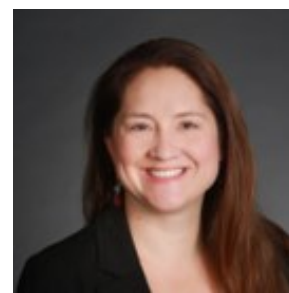
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Grad Student Rep
Rajat Gupta,
MS, PhD Candidate
UCLA



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Exiting 2022–2023 BTSS Officers

The BTSS-sponsored events at the 62nd Society of Toxicology Annual Meeting held in Nashville, Tennessee, were great successes. We would like to thank our incredible team from the **2022–2023** year!

- **President:** Nicola Stagg
- **Vice President:** Tod Harper
- **Vice President-Elect:** Jason Pinkstaff
- **Secretary/Treasurer:** René Viñas
- **Senior Councilor:** Saurabh Vispute
- **Junior Councilor:** Jessica Sims
- **Postdoc Representative:** Muthanna Sultan
- **Grad Student Representative:** Keivy Cannon

Renew Your Membership

Membership dues and donations are important sources of funding that are critical to fund the BTSS mentoring activities, awards, workshops, and other activities to keep our Specialty Section active. If you have not already done so, please **renew your BTSS membership ASAP** as dues reminders approach. In addition to funding our activities, it will ensure that you are able to vote in the upcoming BTSS officer election.

Donations & Finance

On behalf of BTSS Executive Board and members, we would like to thank the recent generous donation from Pfizer and Amgen to our Specialty Section.



If you or your organization is able to make a new [financial contribution](#), it will help ensure BTSS representation within SOT for years to come.

Please reach out to BTSS Treasurer René Viñas via email : revinas.tox@gmail.com

BTSS Financials:

Net assets as of June 2023: \$16,871

2023 BTSS Award Recipients

Reminder!

2024 BTSS Awards

Award deadlines are approaching! Please visit the [BTSS website](#) to nominate and apply.

2023 BTSS Award Winners



**Michael Leach,
DVM, PhD**
Trident Toxicology,
Inc.
**Career
Achievement
Award**



Mychal Grames
Louisiana State
University
**Student
Achievement
Award**



**Xiao-Hong Lu,
PhD**
Louisiana State
University
Best Paper Award



Piyush Padhi
University of
Georgia
**Student
Achievement
Award**



Naresh Sah
Texas Tech University
**Boehringer
Ingelheim Award
for Excellence in
Biotherapeutic
Safety**



**John Szilagyi,
PhD, DABT**
Bristol Myers
Squibb
**Young
Investigator
Achievement
Award**



Society of Toxicology 2024



63RD ANNUAL MEETING
& ToxExpo • March 10–14, 2024
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

The 63rd Society of Toxicology Annual Meeting & ToxExpo is coming up! Be sure to mark your calendars:

- Early Bird Registration Deadline: January 19, 2024
- Standard Registration Deadline: February 16, 2024
- Final Registration: After February 16, 2024

BTSS Co-Sponsored Sessions at 2024 SOT

Symposiums

- *Preclinical Development of RNA-Editing, Gene, and Cell Therapies: Risks and Challenges*

Stay tuned for details on the BTSS Reception (March 13th) and Career Mentoring Event in partnership with MSBSS!

We will be sending out a call for interested mentors and mentees to participate in the mentoring event (more information to follow).

Mentorship Matching

Meanwhile, don't forget the SOT [Mentor Match](#) program. Log in to ToXchange from the [SOT](#) website and click Mentor Match right on the welcome page.



Upcoming BTSS Webinar

[An Introduction to Precision Fermentation: Application and Challenges](#)

- Precision fermentation is a rapidly emerging technology that promises to revolutionize various industries, from food and beverages to pharmaceuticals and biotechnology. This 90-minute session will provide an in-depth exploration of the science behind precision fermentation, the techno-economic challenges faced by this innovative approach, and the regulatory and safety hurdles that must be navigated for its successful integration into the global market. Furthermore, the session will examine the sustainability outlook and potential challenges associated with implementing precision fermentation on a large scale.
- October 12, 2023, 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM (US EDT, UTC -4)
- Registration required: [Register here for free](#)

Member Spotlight Section

The BTSS leadership would like to solicit member accomplishments to highlight in our future newsletters! We are trying out a new way to engage with and recognize our members' hard work and achievements within the biotechnology field. Please be on the lookout for future calls to spotlight our outstanding BTSS membership!