

Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section

ANNUAL REPORT: 2024–2025
May 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025

I. Officers:

<u>2024–2025</u>	<u>2025–2026</u>
President: William Cook Vice President: Ling Huang Vice President-Elect: Neera Tewari-Singh Treasurer: Suvidha Menon Past President, Councilor: Andrea Rodrigues Councilor: Napoleon Alejandro Councilor: Yu-Quan Wen Communications Officer: Ewa Budzynski Postdoctoral Representative: Jonathan Luisi Graduate Student Representative: Oluchukwu Okoyeocha	President: Ling Huang Vice President: Neera Tewari-Singh Vice President Elect: Yu-Quan Wen Past President, Councilor: William Cook Treasurer: Suvidha Menon Councilor: Napoleon Alejandro Councilor: Gayathri Chadalapaka Communications Officer: Ewa Budzynski Postdoctoral Representative: Jonathan Luisi Graduate Student Representative: Oluchukwu Okoyeocha

Committees:

Membership Committee: Chair - Neera Tewari-Singh Communication Committee: Chair - Ewa Budzynski
Program Committee: Chair - Ling Huang Program Committee Members: Napoleon Alejandro, Vladimir Bantsev, Helen Booler, Ewa Budzynski, William Cook, Anh Diep, Swati Gupta, Ling Huang, Qihong Huang, Patrick Kerstein, Jonathan Lin, Jonathan Luisi, Zechu Peng, Andrea Rodrigues, Mercedes Salvador-Silva, Chris Schuetz, Neera Tewari-Singh, Yu-Quan Wen, and Krisha Yekkala

II. 2025 Membership total: 91

III. Key Outcomes and Accomplishments in 2024–2025:

The Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section accomplished the following activities throughout the year.

- In-person meeting/mixer
- Virtual meetings
- Sponsored session(s) at the Annual Meeting
- Endorsed session(s) at the Annual Meeting
- Mentoring/career development events
- Trainee awards conferred
- Scientist investigator awards conferred
- Paper of the year award
- Member highlights
- Newsletter(s)
- Webinars
- Business meeting (communicated operations/finances to members)

IV. Collaborative Partnerships with Other SOT Organizations:

The Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section collaborated with the following organizations within SOT.

V. Communication Methods:

The Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section stayed in contact with its members throughout the year through the following mechanisms.

- Emails through SOT Headquarters
- Specialty Section website
- Newsletter(s)
- Through Graduate Student/Postdoc Representatives
- LinkedIn

VI. Promotion of Inclusivity

The Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section maintained an inclusive organization through the following activities.

- Nominate a diverse slate of candidates for elections
- Solicit equitable input from all executive committee leaders
- Utilize virtual meetings for convening Specialty Section leadership
- Utilize standardized rubrics for judging awards/posters
- Include inclusive descriptions of Awards
- Prioritize diversity in selection of speakers/panelists
- Waive fees for meetings or membership due to financial hardship
- Highlight trainee research
- Solicit member feedback for development of Specialty Section activities (such as webinar topics)
- Provide volunteer activities for the membership to be engaged
- Use multiple approaches to communicate with membership

VII. Mentoring and Career Development Activities:

The Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section hosted the following mentoring activities throughout the year for its membership.

- Career panel(s)
- Speed mentoring
- Chat with an expert
- Mentoring/soft skills webinar

VIII. Awards Given:

Trainee	2
Early Career	1
Mid Career	1
Late Career	1

IX. Strategic Plan:

The Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section supported the following SOT Strategic Priorities.

- Proactively pursue impactful scientific content
- Support the development and application of tools that advance toxicology
- Effectively communicate scientific advances
- Foster connectivity across scientific disciplines
- Develop a talent pool of toxicologists for the future
- Provide training and education that reflects the needs of members
- Provide mentoring and networking opportunities for all career levels
- Enhance member recognition and visibility at all levels

X. Scientific Topics of Interest:

The Ocular Toxicology Specialty Section is interested in seeing the following topic areas developed into sessions at future SOT Annual Meetings.

- A significant portion of support and membership in SOT comes from big pharma, biotech, and contract research organizations. To better reflect their contributions and interests, it would be great to see more emphasis on featuring SOT awards and inviting key speakers from these industry groups. While academia brings valuable perspectives, highlighting practical applications such as emerging artificial intelligence, imaging technologies, and cell/gene therapies from industry leaders could really enrich future sessions and foster stronger collaboration across sectors.

XI. Feedback to the Society:

- A. What is the one thing the Society should be doing that it currently does not do (or does not do effectively) that would be of importance/benefit to the members of the Specialty Section?

SOT could significantly benefit from creating more opportunities to introduce and promote our Specialty Sections beyond just poster sessions. This includes fostering collaborations across different subspecialties to attract members interested in expanding their knowledge across the Society. Additionally, increased coordination of mentoring activities, establishing a framework for cross-specialty group sharing, and providing easy opt-in participation options would encourage more engagement. Recognizing that some Specialty Sections may not have enough trainees to organize activities independently, we're actively exploring ways to support these efforts and enhance overall member involvement and cross-disciplinary learning.

- B. What is the one thing the Society is currently doing that impacts the Specialty Section that should be changed (e.g., stopped, modified, etc.)?

SOT could improve how it supports our Specialty Section by providing targeted training on how we can work together to generate funding and request sponsorships for our awards. For example, offering education on setting up endowment funds and other funding mechanisms would empower our section to secure additional resources and strengthen our programs. This kind of support could make a meaningful impact on our ability to recognize achievements and sustain our initiatives long-term.