Dear OTSS Members,

Greetings and welcome to the Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section (OTSS) fall/winter newsletter! I hope this communication finds you and your family healthy and in a good spirit. This year I have had the privilege to serve as your president and am deeply honored to work with the incredibly talented and committed members on the Executive Committee. On behalf of the OTSS Executive Committee, I want to thank all for your support and trust. Building on the legacy work from the past presidents and board members, I am committed to continue to grow our membership, enhance communication, support our OTSS members, recognize great research from our members, and promote the exchange of new sciences among academic, clinical and preclinical researchers in ocular toxicology.

Earlier this year, we welcomed our new officers to the Executive Board: Vlad Bantseev (Vice President), Andrea Rodrigues (Vice President-Elect), Hiromi Hosako (Past President), Neera Tewari-Singh (Treasurer), Chris Steele (Communication), Chris Schuetz (Councilor), Ling Huang (Councilor). This team has brought tremendous enthusiasm and energy and are always working diligently at the background for our Specialty Section. I greatly appreciate their hard work and would encourage you to engage with them to advance the OTSS over this year and beyond. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the outgoing officers for their passionate leadership over the past few years of service: Kathleen Krenzer (Past President) and Andrea Rodrigues (Councilor).

At the 60th virtual SOT Annual Meeting, the OTSS sponsored a Workshop, entitled “Nonclinical Safety Toxicology Strategies for the Development of Novel Ocular Biotherapeutics”, co-chaired by Drs. Qihong Huang and Vladimir Bantseev. The symposium highlighted the state-of-art sciences in ocular biotherapeutics. It was super informative and well-attended with over 200 attendees, ended with a lively Q&A discussion. On the social front, we carried on our tradition of OTSS reception virtually. It was great seeing and catching up with many of you not only on zoom. At the reception, we recognized the award winners from years 2020 and 2021. All the award winners were able to join the virtual reception to receive their awards. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the winners and thank your hard work to advance the understanding of ocular toxicology. You can find the names of the 2021 winners and their great work under the Award Announcements section of this newsletter. I would also like to encourage everyone to take advantage of the wide range of awards OTSS has to offer and submit nominations for OTSS-sponsored awards. Please refer to the Award Nominations section of this newsletter for details.

OTSS Program Committee has had a very productive year. Building on the success of 2021 SOT symposium, I am pleased to share that their proposal of a symposium at 2022 SOT Annual Meeting on in vitro considerations for predicting retinal toxicities has been accepted. The OTSS Program Committee is also working on two webinars for early 2022.

Supporting career development has always been one of the key objectives of OTSS. To this end, OTSS co-hosted a virtual Career Panel with MDCPSS on September 21, 2020. At this event, three panelists each from Academia, Government, Industry, and Consulting addressed career development questions from graduate students and postdocs. We have been exploring more ways to reach out to graduate students and post-docs in ocular toxicology. If you have any good suggestions, ideas, or needs, especially to reach graduate students and postdocs in ocular toxicology, please contact us at Ocular.SOT@gmail.com. With our new normal, the possibility is endless, and we would like your innovative ideas for connecting to and networking with each other.

Finally, I would like to remind all OTSS members to submit nominations for OTSS Officer nominations and elections. We have several open positions for the coming term so please refer to the Nominations and Elections section for more details. The success of our Specialty Section and various initiatives depend on the involvement of our people. I would like to encourage OTSS members to be involved by volunteering on various committees. Also please consider encouraging your colleagues to join OTSS and committees! The focus of our Executive Committees for the remainder of the year are awards and elections. Our Award Committee and Election Committee are ready for these two important tasks. The results will be announced at the 2022 SOT Meeting. I hope to see you in person in San Diego, CA!

Thank you for your support and wish you a wonderful holiday season!

Qihong Huang, PhD, DABT
OTSS President

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OTSS Website

**Officers**

- **President**
  Qihong Huang
- **Vice President**
  Vlad Bantseev
- **Vice President-Elect**
  Andrea Rodrigues
- **Secretary-Treasurer**
  Neera Tewari-Singh
- **Communications Officer**
  Open
- **Past President**
  Hiromi Hosako
- **Councilors**
  Chris Schuetz
  Ling Huang
- **Postdoctoral Representative**
  Open
- **Student Representative**
  Open
2021 OTSS Reception Highlights

Supporters
The virtual reception for the Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section was held on Monday, March 15, 2021 at 4:15 – 5:35 pm ET. It began by acknowledging the supporters of the OTSS, which included: Biomere, Charles River, Covance, Ocular Services On Demand (OSOD), Regeneron, and Absorption Systems. In addition, the OTSS’ new logo was introduced.

OTSS’ new logo:

Officer Transitions
Introductions of the Current Officers of the OTSS and New Officers for the 2021-2022 term were announced by Hiromi Hosako. New officers included: Qihong Huang (President), Vlad Bantseev (Vice-President), Andrea Rodrigues (Vice-President Elect), Neera Tewari-Singh (Treasurer), Chris Steele (Communication), and Chris Schuetz and Ling Huang (Councilors). The Postdoctoral Representative and Student Representative positions were open, and it was encouraged that those who were qualified to nominate for those positions. Officers completing their terms on the OTSS Executive Committee included: Kathleen Krenzer (Past President), and Andrea Rodrigues (Councilor). After the introduction, the chairpersons of various OTSS committees presented updates.

Incoming Executive Committee Officers (2021-2022)

[Image showing the names and faces of the officers]

Contact Ocular.to@gmail.com if you know someone interested in these positions!
Program Committee Update
Qihong Huang, Chair of the Program Planning Committee, introduced the OTSS members who helped support the committee and updated on the activities organized and supported by the committee. These included the Continuing Education “Developing Therapeutics for Ocular Indications.” presented at the annual SOT in 2020 and the Workshop “Nonclinical Safety Toxicology Strategies for the Development of Novel Ocular Biotherapeutics” presented at the annual SOT in 2021. The Symposium was endorsed by the Biotechnology Specialty Section.

Communications, Membership, and Treasurer Update
The chairperson of the Communications Committee, Chris Steele, highlighted the OTSS summer newsletter issued in 2020, updated OTSS website, and the new LinkedIn group page that supports students/postdocs who are in the ocular toxicology field and connects them to OTSS members (https://www.toxicology.org/groups/ss/otss/).

Next was an update on OTSS financials by Neera Tewari-Singh. Neera indicated that the OTSS was doing well financially, with a balance ending September 2021 of $85,423.

An update on the Membership Committee, chaired by Vlad Bantseev was provided. As for the current OTSS members, there are 90-100 members. Of those members, 48% represent Pharma/Biotech, 19% represent CRO, 12% represent Consultants, 10% represent Academic, 6% represent Government, and 4% are others. This number has been steady for the past few years, but there is room for many more members, especially students and postdocs!

OTSS is excited to announce a pilot program in 2022 to gain more student and postdoctoral members! Thanks to generous donations from our members, we are able to waive the OTSS annual membership fees for members-in-training. To obtain a request form and for more information, please send an email to Ocular.SOT@gmail.com.
Update from Japanese Society of Comparative and Veterinary Ophthalmology
Dr. Shoji Sasaki, a representative of the Japanese Society of Comparative and Veterinary Ophthalmology, provided an update highlighting activities from 2020 including: A special lecture at the 40th Basic Seminar regarding the current status and future issues of gene therapy with channelrhodopsin (2020) and an educational lecture, “Development of Readthrough Drug for Retinitis Pigmentosa, Current Status and Future Issues” at the 41st Japanese Society of Toxicology (JSOT) Meeting. Dr. Sasaki also mentioned the upcoming relevant conferences in 2021 in Japan.

Award Announcements
2020-2021 OTSS awards listed below were announced by Andrea Rodrigues and Chris Schuetz. Dr. Wallace Hayes, the Editor-in-Chief of Cutaneous and Ocular Toxicology, has also generously announced the Paper of the Year (The Taylor & Francis Award). The 2019-2020 OTSS award winners were announced again since we did not have a reception in 2020 to celebrate. The winner of the OTSS Career Achievement Award, Dr. Brian Short, presented and provided great and fun insight on ocular toxicity studies and high-quality reports. Congratulations to the award winners!!

OTSS Career Achievement Award: Brian Short, DVM, PhD, DACVP
Company: Brian Short Consulting, LLC

Ocular Toxicology Best Poster Award: Jonathan Lin
Poster Title: Assessment of Corneal Alkali Injury in a Murine Model with Anterior Segment Optical Coherence Tomography
Authors: J. Lin, J. Luisi, E.R. Kraft, S.A. Giannos, M.E. Schmitz-Brown, M. Motamedi, P. Gupta

Annual “Paper of the Year” Award by Taylor & Francis
Paper Title: Validation of the OptiSafe™ eye irritation test
Authors: Neepa Choksi, Stewart Lebrun, Minh Nguyen, Amber Daniel, George DeGeorge, Jamin Willoughby, Adrienne Layton, Donnie Lowther, Jill Merrill, Joanna Matheson, João Barroso, Krystle Yozzo, Warren Casey & David Allen

I2 (Innovation and Impact) Award
Paper Title: A Supersaturated Oxygen Emulsion for the Topical Treatment of Ocular Trauma
Author: Neera Tewari-Singh
Mil. Med. 2020 Mar 2;185(3-4):e466-e472
Social Networking
At the end of the reception, there was a short networking opportunity where participants were randomly assigned to a breakroom (up to 5-6 people/room) to have an opportunity to connect with each other. In the breakroom session, participants introduced each other, talked over a prepared trivia/ice breaker, and shared thoughts or ideas for OTSS. Thank you for those who participated!

Upcoming Program Committee Events in 2022
Webinar: Friday, February 4, 2022
Title: “Regulatory Requirements for Ocular Biologics Development”
Speaker: Dr. Maria Rivera, FDA

Webinar: Wednesday, February 23, 2022
Title: “Lighting in the Vivarium; The Spectrum and Intensity is Crucial, The Source is Not”
Speaker: Dr. Douglas Lear, Charles River Laboratories

Symposium: Thursday, March 31, 2022
Title: In Vitro Considerations for Predicting Retinal Toxicities
SOT Annual Meeting (check Program for more details)

Call for Award Nominations
Deadline: December 31, 2021

Submit all nominations to: Chris Schuetz and Ling Huang (Ocular.SOT@gmail.com)
Link to award details: https://www.toxicology.org/groups/ss/otss/awards.asp
I² Award (Innovation and Impact) Sponsored by Biomere

This award recognizes Innovations and/or scientific advances that Impact the field of ocular toxicology based on papers published (or in press) in any journal in the calendar year (January 1 through December 31) prior to the SOT Annual Meeting. The award will be announced at the OTSS reception held during the SOT Annual Meeting. A single award will be conferred each year.

Applicants for the award must be an author of the peer-reviewed paper and a member of the OTSS at the time they apply.

The applicants shall submit a copy of the publication and a description or other documentation describing how the subject work is Innovative in ocular toxicology or Impacts the scientific advancement of ocular toxicology.

Submit nominations to: Ocular.SOT@gmail.com

The winner will receive a plaque and a monetary award of $1,000 to recognize their accomplishment at the OTSS reception held during the SOT Annual Meeting.

1. Covance-OSOD Graduate Student/Postdoctoral Fellow Research Award

Each year, OTSS recognizes outstanding student/postdoctoral candidates for their contribution to advancing the understanding of ocular toxicology and pharmacology. The award will be announced at the OTSS reception held during the SOT Annual Meeting.

The requirements/criteria for the award include that the Applicant:

1) Must be a graduate student or postdoctoral fellow as of October 1 the year prior to the SOT Annual Meeting
2) Is preferred to be a SOT and OTSS member
3) Must have an submitted and/or accepted abstract (for platform or poster presentation) at the upcoming SOT Annual Meeting
4) His/her accepted abstract must be related to ocular toxicology and/or pharmacology
5) Must attend the OTSS reception held during the SOT Annual Meeting

The applicant should submit:

1) His/her submitted and/or accepted abstract (for platform or poster presentation) at the SOT Annual Meeting
2) A letter of support from trainee’s advisor or mentor indicating the role of the applicant and independence in conducting the research
3) Narrative describing their research hypothesis, background and significance (up to 2-pages)

Submit nominations to: Ocular.SOT@gmail.com

The winner(s) will receive a certificate and monetary award of up to $500, funded by generous contributions from Covance and OSOD. The winner(s) will present a 5-minute synopsis of his/her research at the OTSS reception held during the SOT Annual Meeting.
2. Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Fellow Trainee Travel Award

Each year, OTSS recognizes outstanding student/postdoctoral candidates with the Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Fellow Trainee Travel Award. The purpose of this award is to recognize outstanding contributions of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in the area of ocular toxicology specifically to support attendance to the upcoming SOT Annual Meeting. The award will be announced at the OTSS reception held during the SOT Annual Meeting.

Criteria for the selection will be based on both the applicant’s need and merit.

The requirements/criteria for the award include that the Applicant:

1) Must be a graduate student or postdoctoral fellow as of October 1 the year prior to the SOT Annual Meeting
2) Must have a submitted and/or accepted abstract (for platform or poster presentation) at the upcoming SOT Annual Meeting
3) His/her abstract must be related to ocular toxicology and/or pharmacology
4) Must attend the OTSS reception held during the upcoming SOT Annual Meeting

The application should submit:

1) A cover letter from the trainee indicating his/her intent to apply for this award and interest in attending the SOT Annual Meeting
2) Current CV
3) His/her submitted and/or accepted abstract (for platform or poster presentation) at the SOT Annual Meeting
4) A letter from trainee’s advisor or mentor indicating the trainee’s merit, as well as the confirmation of need for funding to enable travel

Submit nominations to: Ocular.SOT@gmail.com

This award will be conferred to one (1) graduate student and/or one (1) postdoctoral fellow. The winner(s) will receive an achievement plaque and a monetary award of $500 at the OTSS reception held during the SOT Annual Meeting.

3. Ocular Toxicology Best Poster Award

Any poster accepted for presentation during the SOT Annual Meeting in the field of ocular toxicology are eligible for the Best Poster Award. The award will be announced at the OTSS reception held during the SOT Annual Meeting.

Nominees must have a submitted and/or accepted poster for the upcoming SOT Annual meeting and attend the meeting to present the poster.

A submitted and/or accepted abstract and a pdf file of the poster must be submitted for consideration.

Submit nominations to: Ocular.SOT@gmail.com
The winning author(s) will receive a ribbon for the poster. The winning author(s) will also receive a certificate of recognition at the OTSS reception held during the SOT Annual Meeting.

4. Annual “Paper of the Year” Award

In addition to the above awards, our Annual “Paper of the Year” Award will be selected by Taylor & Francis from articles published in the Journal of Cutaneous and Ocular Toxicology between 01 January and 31 December of the year preceding the SOT annual meeting. No nominations from our members will be solicited for this award.

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**Call for OTSS Officer Nominations and Elections**

Support your Specialty Section by serving on the OTSS Executive Committee. Each year there is a call for Nominations. Please consider self-nominating or nominating a fellow OTSS member.

For the 2022-2023 term, the following positions will be open: Vice President-Elect, Secretary-Treasurer, Communications Officer, Councilor, and Postdoctoral/Graduate Student Representative. Please see the link (https://www.toxicology.org/groups/ss/otss/officers.asp) for the officer handbook with a description of these officer positions and send nomination suggestions to Qihong Huang (Ocular.SOT@gmail.com).

Voting occurs in February 2022, with induction of the new OTSS Executive Committee at the 2022 SOT meeting. Please keep an “eye” out for the email requesting your vote.

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**OTSS Member Suggestions**

Please feel free to contact OTSS (Ocular.SOT@gmail.com) for any suggestions, ideas, or needs at any time!
Supporters

We sincerely thank you for your generous support!!

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**2020-2021 Supporters**

- **COVANCE**
- **OSOD**
- **Charles River Laboratories**
- **REGENERON**
- **Biomere**
- **ABSORPTION SYSTEMS**

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**HELP US RECRUIT EMERGING TOXICOLOGISTS!**

SOT ToxScholar program supports presentations to increase awareness of toxicology as a science and as a career field.

At institutions that are
- Primarily undergraduate
- With a high proportion of undergraduates from underrepresented groups
- In countries listed by the World Bank as low or middle income.

We need YOU to be a ToxScholar. [Apply for funding.](#)

Faculty United for Toxicology Undergraduate Recruitment and Education (FUTURE) Committee