



President's Message

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

I hope that everyone is having a wonderful fall season! I don't know where the year went but we are now in October and it's getting (too) cold outside. We have a few important announcements to make in this newsletter, so I'll get right to it.

1) Officer Nominations: We have three upcoming RASS officer vacancies: VP-Elect, Councilor, and Postdoc Rep. Please consider running for an officer position this year! Serving on the Executive Committee is a great opportunity to get more involved with RASS and SOT as a whole, and it's also a great way to establish new relationships. Please see page 2 of this newsletter for details.

2) RASS Awards: RASS offers five graduate student and postdoctoral awards, two best paper awards, and a best abstract award each year at the SOT meeting. I am also proud to announce that RASS has a new trainee award this year, which is being sponsored by the Research Institute for Fragrance Materials (RIFM). Applications related to new approach methodologies (NAMs), advances in exposure science or materials composition, or risk assessment submitted under the John Doull or Perry J. Gehring Graduate/Postdoctoral RASS Awards through the SOT Apply platform will be considered for this award. We encourage all eligible to apply! Please see page 7 for details.

Don't miss the chance to apply for these prestigious awards before the deadlines pass. Moreover, I invite you to consider volunteering as a reviewer for these award applications—an opportunity to contribute to the recognition of outstanding achievements in our field.

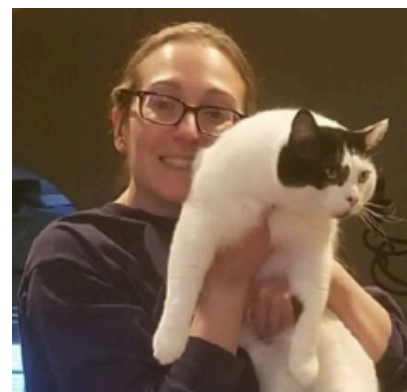
3) RASS Reception and Virtual Business Meeting: Our reception at the SOT 2026 Annual Meeting is planned for Tuesday, March 24, from 6-7:30 PM at the Marriott Marquis San Diego hotel. We do not yet have a date for our Virtual Business meeting; however, that will be held prior to the SOT Annual Meeting. The EC will keep membership posted on further details.

I want to give a special shout-out to our RASS Webinar Series Coordinator, Annie Jarabek, for serving in this role and for her dedication for almost two decades. If you have any suggestions for topics or speakers, feedback, etc., please get in touch with any of the EC members or Annie Jarabek. We also welcome proposals for joint webinars from other Specialty Sections. Risk Assessment Syllabus Planning Committee Chair Li Yang and members also deserve a special mention for coordinating the Risk Assessment Syllabus webinar for trainees that complements the RASS Webinar Series and other RASS-related mentoring activities.

Your continued support, participation, and volunteering are crucial to our collective success and to make RASS as impactful as possible. As such, please consider ways to become more involved with RASS activities, such as contributing to the Endowment Fund, serving on the Endowment Fund Committee or the Risk Assessment Syllabus Planning Committee, running for an EC Officer position, being a speaker for the webinar series, or volunteering to assist in the award selection process. If you are interested in volunteering, please send your contact information to our volunteer coordinator, Alea Goodmanson, who has been a valuable volunteer organizer for many years. You can also follow RASS on LinkedIn as an additional means of communication and involvement. Together, I am confident we will achieve great things and make a lasting impact on RASS. I look forward to working with you all in the coming year.

Cheers and warm regards,

Anne E. Loccisano, PhD, DABT, Fellow ATS
RASS President, 2025-2026



Anne Loccisano
RASS President

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2026 RASS OFFICER NOMINATIONS

RASS is one of the largest SOT Specialty Sections. Our members have a broad spectrum of scientific experience and influence and participate in many of the most important decisions in applying toxicology for the greater good. This standing is and will continue to be only as strong as the RASS leadership. If you or someone you know might be interested in helping direct RASS's continuing presence in the field, then there are several Officer opportunities for which you may be a terrific fit. Serving as an Officer presents a great opportunity to get involved with our Specialty Section and the wider Society, and most importantly, serving on the Executive Committee is fun!

There are three upcoming RASS Officer vacancies for which nominations are being received:

- Vice President-Elect (Presidential chain: 4-year commitment)
- Junior Councilor (2-year commitment)
- Postdoctoral Representative (2-year commitment)

This year's RASS Officer nominations committee is headed by our RASS immediate Past President, Bernard Gadagbui. **Please submit your nomination for yourself or a colleague via the official RASS email (sotrassawards@gmail.com) as soon as possible (the deadline is November 15, 2025).**

NOTE: All candidates must be RASS members. All candidates in the Presidential chain must be Full, Associate, Retired, or Emeritus members of SOT. The Postdoctoral Representative must be a Postdoctoral member of SOT.

If you are interested in reviewing the roles and responsibilities of each position before committing, these can be found on the [RASS Officers webpage](#).

RASS ENDOWMENT FUNDS

RASS has five Endowment Fund-supported awards for students and postdocs: the John Doull Risk Assessment Endowment Award, the Perry J. Gehring Risk Assessment Student and Postdoctoral Endowment Awards, the Robert J. Rubin Student Travel Award, and the Andersen-Clewell Trainee Award. We encourage our members to [contribute](#) to our Endowment Funds, as they provide stipends to graduate student and postdoctoral members who display excellence in risk assessment.

Our goal in the next year is to increase each fund by at least \$2,000 (\$8,000 in total). With your help, the annual RASS merit-based Endowment Fund awards will continue to increase each year. Please help us meet this goal and continue to support the next generation of toxicologists. Please visit the [SOT website](#) to see current contributors and learn more about the Endowments.

Current RASS Officers

President

Anne Loccisano, PhD, DABT

Vice President

Kan Shao, PhD, DABT

Past President

Bernard Gadagbui, PhD, DABT

Vice President-Elect

Kathryn Page, PhD, DABT

Secretary/Treasurer

Nikolaos Georgiadis, PhD

Councilors

Melissa Heintz, PhD

Alexandra Cordova, PhD

Postdoctoral Representative

Chi-Yun Chen, PhD

Student Representative

Disha Gupta

Newsletter Editors

Melissa Heintz, PhD

Alexandra Cordova, PhD

Bernard Gadagbui, PhD, DABT

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RASS WEBINAR SERIES

RASS webinars are held from Fall through Spring, generally on the second Wednesday of each month. If you cannot participate in any of the live RASS webinars, links to the past webinar slides and recordings are available on the RASS website. Information on both upcoming and recordings of past webinars are on our [events page](#).

Below are the recent webinars from the 2025 series.

October 8, 2025 - (See Recording)

Using Defined Approaches (DAs) to Predict the Human Skin Sensitization Potential of Chemicals Previously Untested in NAMs

Martyn Chilton, PhD, Principal Scientist, Lhasa Limited, United Kingdom

Darren Kidd, PhD, Scientific Specialist, Labcorp Early Development Laboratories

September 10, 2025 - Joint Webinar with Mixtures Specialty Section (See Recording)

Student Award Recipients: Assessment Approaches to Wildfire Mixtures

Kyle Burns, Oregon State University, MixSS 2025 Best Abstract Recipient

Sarah Miller, University of North Carolina School of Medicine, RASS 2025 John Doull Award Recipient

April 9, 2025 - Joint Webinar with In Vitro and Alternative Methods Section (See Recording)

TEER21: Development of Data-driven Insights on the Practice and Interpretation of Epithelial Barrier Integrity Data for NAMs-Based Safety Assessments

Erin A. Huber, PhD

RTI International

February 12, 2025 - Joint Webinar with Exposure Specialty Section (See Recording)

Guide to High Throughput Toxicokinetic (HTTK) Parameters

John Wambaugh, PhD,

US Environmental Protection Agency

January 8, 2025 - Joint Webinar with Mixtures Specialty Section (See Recording)

An Update on Vaping in Two Parts

"Part 1: The Mixture Effect – Complexity of Electronic Nicotine Delivery System (ENDS) Aerosols Toxicity Assessment"

Alexandra Noel, PhD

Associate Professor, Director of Inhalation Research Facility, Louisiana State University

"Part 2: Considerations in Assessing Hazards, Exposures, and Risks of ENDS Compared to Other Tobacco Products"

Mary Irwin, PhD

Center for Tobacco Products, US Food and Drug Administration



RASS would like to extend a HUGE thank you to **Annie Jarabek** for her continued leadership in coordinating and facilitating the RASS Webinar Series.

Please [share your ideas](#) on the topics for the RASS Webinar Series.

RISK ASSESSMENT SYLLABUS

The Risk Assessment Syllabus Planning Committee, with the support of RASS leadership, has continued the development of a dedicated “Risk Assessment Syllabus” that was initiated in 2022. This training series complements the existing RASS webinar series and other RASS-related mentoring initiatives.

The objective of this Syllabus is to provide participants with an introduction to the fundamental concepts and terminology associated with chemical risk assessment, as well as a practical perspective on the application of risk assessment principles to inform decision making. Each event in the series is focused on a selected risk assessment-related topic and has speakers from academia, government, and/or industry, with each speaker providing their perspective on what risk assessment means in their respective sector.

The Syllabus provides Trainees with valuable insights that enhance their awareness of the importance and sector-specific aspects of risk assessment in their professional careers and the required skills for the respective job profiles. For current professionals, the Syllabus provides an opportunity to refresh and advance their understanding of risk assessment principles and to develop sector-specific perspectives on contemporary topics in human and environmental health sciences.

The Syllabus is currently hosted in a web-based format to maximize attendance. Individual events are structured to contain a formal presentation focusing on a specific aspect relevant to risk assessment, followed by an open panel discussion with invited experts in the field. Our most recent webinar “Basic Tenets of Risk Characterization” was held in June 2025; details on this event can be found on the [RASS Events webpage](#). The next Risk Assessment Syllabus webinar is anticipated for June 2026, the specific topic, date and time will be determined by spring 2026.

Risk Assessment Syllabus - Basic Tenets of Risk Characterization ([See Recording](#))

Speakers:

George Woodall, PhD, US Environmental Protection Agency

Larisa Rudenko, PhD, US Food & Drug Administration, retired

Scott Dotson, PhD, CIH, DABT, Insight Exposure & Risk Sciences Group

Deborah McKean, PhD, US Environmental Protection Agency, retired

Risk Assessment Syllabus Planning Committee

Committee Chair: Li Yang, RASS Councilor 2020-2022

George Woodall, RASS Past President 2018-2019

Nathan Pechacek, RASS Secretary/Treasurer 2019-2021

Laura Plunkett, RASS President 2020-2021

Jon Urban

Bernard Gadagbui, RASS Past President current

Sarah Burnett, RASS Councilor 2023-2025

Melissa Heintz, RASS Councilor 2024-present

Chi-Yun Chen, Postdoctoral Rep 2024-present

Kelly Salinas, RASS Volunteer

Zemin Wang

We would like to thank the Risk Assessment Syllabus Planning Committee, who plans and coordinates the Risk Assessment Syllabus webinars. The Committee is currently seeking experts in any of the disciplines associated with chemical risk assessment to consider serving on the Committee. In addition, the Committee is currently seeking experts to volunteer to participate as a panelist and share their experiences and perspectives in one of the open discussions. We would also like to use this opportunity to collect feedback, suggestions, and ideas for future Syllabus webinars from the RASS membership. If you are interested in serving on the Committee, participating as a panelist for a Syllabus webinar, or have suggestions for topics for future Syllabus webinars, please email the official RASS email (sotrassawards@gmail.com).

TRAINEE SPOTLIGHT

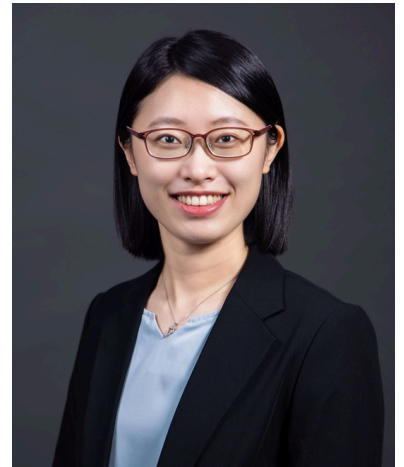
We are spotlighting our outgoing Postdoctoral Representative of RASS, Dr. Chi-Yun Chen. Dr. Chi-Yun Chen earned her doctorate in Bioenvironmental Systems Engineering from National Taiwan University and is currently a Postdoctoral Associate at the University of Florida College of Public Health and Health Professions. Thank you, Chi-Yun, for your service to RASS!

If you would like to be featured in the next Trainee Spotlight, please email the official RASS email (sotrassawards@gmail.com).

Chi-Yun Chen: Outgoing Postdoctoral Representative

What has been the most rewarding aspect of serving as the Postdoctoral Representative for RASS?

The most rewarding aspect has been gaining a comprehensive understanding of the Society's inner workings and the field's collaborative spirit. Since completing my PhD in Taiwan during the pandemic, I had limited opportunities to attend international conferences and to build a network in toxicology. I was fortunate to join RASS as the Postdoctoral Representative when I attended the 2024 SOT Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City at the start of my postdoc journey.



Everything was new and initially overwhelming. However, this position offered an unparalleled chance to quickly learn how the Society operates. It was incredibly rewarding to witness, and contribute to, the dedication of the RASS Executive Committee and the Risk Assessment Syllabus Planning Committee in serving our members and ensuring the success of the Annual Meeting. I am grateful for the chance to learn from these amazing officers and to consistently support RASS in this capacity.

Which skills or experiences from your time in RASS do you think will be most valuable as you advance in your career?

Two experiences in RASS have been exceptionally valuable: scientific session proposal review and participation in organizing the webinars with the Risk Assessment Syllabus Planning Committee. These roles have been invaluable in broadening my perspective on the current state of toxicology and risk assessment. By reviewing proposals, I gained insight into the emerging "hot topics" that are captivating field experts and learned how to craft a compelling scientific event. Participating in webinar organization provided experience in effective professional planning and outreach. Together, these opportunities have been a fantastic way for me, as an early-career scientist and newcomer to the US, to network with and learn from key leaders in the field.

TRAINEE SPOTLIGHT CONTINUED

Chi-Yun Chen: Outgoing Postdoctoral Representative

Was there a particular insight during your research that surprised you or changed your perspective on the field? What excites you most about the future of risk assessment?

As a modeler using biological and computational techniques for risk assessment, I rely heavily on high-quality data. One insight that reinforced my thinking is seeing the value of interdisciplinary collaboration between wet labs and dry labs, where experimental data can be interpreted through a mechanistic lens, yielding deeper insights. Risk assessment inherently involves integrating multiple phases of work into risk characterization, and I see that strategic data integration between experimental and computational scientists can address existing gaps in this process.

Which computational approaches do you think hold the greatest promise for advancing risk assessment in the future?

I think artificial intelligence and machine learning hold the greatest promise for advancing risk assessment. My current focus is on utilizing these techniques to address various research questions because they offer unparalleled speed and scalability. The field is evolving quickly, and while current applications face challenges like fragmented data, methodological inconsistencies, and incomplete frameworks, these issues are becoming increasingly addressable. As data standardization improves and validation methods strengthen, machine learning will enable more accurate, dynamic risk predictions across diverse domains. With sustained efforts in data quality and domain expertise, these techniques will significantly enhance evidence-based risk assessment.

What helps you recharge and stay inspired?

I find creating scientific artwork deeply rewarding. The process of synthesizing my findings and determining how best to present them is what I enjoy most about research. While I am still developing my speaking skills, I have found that I excel at using figures to communicate complex data clearly and effectively. I love the creative challenge of opening a color palette, selecting the best combination for a figure and studying articles that present similar data in a variety of unique ways. These exercises not only make the research process enjoyable but are a continuous source of inspiration.

What advice would you give to graduate students or postdocs who are just beginning to explore risk assessment?

Risk assessment is not a monolithic field; it encompasses regulatory, industry, and academic roles, each requiring slightly different expertise. To gain this perspective, I strongly recommend utilizing resources like the webinar series developed by the Risk Assessment Syllabus Planning Committee. Having this information upfront, which outlines the various types of risk assessment work and the specific skills used in each, is incredibly helpful. It allows a potential future risk assessor to better visualize themselves being successful and identify where their current skills and interests align best within this dynamic field.

ANNUAL STUDENT AND POSTDOCTORAL TRAINEE AWARDS



RASS gives five student and postdoctoral trainee awards each year:

- Perry J. Gehring Best Graduate Student Abstract Risk Assessment Endowment Award
- Perry J. Gehring Best Postdoctoral Fellow Abstract Risk Assessment Endowment Award
- John Doull Risk Assessment Endowment Award
- RASS/MechSS Robert J. Rubin Student Travel Award
- RASS/BMSS Andersen-Clewell Trainee Award

Applications are being accepted through the centralized SOT Apply platform. **The deadline for award applications is December 31, 2025** for all student and postdoctoral trainee awards. Application details and links to apply can be found on the [RASS Awards webpage](#). If you have questions about any of the awards, please contact the official RASS email (sotrassawards@gmail.com).

Applicants are only eligible to win one award but may apply for multiple awards.

The Research Institute for Fragrance Materials (RIFM) will also be sponsoring a \$500 student award. Applications related to New Approach Methodologies (NAMs), advances in exposure science or material composition, or risk assessment submitted under John Doull or Perry J. Gehring Graduate/Postdoctoral RASS awards through the SOT Apply platform will be considered for this award.



BEST ABSTRACT AND BEST PAPER AWARDS

RASS gives one best abstract award and two best paper awards each year:

- Best Overall Risk Assessment Abstract Award (given at the SOT Annual Meeting)
- Best Published Paper Advancing the Science of Risk Assessment Award
- Best Published Paper Demonstrating an Application of Risk Assessment Award

Applications are being accepted through the centralized SOT Apply platform. The deadlines are December 31, 2025 for the best abstract award and January 6, 2026 for both best paper awards. Application details and links to apply can be found on the [RASS Awards webpage](#). If you have questions about any of the awards, please contact the official RASS email (sotrassawards@gmail.com).

How are candidate abstracts identified for the best abstract award?

Any abstract submitted to SOT for the Annual Meeting that includes "risk assessment" as a keyword or category will be considered for the best abstract award.



How are candidate papers identified for the best paper awards?

All papers published in SOT's official journal, *Toxicological Sciences*, between January 1 and December 31, 2025 (in print or online), with at least one SOT member as a co-author, will be considered for the best paper awards. The search term "assessment" will be used to identify candidate papers.

Toxicological Sciences

In addition, RASS members can nominate a paper published in any journal for a best paper award via SOT Apply, as long as the paper has at least one SOT member as a co-author.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

There are numerous opportunities for RASS members to get involved with RASS-related activities. Fall and Winter are busy times, as the reviewing and judging of student and postdoctoral award applications and best abstract and paper awards are in full force. Your help is greatly needed! The benefits of serving as a RASS volunteer include the following:

- ✓ Getting your name and your ability to help recognized. When you get involved, your willingness to serve and help gets recognized. This is especially important for graduate students and postdocs who are looking to get more involved in SOT.
- ✓ Working with colleagues. In volunteering, you have the opportunity to work on committees with people that you might not otherwise have the opportunity to work with, in a fun and collegial way.
- ✓ It is an AWESOME learning opportunity. When you review award applications and candidates for best paper, you have the opportunity to learn about recent developments in risk assessment. Helping out and learning about risk assessment—what more can one ask for?

Available Volunteer Opportunities:

- Student awards selection committee (Jan–Feb)
- Best abstracts selection committee (Jan–Feb)
- Best papers selection committee (Jan–Feb)



RASS would like to extend a HUGE thank you to **Alea Goodmanson** for her continued leadership in coordination of the volunteer pool.

If you would like to enter your name into the RASS Volunteer Pool, please email Alea Goodmanson (aleagoodmanson@chevron.com).

RASS SPONSORSHIP

RASS offers the opportunity for individuals and organizations to support the future of RASS through several levels of sponsorship. Please consider making a donation to support RASS. Donations can also be made anonymously if preferred. Click [here](#) to make a donation to our operating fund.

Sponsorship Level	Amount	Potential Sponsorship Recognition
Leadership	\$5,000	RASS newsletter, RASS business meeting, RASS annual reception, RASS LinkedIn
Mentoring	\$1,000	RASS newsletter, RASS business meeting, RASS mentoring events, RASS LinkedIn
Education	\$500	RASS newsletter, RASS annual reception, RASS LinkedIn
Visibility	\$100	RASS newsletter, RASS annual reception
Networking	< \$100	RASS annual reception



We would like to recognize our recent sponsors, Raptor Pharm & Tox, Ltd. and Toxiqua Ltd.



*Thank you for supporting the
future of RASS!*



RASS OFFICERS 2025-2026

Thank you to the RASS Officers, who dedicate their time and effort to the success of RASS and RASS members. To get to know your RASS Officers better, we asked each of them to share their favorite foods. See their responses below!

Past President



Bernard Gadagbui
TERA

Favorite Foods: Rich and tantalizing flavors of authentic dishes from the Ewe-speaking communities of Ghana, Togo, and Benin.

President



Anne Loccisano
Exponent, Inc.

Favorite Foods: Just about anything vegan! I'll do vegetarian as well, but I love to cook and bake and try to veganize anything that I can. Pizza & pasta are especially popular as well as cookies & cinnamon rolls.

Vice President



Kan Shao
Indiana University
Bloomington

Favorite Food: Red bayberry (*Myrica rubra*), a very delicious fruit, only available in June and early July in east and southeast Asian countries.

Vice President-Elect



Kathryn Page
The Clorox Company
Favorite Food: Sushi

Secretary/ Treasurer



Nikolaos Georgiadis
European Chemicals
Agency (ECHA)

Senior Councilor



Melissa Heintz
ToxStrategies, LLC

Favorite Foods: Vietnamese - especially steamed pork buns (banh bao), pho, and coffee.

Junior Councilor



Alexandra Cordova
ExxonMobil Biomedical
Sciences, Inc.

Favorite Food: A good turkey burger with sweet potato fries.

Postdoctoral Representative



Chi-Yun Chen
University of Florida

Favorite Food: Authentic matcha-flavored sweets with a balanced flavor - not overly sweet or bitter.

Graduate Student Representative



Disha Gupta
Rutgers University

Favorite Food: Samosas (savory pastry with different kinds of filling). Disha's favorite is potato filling with a mint dip (chutney).