Letter from the Chair
Lorraine Finlay
Chair of CSWM and Professor
Department of Allied Health Sciences
Nassau Community College/University Medical Center

I look forward to greeting our visitors, friends, supporters, and members of the Committee on the Status of Women in Microbiology (CSWM) at the ASM General Meeting in New Orleans. This year, all of our events will be held in succession on Monday, May 23, including our special interest session. We had to strongly negotiate this year to keep this special interest session on the general meeting program, considering the new changes made to the proceedings of the meeting. Our open forum meeting follows later in the afternoon and allows you the opportunity to voice your issues and concerns. This is immediately followed by our reception, a wonderful social event that gives you a chance to meet new fellow microbiologists, network, and exchange ideas, all while enjoying some refreshments. At this reception, the recipient of the Alice C. Evans Award is acknowledged. Our committee administers this award, given to a scientist who has fostered the advancement of women in the field of Microbiology. Please look for the announcement of these events in this newsletter and please attend all of our events.

I have a special announcement that gives me great pleasure. At last year’s general meeting in 2010, a request was made at the open forum meeting that a quiet area be provided for mothers to breast-feed their children; apparently, there was no such location provided with the child-care center. On behalf of this committee, a private location will now be provided at this general meeting. To the woman ASM member who originally made this suggestion: Kudos!

How are women in academia progressing in their careers? A 2010 issue of the National Education Association Higher Education Advocate has been published listing the salary data on full time faculty in the nation’s public and private colleges and universities. The Advocate reports that women faculty members continue to earn less than men faculty in all sectors. The greatest disparity continues to be at doctoral universities, where women’s salaries at public and private institutions are 80% and 78% of men’s salaries, respectively; this has been the case for the last several years since 2007. Female faculty members at community colleges continue to show smaller salary differences. Despite women’s salaries making little headway, the number of full-time women faculty at public institutions has increased by 94% since 1989-1990, while the number of men increased by not even 10%. The share of women working full time at private institutions will now be provided at this general meeting. To the woman ASM member who originally made this suggestion: Kudos!

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their gains, women still represent a minority share of faculty. (NEA Higher Education Advocate, 2010, Section IV, p. 5-6.)

I’d like to take this section of the newsletter to share some advice that I have learned as a woman member of the CSWM. How do you pave your way to a successful career in microbiology?

* Join a support group of peers and network: Make friends, male or female, before you need them. Cultivate the professional network within your department.
* Form research collaborations outside of your institution/company: these are often highly valued and lead to publications.
* Document your work: Record everything, including the number of hours spent on all activities that you have done, no matter how mundane.
* Find a mentor: If you cannot find one within your institution, find one outside; the advice and guidance are priceless.
* Strategize your future: Assess the weight that your institution/company allots to teaching, research, and committee work. Choose tasks wisely. Learn not to accept a task before significantly thinking about it; learn to say “No.” Women are asked to do a great deal of service that men are not asked to do.
* Request performance reviews in writing: Do this yearly whether required by your institution/company or not. It can serve you at a later date.
* Be assertive: Be proactive if you believe you deserve a raise. However, be prepared and plan your negotiations. Justify why your request is appropriate in terms of the institution/company. Anticipate objections and prepare to counter them.
* Organize your time: Balance your household responsibilities with your career responsibilities. You cannot accomplish all things at the same time; choose your priorities. Ask for family help and support. Have patience! If you have children, it may take you longer to accomplish your career goals; you will eventually arrive at your goals in due time.
* Eliminate sexual harassment: Maintain zero tolerance for sexual harassment. You can be harassed only if you allow it; institutions usually have an office to deal with these issues. Use that resource. Eliminate your fear or hesitancy to do so!
* Land a family-friendly post: Search the website of the human resources department of the institution/company that you wish to join for their policies, before you accept a position. Investigate tenure policies.
* Have confidence in yourself!

On an encouraging note, there are plenty of women interested in communicating with each other and with the CSWM within ASM. The CSWM maintains a display booth at the General Meeting. Please take a moment to visit us at our booth in New Orleans!

Lorraine

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The Roche Diagnostics Alice C. Evans Award

Each year we recognize one ASM member for contributions toward the full participation and advancement of women in microbiology. This award was established by the ASM’s Committee on the Status of Women in Microbiology, and is given in memory of Alice C. Evans, the first woman to be elected ASM President in 1928. The nominee can be any member of ASM who has made major contributions toward fostering the inclusion, development, and advancement of women in careers in microbiology. The nominee must demonstrate commitment to women in science through mentorship and advocacy and by setting an example through scientific and professional achievement.

This year, Susan Forsburg, Ph.D., University of Southern California, has been honored with the Roche Diagnostics Alice C. Evans Award. Dr. Forsburg is honored for her commitment to the success of women in biological sciences, as demonstrated not only by her efforts at USC, but also through her work on a web mentoring site that benefits women worldwide.

Dr. Susan Forsburg, the 2011 Roche Diagnostics Alice C. Evans Award Recipient

Photo credit USC

Dr. Forsburg received her Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where she investigated transcriptional regulation in the budding yeast S. cerevisiae. She then completed her postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Oxford, where she was a Helen Hay Whitney and NATO fellow working on “the other yeast,” the fission yeast S. pombe. Dr. Forsburg then returned to begin a faculty position at The Salk Institute for Biological Studies, La Jolla. Eleven years later, she moved to her current institution, where she is a Professor in the Molecular & Computational Biology Program in the Department of Biological Sciences. Her lab studies how fission yeast cells maintain genome
stability, particularly during DNA replication.

Dr. Forsburg was nominated by Laura L. Mays Hoopes of Pomona College, Claremont, California. Dr. Forsburg’s dedication to women in biological sciences is obvious through the success of those who have worked with her. Dr. Hoopes explains in her nominating letter, “Her mentees excel at all levels, from undergraduate to faculty. Beyond her own students, Forsburg goes out of her way to talk with young women, for example at poster sessions—a tremendous confidence boost for women early in their careers.” Dr. Forsburg maintains the Women in Biology Internet Launch Pages (http://www.womenbio.net), a list of internet resources of use to women scientists. “Labor-intensive and scrupulously researched, Forsburg’s Women in Biology site bypasses traditional search engines, providing a comprehensive Web resource on history of women scientists, education opportunities, organizations for women scientists, and career planning and management,” notes Dr. Hoopes.

Also known for her participation in associations, Dr. Forsburg is an active member of the Women in Cell Biology committee of the American Society for Cell Biology, the Council for Extramural Grants of the American Cancer Society, the CSRS review panel at NIH, the Public Affairs Advisory Committee of ASMB, and is a Fellow of the Association for Women in Science and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. “Susan is one of our most active and prominent members: she offers cogent and original suggestions during our meetings, volunteers to follow up on numerous initiatives, and sends committee members a stream of URLs on women’s issues from her thorough monitoring of the internet,” comments nomination supporter Ursula Goodenough of Washington University St. Louis, Missouri, on her work with Dr. Forsburg on the Women in Cell Biology Committee. “Most academics in our times support the full participation and advancement of women in microbiology and in science writ large, but very few go to the lengths that Susan goes to assure that this ideal is achievable and to point out when it is being thwarted.” Dr. Forsburg’s efforts have eased the way for women all over the world, exemplifying the commitment this award honors.

Funding Opportunities

ASM 2011 Career Development Grants for Postdoctoral Women

The Career Development Grants for Postdoctoral Women (CDGPW) program, administered by the ASM Membership Board, awards up to three $1200 grants per year to postdoctoral women with outstanding scientific accomplishments and potential for significant research in the area of microbiology. The grants support the career development of the candidates by providing funds to travel to a meeting, visit a laboratory, take a course in a geographically distant place, or for other purposes to advance the candidates’ careers. The 2011 CDGPW awardees are Sinem Beyhan (currently at University of California, San Francisco in Anita Sil’s Lab), who will use the grant to attend the FEBS (Federation of European Biochemical Societies) Human Fungal Pathogens Course in La Colle sur Loup, France; Ashley Shade (currently at Yale University in Jo Handelsman’s Lab), who will use the grant to attend the Marine Biological Laboratory Microbial Diversity summer course at Woods Hole, Massachusetts; and Laura E. Williams (currently at Duke University in Jennifer Wernegreen’s Lab), who will use the award to visit Dr. Elizabeth Sackett’s laboratory at the University of Nottingham in the United Kingdom to study isolation, culture and assay techniques for predatory bacteria.

The CDGPW Committee is currently accepting applications for the 2012 grant program. Please check the ASM website for complete program policies and nomination procedures:


(or go to http://www.asm.org/, click on “Membership,” then “Membership Board Grants”) or contact Anne Dempsey at ASM Headquarters (adempsey@asmusa.org).

L’Oréal USA Fellowships for Women in Science Program

The L’Oréal USA Fellowships for Women in Science program announces the 2011 call for applications.

The L’Oréal USA Fellowships for Women in Science program is a national awards program that annually recognizes and rewards five U.S.-based women researchers at the beginning of their scientific careers. Recipients each receive up to $60,000 that must put towards their postdoctoral research.

Launched in 2003 as the U.S. component of the L’Oréal-UNESCO for Women in Science International Fellowship program, the U.S. Fellowships aim to:

Raise awareness of the contribution of women to the sciences and identify exceptional female researchers in the U.S. to serve as role models for younger generations

Candidates who would like to apply may visit: http://lorealfwiw.aas.org. Applications are now being accepted online.
Remember...
The CSWM Special Session
Monday 11:00 a.m.
Convention Center Room 254

A Gut Reaction: The Relationship Between Obesity and Microorganisms
11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Invited Speakers:

Human Adenovirus-36: Role in Obesity and Breast Cancer
RICHARD L. ATKINSON; Virginia Commonwealth Univ. and Obetech Obesity Res. Center, Richmond, VA

The Economic Impact of Obesity on Women
CHRISTINE C. FERGUSON; George Washington Univ., Washington, DC.

Immune Defense of the Gut Epithelial Surface
LORA HOOPER; Univ. of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, TX.

A New (Orleans) Primer on Obesity: A is for Adenovirus, B is for Body Fat, C is for Children
JEFFREY B. SCHWIMMER; Univ. of California, San Diego, CA.

CSWM Open Forum Meeting
Monday
3:00 p.m.
Belle Chasse Room

Join the committee for a lively discussion of issues that are of importance to women microbiologists, including:

- Breaking barriers
- Balancing career and family
- Tenure and career advancement
- Salary concerns
- Attracting more women to the life sciences
- Networking

If you have any questions that you would like addressed, please come to the meeting or submit them in advance here at the booth.

To facilitate the discussion, the issues forum will be moderated by:

Anne-Marie B. Blancquaert, D.V.M.
Microbiology Specialist
Dow Corning Corporation

Also attending:

Tamara Lewis-Johnson, MBA, MPH
Women’s Health Program Manager, Office of Special Populations and Research Training, DEA NIAID, NIH

What is CSWM?
The Committee on the Status of Women in Microbiology (CSWM) periodically collects data on the training and employment of women microbiologists; studies legislation affecting women microbiologists; interacts and cooperates with similar committees in other scientific organizations; encourages women microbiologists to participate in ASM activities; and advises ASM on matters concerning the status of women microbiologists.

CSWM on the Web
Visit the CSWM Webpage: http://www.asm.org/cswm
Join the CSWM discussion group: http://www.asm.org/subscribe.asp