2016 Session Proposals due 30 April: Pre-proposals are due to RASS by 15 April

It is hard to believe that even though the 2015 Annual Meeting is still weeks away, it is time to begin planning for the 2016 Annual Meeting in New Orleans! Completed proposals for Meeting Sessions, Symposia, Continuing Education Courses, Workshops, Roundtables, and Information Sessions must be submitted to SOT headquarters by Thursday, 30 April 2015.

Forms and instructions for the various types of sessions can be found on the SOT homepage. Log in to the homepage and click on the “Events & Meetings” tab on the left side of the screen; then select “Submit to the Scientific Program” and find the instructions for the type of session you want to propose.

Each proposal must have one and as many as three “Endorsers (formerly ‘Sponsors’)” – which includes Specialty Sections, Special Interest Groups, and various SOT Committees and Task Forces. If you would like RASS to endorse your proposal, it may be helpful to provide us with a draft pre-proposal for comment and feedback. It is important to recognize, however, that RASS typically reviews ~70 proposals seeking endorsement. If you would like feedback on your pre-proposal prior to formal submission, it is imperative that we have sufficient time to review the pre-proposal and that you have time to respond to the feedback. Consequently, pre-proposals sent to RASS for informal feedback must arrive by 15 April. Pre-proposals received after 15 April are not be guaranteed to be reviewed by RASS and pre-proposals submitted after 22 April will not be reviewed by RASS prior to final submission.

Due to the late schedule for SOT this year (the meeting ends on 26 March), there are only 3 weeks between arrival at home and the time for submission of pre-proposals. If you want feedback from RASS – start early. Use your time at SOT and the RASS reception to get your concepts drafted so that you can meet the deadlines. We look forward to hearing your ideas!
**CRAD Luncheon at the 2015 Meeting**

We are holding our first RASS Mentor/Mentee Lunch & Learn on Tuesday, March 24 at 12:00pm in the Convention Center, room 28. This event will provide an opportunity for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to meet and ask questions to risk assessment experts about career path selection and success and life/work balance issues. Graduate students or fellows interested in attending please RSVP ASAP to Allison Franzen (afranzen@environcorp.com) or Michelle Desimone (michelle.desimone@gmail.com).

**Volunteer to Participate in RASS Activities**

Each year RASS has an ambitious agenda for which the participation of RASS members is essential. Volunteers are being sought for several committees that will begin activities in the spring or fall. These include several awards committees (Student and Postdoc Awards Committee, The Best Paper Awards Committee, and the 2016 Meeting Best Abstract Award Committee) and the proposal review committee. There are other activities at the annual meeting and throughout the year for which member participation is invaluable.

We have started to compile a Volunteer Pool of people interested in helping with RASS activities. We currently have 37 volunteers, of which 16% are academics, 30% are government, and 54% are industry. We are always looking for more volunteers, so please contact Alea Bunch (abunch@toxstrategies.com) if you would like your name added to our Volunteer Pool. If you have ideas of suggestion for activities that RASS could undertake, including organizing Contemporary Concepts in Toxicology (CCT) meetings, contact any of the officers.

Every year RASS is fortunate to have the energy and enthusiasm of its members contributing their time and efforts to make these and other RASS activities successful. The assistance of members is essential to the RASS officers in carrying out these important activities. We look forward to working with members again this year. Please **VOLUNTEER NOW!**
President’s Message

I hope you found this issue of the RASS newsletter to be informative. As you can tell, so far this year we have accomplished a lot and we have initiated several new activities, but there is still much to be done both in regard to the 2015 Annual Meeting and in planning for the 2016 Meeting in New Orleans. If you want to become part of any of the activities that are supported by RASS, please send your contact information and areas of interest to Alea Bunch (Abunch@toxstrategies.com). We are always happy to have volunteers, and this is a great way to learn more about RASS and to discern whether you would be interested in taking on more responsibility, and perhaps even running for office.

On behalf of the Executive Council, I urge you to attend the RASS reception and business meeting on Tuesday, March 24th at 6:00 PM in Room 28 of the Convention Center. Your Executive Council has worked hard to minimize the presentation aspects of the meeting and to increase time devoted to the social aspects of RASS. At our reception you can meet up with colleagues and congratulate the winners of the Outstanding Abstract Award for the 2015 annual meeting (plus the authors of the “Top 10 Abstracts”), the winners of The Outstanding Paper that Advanced the Science of Risk Assessment published in 2014 (plus the top runners up), and the winners of The Outstanding Paper Demonstrating an Application of Risk Assessment published in 2014 (plus the top runners up).

In addition, you can applaud the efforts of the student and postdoc winners (and their mentors) of the John Doull, Perry Gehring, and Robert Rubin Awards (The Rubin Award is selected in association with the Mechanisms Specialty Section). In the stimulating conversations that follow, you and some of your colleagues whom you may not see regularly during the year might be able to conceive an idea for a Session Proposal for the 2016 SOT Meeting. You certainly don’t want to miss the splendid opportunities available at the RASS reception – and we do not want to miss seeing you!

We look forward to seeing you in San Diego,

John DeSesso, PhD, DABFM, DABFE, DABCHS, Fellow ATS
President, Risk Assessment Specialty Section
**RASS Financial Status (as of November 30, 2014)**

**Dues-paying members:** 733
- Student: 43 (9 International)
- Post Doc: 29 (6 International)

**RASS General Fund**

**Financial History:**
- Net assets as of July 2009: $19,684
- Net assets as of July 2010: $21,835
- Net assets as of July 2011: $23,789
- Net assets as of July 2012: $24,883
- Net assets as of July 2013: $29,836
- Net assets as of July 2014: $28,096

**RASS Endowment Funds** (Status as of September 30, 2014)

- **John Doull Endowment Fund**
  Net Assets: $38,756

- **Perry J Gehring Endowment Fund**
  Net Assets: $43,826

- **Robert J Ruben Endowment Fund (cooperative with the Mechanisms Specialty Section)**
  Net Assets: $42,460

**Support Awards to Students and Post Docs – Contribute to the RASS Endowment Funds**

The majority of awards to students and post docs provided by RASS at the SOT Annual Meeting come from these named endowment funds:

- **John Doull Student Award Fund**
- **Perry J. Gehring Risk Assessment Student Award Fund** (Two Awards per year: one student and one post doc)
- **Robert J. Rubin Student Travel Award Fund** (jointly funded with the Mechanisms Specialty Section)

These funds are designed to be a sustainable source of funding for these awards. As the costs for travel have increased, the RASS Executive Committee has increased the level of these awards, and has at times needed to supplement the allowable disbursements from the endowment funds to meet those needs. The RASS Executive Committee would like to invite you to consider making a contribution to the RASS Endowment funds.

**Who may Contribute:** Contributions are welcome from individuals or organizations. Details may be found on the SOT Endowment Fund web page - [http://www.toxicology.org/ai/csot/contribute.asp](http://www.toxicology.org/ai/csot/contribute.asp).

**Double your Contribution:** Most contributions are matched on a one-to-one basis by SOT, and many employers do so as well – please check with your employer.
It’s Easy to Do: Making a contribution to the Endowment Fund of your choice is very simple. Please use the Donor Form that should accompany all donations (http://www.toxicology.org/ai/csot/Endowment_Donor_form.pdf) and designate one or more of the RASS Endowment funds.

Risk Assessment Links and Resources

Below are some links to Government programs, reviews, and upcoming events that may be of interest to those in the risk assessment community:

- EPA IRIS program, What’s New: http://www.epa.gov/iris/recent.htm
- EPA OPPT TSCA Work Plan Chemicals: http://www.epa.gov/oppt/existingchemicals/pubs/workplan.html
- EPA Environmental Justice: http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/
- NIOSH What’s New: http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/whatsnew/default.html
- SOT Calendar of events: https://www.toxicology.org/ms/events.asp