

2012 ASCB Minorities Affairs Committee

Renato J. Aguilera,* *Chair*
David J. Asai*
David R. Burgess,* *MARC
Grant PI*
Andrew G. Campbell*
Franklin A. Carrero-
Martínez*
Wilfred F. Denetclaw Jr. *
Latanya Hammonds-Odie*
Deborah Harmon Hines*
Tama W. Hasson*
Michael J. Leibowitz*
Michelle Juarez,*
Postdoctoral Fellow
Deborah McCall,* *Staff
Liaison*
Sandra A. Murray*
Winston E. Thompson*
Graciela A. Unguez*
MariaElena B. Zavala*

*In attendance at December
meeting

Minorities Affairs



Teresa Shakespeare spoke at the inaugural MAC Visiting Professor Lecture Series.

Minorities Affairs Committee Notes Successes, Seeks Funding

Minorities Affairs Committee (MAC) programs and activities at ASCB Annual Meetings have succeeded and have continued to grow, noted Chair Renato Aguilera at the 2012 MAC meeting in San Francisco. New ASCB Executive Director Stefano Bertuzzi shared his plans to work with the MAC in the coming year, and ASCB President Ron Vale commended the MAC for a successful year.

Funding of MAC programs was a major topic of discussion at the meeting. The MAC will submit a renewal for its Minority Access to Research Careers (MARC) grant from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences. MARC Grant PI David Burgess will lead the renewal process and will work with MAC programmatic subcommittees. The MAC will also submit a grant proposal to the National Science Foundation (NSF) in 2013. MAC member Mike Leibowitz will lead this effort and will work with members Latanya Hammonds-Odie and Franklin Carrero-Martinez.

The Committee discussed its ongoing programs. It was particularly excited about its first Visiting Professor Lecture Series with Teresa Shakespeare as the lecturer. The MAC plans to have more lectures in this series.

Guests at the meeting included MAC program evaluator Joy Quill, Quill and Associates; iBioSeminars Associate Director Laurence Clement; and Greg Warr, program director, NSF.

—Deborah McCall, Senior Manager,
Minorities Affairs

Stirring MAC Mentoring Program Keynote

The Minorities Affairs Committee's (MAC's) Mentoring Keynote was inspirational. Speaker Winston Anderson, professor at Howard University, brought the past and present together. Anderson, who launched the MAC at ASCB, encouraged attendees to strive for excellence as scientists but to always remember those who came before them.

—Deborah McCall, Senior Manager, Minorities
Affairs

Grant Writing Seminar

On Saturday, December 15, 2012, ASCB hosted a Grant Writers' Seminar to help kick off the Annual Meeting. Stephen W. Russell, cofounder and manager of Grant Writers' Seminars and Workshops LLC, addressed 125 junior faculty and postdoctoral investigators on how to write winning National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant proposals. Attendees received a copy of *The Grant Writer's Workbook*.

Although aspects of the program focused specifically on NIH grant proposals, Russell shared advice useful for all granting agencies. His talk emphasized methods to prepare for proposal writing and how to refine the proposal before submission. After making attendees aware of considerations given to early-stage investigators, Russell addressed the following main topics:

Assess the competition. Internet resources, such as HighWire, RePorter, and enGrant, are useful for searching for previously submitted

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grants in one's research field. Although a research idea may be wonderful, Russell said, someone else may already have proposed it. Many grant writers make the mistake of not searching their research field for competitors' proposals. Knowing what someone else has already proposed can enable one to write a unique project proposal, enhancing the chance of acceptance.

Determine fundability by a specific agency/institute. Maximize the programmatic relevance of a proposal by first researching high-priority funding areas for various agencies. Russell recommended contacting program officers to ask about priority updates and request a review of a proposal synopsis. Their advice may enable applicants to adjust aims to make them relevant to priority funding. He reminded the audience of different categories or mechanisms that might be available to early-stage investigators.

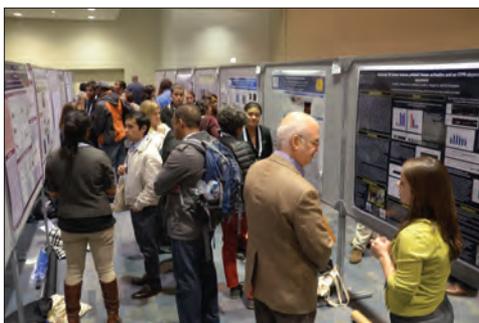
Write specifically for your reviewers. Seek a presubmission review by a colleague not expertly involved in your research area. A grant application should be finished at least one month ahead of the due date. To determine reviewer guidelines, consult the NIH Center for Scientific Review website. Proposals most relevant to the program's goals would most likely get attention, Russell advised. Recommending and justifying a particular study section in the cover letter is permissible, as is stating the names of direct competitors, so that someone representing your area of expertise is present and competitors are not included as reviewers.

The workshop ended with tips on writing each main section of an NIH grant proposal. Russell's presentation offered helpful behind-the-scenes tips to improve one's success in grant funding.

—*Brenda Schoffstall, MAC Linkage Fellow,
Barry University*



The MAC Awards Luncheon



Poster presenters and judges at the 2012 ASCB Poster Competition

Undergraduate/Graduate Student Session

The Minorities Affairs Committee sponsored a panel session for undergraduate and graduate students titled “New Challenges and Old Obstacles 101.” This interactive session aimed to guide students by highlighting the experiences of graduate students at different academic phases. A diverse and dynamic group of scientists (postdoc, assistant professor, full professor, and industry scientist) discussed why and how they pursued scientific careers and the struggles and successes they have experienced.

Michelle Juarez, assistant project scientist at the University of California, San Diego, initiated the panel discussion—emphasizing how she turned her scientific interests to biomedical sciences. This enthusiastic young scientist had the advantage of being exposed to a research environment at the undergraduate level, reinforced by a year as a laboratory technician. Both experiences helped her to get into graduate school and ultimately obtain an institutional research and academic career development award sponsored by the National Institutes of Health.

The industry representative on the panel, Lino González, a senior scientist at Genentech, Inc., showed the audience how a calm but patient person becomes a leader and makes his or her voice heard. He suggested that attendees read *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking* by Susan Cain. He also encouraged young scientists to find time to clear their minds and renew their energy.

Like González, Shanta D. Hinton, assistant professor at the College of William and Mary, was a first-generation college student. Hinton's determination and success are impressive. Even though her family only expected her to obtain

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2012 E.E. Just Awardee Georgia Dunston

a bachelor's degree, Hinton always strived for more and did not stop until she obtained her PhD.

Finally, Anthony DePass, assistant vice president for research and professor of biology, University of Long Island, reminded attendees about the importance of networking. He advised attendees to think about what they want to be as scientists and look for individuals who are doing what they want to do. In addition, young scientists need to keep in mind that effective communication is very important.

Overall, the panelists agreed that finding informal mentors helps students feel more confident with asking questions in an open and friendly environment without the pressure of interacting with their formal mentors, who evaluate their everyday work and grade them. The panel's advice on getting results and continually focusing on one's goal as a key to success was very motivating.

—*Elinette M. Albino Rodriguez, Ponce School of Medicine & Health Sciences, MAC Travel Awardee*

MAC and Education Committee Combined Poster Competition a Success

With more than 140 posters at the new combined Minorities Affairs Committee (MAC) and Education Committee Poster Session Competition—called the ASCB Poster Competition—presenters, judges, MAC and Education Committee members, MAC visiting professors, Linkage Fellows, and others enjoyed extensive interaction and networking. The



2012 MAC Committee meeting

new combined competition had lots of energy. MAC poster winners were notified of their winning status during the annual MAC Awards Luncheon. Winners will receive a cash award and a certificate.

2012 MAC Poster Award Winners

Undergraduates

First Place: *Jose Rapanan*, Midwestern University

Second Place: *Jovans Lorquet*, Barry University

Third Place: *Jordan Harper*, Fort Valley State University

Graduate Students

First Place: *Corinne Fairchild*, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

Second Place: *Natasha Gutierrez*, Rutgers University

Third Place: *Lilian Kabeche*, Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth

Postdoctoral Fellows

First Place: *Damaris Lorenzo*, Duke University

Second Place: *Tarsha Ward*, Morehouse School of Medicine

Third Place: *Armando Varela*, University of Texas at El Paso

—*Deborah McCall, Senior Manager, Minorities Affairs*



MAC Poster Competition winners with Poster Competition Chair Tama Hasson (far left) and MAC Chair Renato Aguilera (far right)

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MAC Awards Luncheon

The MAC hosted its annual MAC Awards Luncheon, where poster winners were announced, the previous year's MAC activities were reviewed, and members of the MAC community and others networked and shared experiences.

This year, luncheon attendees were seated by career interest, allowing for even more networking and sharing. More than 140 attended this annual event, supported by the Burroughs Wellcome Fund.

—Deborah McCall, Senior Manager,
Minorities Affairs

Educational Resources/MAC Booth and MAC Welcome Suite

Again in 2012, the Educational Resources/Minorities Affairs Committee (MAC) Booth—always busy with networking, presentations, and information dissemination—served as “official hangout” for the MAC Community. All MAC travel awardees must be at the booth for at least one hour during the Annual Meeting. Many stay much longer and come back day after day. This year, Table Talks—informal sessions for different audiences—were held at the booth. The sessions proved popular, with one session for postdocs drawing more than 65 attendees. Planners hope to move this session to a room at the 2013 Annual Meeting.

The MAC Welcome Suite was also popular. This event, supported by the Burroughs

Wellcome Fund and held for two days during the Annual Meeting, has become a “favorite” of the MAC community. In its fifth year and hosted by MAC Chair Renato Aguilera, the MAC Welcome Suite caters to an overflowing crowd that each evening doesn't want the networking to end.

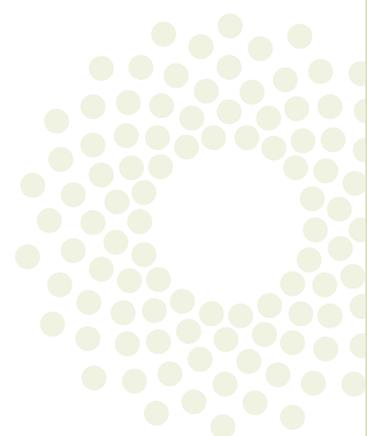
—Deborah McCall, Senior Manager,
Minorities Affairs

E.E. Just Lecture

This year's E.E. Just Lecture, “Decoding the Biology of Human Genome Polymorphisms in African Americans,” was presented by Georgia Dunston, of the National Human Genome Center (NHGC) at Howard University College of Medicine.

Dunston's research on human genome variation in disease susceptibility and health disparities has been the vanguard of efforts at Howard to build national and international research collaborations focusing on the genetics of diseases common in African Americans and other African Diaspora populations. Under Dunston's leadership, the NHGC has been instrumental in bringing multicultural perspectives and resources to an understanding of knowledge gained from the Human Genome Project and research on human genome variation. ■

—Deborah McCall, Senior Manager,
Minorities Affairs



Participants in the Grantwriting Seminar



Attendees at “New Challenges and Old Obstacles 101”