

# SSR Trainee Affairs Committee: Standard Operating Procedures

## First Year Trainee Representative (Junior Rep) Responsibilities

### June

1. Select trainees to run the Trainee-Mentor Luncheon (TML), the Larry Ewing Memorial Trainee Travel Fund (LEMTTF), and the Roommate Referral Service for the next year. In the past, representatives have asked trainee members who ran for election but who were not elected. This process helps to keep interested members involved in the SSR.

### July

1. At the end of the SSR meeting, take one copy of any placement service materials. The rep should respond to any questions regarding placement service postings during the year.
2. Send thank you letters to LEMTTF contributors. The SSR business office will provide letters to sign on SSR stationary and stamped envelopes to stuff. A letter should also be sent to Mrs. Ewing (see sample on next page). Thank you letters should be sent to the TML mentors (check with the person in charge of the TML – they may have already done this) and to the organizer of the TML. Likewise, a letter should be sent to the trainee in charge of the LEMTTF, the trainee in charge of the roommate referral service, and the trainee who was in charge of the T-shirts.

### October

1. Send out a call for nominations for trainee representative. Email this to the SSR business office, and they will send it out. Trainee members can nominate themselves, or be nominated by others. All nominations should be received by the trainee rep, who should send the list of names to the business office to determine if all nominees are members.

### February

1. Attend winter board meeting. Should have selected LEMTTF and trainee-luncheon coordinators for following year for nomination to trainee affairs committee. It is also important to have t-shirt designs in by this time so the Board of Directors can vote and approve the design.

### March

1. Prepare ballots for trainee representative election. Compile all nominee names and personal statements and send to business office. The rep should notify all nominees of election outcome. The newly elected rep should be invited to help with the annual meeting activities and to attend the summer board meeting.

### July

1. Set up placement service the night before it opens (if applicable). Contact the business office prior to the meeting to ensure all necessary supplies (computers, printers, paper, etc.) are present.

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2. After the meeting, the newly-elected rep should take any copies of placement service materials (if applicable).
3. Both reps must attend the summer board meeting prior to the SSR meeting, the business meeting at the end, and the short board meeting that follows.

**Miscellaneous** – First year rep is responsible for working with the business office to maintain the trainee website. The first year rep can work together with another member of the Trainee Affairs Committee.

### SAMPLE LETTER

June 29, 2001

Mrs. Agnes Ewing  
15 Collingwood Road  
Phoenix, MD 21131-2401

Dear Mrs. Ewing:

I am the 2000-2002 SSR trainee representative. I am writing to inform you of the activities of the Larry Ewing Memorial Trainee Travel Fund. Last summer, we were able to provide support for 65 trainees to attend the SSR meeting, including 4 international students. We are very grateful to have this award available. Many students and postdocs would not be able to attend the annual meeting without it. I have enclosed a list of the Fund's contributors over the past year. Thank you for your efforts on behalf of the Society's trainees.

Sincerely,

Laura Clamon

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## **Responsibilities of the Second Year Representative (Senior Rep) Chair, Trainee Affairs Committee**

### September/October

1. Prepare Fall (October) newsletter. About 1 month before the newsletter is to be published, the editor of the newsletter will contact the representative asking for articles. The deadline for the report is usually about September 15. It is the responsibility of the representative to use the newsletter to pass on any information that is of interest and importance to the trainee members.
2. Begin organization of the Trainee Forum. The representative is responsible for choosing a topic and inviting the speaker(s). The representative is free to contact several trainee members for input about potential topics. The topic and speakers must be approved by the Board of Directors at the mid-winter board meeting, typically held in February or March. If approved, the representative is responsible for inviting the speakers and publicizing the forum. Most likely, the program committee will contact you about the time slot assigned to the forum at the annual meeting. The representative needs to provide the business office with the names of the speakers so that they can send the speakers any pertinent meeting information. If the speakers are nonmembers of the SSR, money for speakers' travel must be approved by the Board, and travel arrangements must be coordinated with the business office.
3. Follow-up with the Junior rep to be sure the call for nominations for trainee representative go out.

### December

1. Prepare the mid-winter (February) Newsletter. The procedure for this is similar to that for the Fall newsletter; however, the deadline for the report is usually around December 15.

### January

1. Work with the TML chair to begin planning the event. See Appendix B for guidelines to organizing the TML.
2. Prepare the mid-winter board report. About 1 month before the meeting, the representative will receive an e-mail from the President asking for the report. It is the responsibility of the representative to write the report and send copies to the other trainee representative, the President, and the business office. The report should contain information about the previous year's placement service, travel fund, forum, and T-shirt sales. The report should also request board approval of the trainee forum speaker(s) and allocation of money for the trainee travel fund and T-shirt production. This information can be obtained from the SSR business office. Additionally, the report should contain any other information that needs board approval. The representative should obtain old copies of reports from past trainee representatives to get an idea of how the reports have been structured in the past.

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## February

1. Mid-winter board meeting. Both representatives are required to attend the meeting. The reps can voice their opinion and share a single vote. In years past, the senior rep provided the board with a draft of the T-shirt design (typically designed by a trainee volunteer or volunteers). The design of the T-shirt must be approved by the board. The rep needs to obtain board approval for the money required to design and produce the T-shirts.

## March

1. Begin production of the T-shirts. It is the responsibility of the rep to be in close contact with the trainee in charge of the T-shirt and to keep up on all details of production. The business office handles the quantities of T-shirts to be produced and arranges for the payment.
2. Follow-up with the Junior rep to be sure ballots for the election of the next trainee rep are sent out.
3. Follow-up with the TML chair to check on plans. Invitations to mentors should be sent out by April.
4. Follow-up with the Junior rep to be sure a trainee on the local arrangements committee has agreed to help organize the trainee mixer.

## April

1. Prepare spring newsletter (for June).
2. Advise business office of the information they will need for SSR meeting pre-registration forms (name and contact info for person in charge of LEMTTF and the roommate referral service).

## May

1. TML plans should be finalized. The rep should contact the organizer and make sure all of the mentors are in place. The organizer needs to send the finalized list of mentors to the business office.
2. Follow-up with LEMTTF chair to check on progress. See Appendix C for LEMTTF guidelines.

## June

1. Follow-up with the LEMTTF chair and the business office to make sure the travel awards have been/are ready to be distributed.
2. Follow-up with the trainee volunteer in charge of T-shirts to ensure that T-shirt production is underway.
3. Follow-up with the TML chair to make sure that the mentor-request form has been sent to trainees who pre-registered for the event.
4. Write the summer board meeting report. The summer report contains information about what has been accomplished since the mid-winter board meeting.

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### July

1. Finalize the annual meeting arrangements. The reps should contact the business office, the LAC, and the Trainee Affairs committee to make sure everything is set for the meeting. Publicize the Trainee Forum using an e-mail message to all trainees.

### **Annual Meeting**

1. Summer Board Meeting: Both reps must attend the summer meeting. The new incoming trainee rep is invited to attend the meeting as well. The outgoing rep presents a final report and introduces the new rep.
2. Placement Service: Set up by reps and run with volunteer help for the duration of the meeting. Reps should set up the placement service the night before the placement service opens. The placement service can be taken down during the morning of the last day of the meeting. The SSR business office will handle the supplies.
3. Trainee-Mentor Luncheon: Both reps need to work with the local arrangements committee and/or the business office to facilitate the luncheon. The reps should ensure the trainees are informed of the mentors they will have lunch with. An assignment sheet of the mentor to whom trainees have been assigned should be posted at the information board.
4. Trainee Forum: Reps need to encourage as many trainees as possible to attend the forum. The senior rep is responsible for moderating the forum. The senior rep is in charge of running the trainee business meeting.
5. Business Meeting: All reps must attend the business meeting that occurs on the last day of the meeting. At the business meeting, the senior rep presents a final report on the number of participants at the luncheon, the forum, and the placement service. The rep also thanks all of the trainee helpers and introduces the newly elected rep and the new senior rep.

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## Appendix A

### Trainee Volunteer Subcommittee Activities and Guidelines

The Trainee Volunteer Subcommittee (TVS) shall handle the daily duties of the annual SSR meeting listed in the document, including organizing the trainee volunteers. TVS shall be chaired by two (2) persons; with one (1) experienced chair (senior) and one (1) incoming chair (junior) as occurs with Trainee Representatives to the SSR Board of Directors. Communication of the TVS activities will be directly to the site planning coordinator. Trainee representatives (senior) will be included in updates to the business office site coordinator.

### Call for Trainee Volunteers

Advertisements for trainee volunteers should be placed on the initial call for abstracts. Another announcement will be sent out to **all** persons when registration for the annual meeting opens. Persons interested in volunteering for the meeting should contact TVS chairs expressing their interest.

### TVS Chair Responsibilities

Each chair will serve a 2-year role , initially as the Junior chair and then as the Senior chair. The TVS chairs will define an under-chair for the slide preview committee. The TVS chairs will then chair all other committees. Chairs will remain in communication with the SSR business office, primarily through the site planning coordinator. After collection of volunteer forms, chairs will designate volunteers to serve on specific committees. These assignments will be confirmed with each volunteer. The TVS chairs will be in charge of supplying staffing for Registration, Signs, Posters, Minisymposia, Platforms, and Social events.

### TVS Reports

The TVS senior chair will submit reports of the TVS activities to the Senior Trainee Representative to be included in the Trainee Reports for the mid-winter and summer board meetings.

### TVS Junior Chair Selection

The TVS Senior chair will select a junior chair. This selection will be based on the following criteria:

- The junior chair must be able to serve a two-year term.
- The junior chair is chosen from current volunteers.
- The junior chair will be chosen based on the following meetings site such that it is in the location of their home institution.

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## Trainee Volunteer Activities

### *Registration*

No more than four (4) volunteers shall be assigned to the registration desk. These volunteers will report directly to the TVS chairs. Volunteers are responsible to make sure the registration desk is staffed at all times for the first two days of the meeting. Should those volunteers not be required they will be re-assigned to another position.

### *Signs*

No more than three (3) people shall be assigned to serve on the signs committee. These volunteers will report directly to the TVS chairs. Volunteers are responsible to ensure that signs at each easel reflect the upcoming/current session. These signs should be changed 30 minutes prior to the next symposium/event.

### *Posters*

No more than four (4) volunteers shall be assigned to serve on the posters committee. These volunteers will report directly to the TVS chairs. The poster committee volunteers will be responsible for recording the number of persons that do not present on a given presentation day and **must** include poster number. In the event that posters cannot stay up the entire meeting the posters committee shall remove all poster numbers, and any remaining posters, the evening the poster session was held. Poster numbers for the following session will then be hung and the poster session area be opened to presenters to hang the next sessions posters.

### *Minisymposia Sessions*

Two (2) volunteers shall be assigned to each minisymposium. These volunteers will report directly to the Senior TVS chair. Volunteers will report **15 minutes early** to the assigned minisymposium. TVS chairs will visit each room and explain the role of the volunteers and the guidelines for the minisymposium to the Minisymposium Chair. The volunteers will operate the timer, pull up the appropriate power point after speaker introduction, and resolve any technical issues with the A/V attendants. The volunteers will also estimate the number of attendants to each minisymposium and report them to the TVS chairs. Based on current SSR guidelines, minisymposia allow thirty (30) minutes per speaker. A total of twenty-five (25) minutes is allotted for presentation with 5 minutes question and answer session. A 2-minute warning shall be provided (at 23 minutes into presentation) prior to the end of the presentation. Should the speaker continue past twenty-five (25) minutes this time will be deducted from question and answer session.

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### *Platform Sessions*

Two (2) volunteers shall be assigned to each platform. These volunteers will report directly to the TVS chairs. Volunteers will report **15 minutes early** to the assigned platform. TVS chairs will visit each room and explain the role of the volunteers and the guidelines for the platform to the Platform Chair. The volunteers will operate the timer, pull up the appropriate powerpoint after speaker introduction, and resolve any technical issues with the A/V attendants. The volunteers will also estimate the number of attendants to each platform and report them to the Senior TVS chair. Based on current SSR guidelines, platforms allow fifteen (15) minutes per speaker. A total of twelve (12) minutes is allotted for presentation with three (3) minute question and answer session. A 2 minute warning shall be provided (at 10 minutes into presentation) prior to the end of the presentation. Should the speaker continue past twelve (12) minutes this time will be deducted from question and answer session.

### *Slide Preview*

Two (2) volunteers shall be assigned to the slide preview room per available session. An under-chair will be assigned to the slide preview room. The under-chair will report to the TVS chairs and shall be responsible for working knowledge of the equipment. The slide preview room will be open throughout the day, except during minisymposia and platform sessions.

### *State of the Art Lectures*

TVS chairs will be present at all state of the art lectures. They will be responsible for loading the powerpoint and ensuring the presentation, as well as question and answer, are confined to a forty-five (45) minute session.

### *Exchange Lectures*

Two (2) volunteers shall be assigned to each exchange lecture. They will report directly to the Junior TVS Chair. The volunteers will operate the timer, pull up the appropriate powerpoint after speaker introduction, and resolve any technical issues with the A/V attendants. The volunteers will also estimate the number of attendants to each session and report them to the TVS chair.

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## Appendix B

### Guidelines for organizing the Trainee-Mentor Luncheon (TML)

Usually, the junior representative asks a trainee member to be in charge of organizing the luncheon. The junior representative should select the person he/she wants to have run the event the year they will be the senior representative. The person appointed to organize the luncheon (the TML chair) is responsible for choosing about 30 SSR scientists to participate in the luncheon, inviting the scientists to the luncheon, sending out pre-registration forms to trainees, and assigning trainees to eat with specific mentors. Check with the LAC and/or business office to get an estimate of how many tables there will be and how big they are. The TML chair should find out the name of the person who organized the previous year's luncheon to get more detailed information. The chair should contact several trainees, faculty, and board members for suggestions on who to invite as mentors. It is helpful to choose a diverse group of scientists including people in academia, industry, and government. The chair can also invite the trainee forum speakers. The chair is responsible for sending out letters or e-mails inviting the SSR scientists to participate as mentors. After mentors have consented to participate, the chair should send a response confirming their acceptance and thanking them for their participation. The trainee sign-up form should include a list of mentors, a short biographical sketch of each mentor, and instructions for trainees to rank their top 3 choices. It is easiest to have the mentors give you a short bio of their background and research interests. The form should be returned via email or fax to the chair who will then assign trainees to each mentor. The assignment should be based on the trainee choices but should include all faculty members equally. The chair should remind the trainees that they might not get any of their choices because it is first-come-first-serve. Include a deadline for response of about a week before the meeting; tell the trainees that a lack of a response will result in a random mentor assignment.

During the meeting, a list of the mentor-trainee matches should be posted in the information area and outside of the room where the lunch will take place. It is helpful to have the table numbers easily identifiable and to have place cards for all of the trainees. There should be volunteers collecting tickets at the door and directing trainees and mentors to the appropriate tables. Be prepared for mentors who are late and trainees arriving without having registered. It is good to know if there are any extra meals available.

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## Appendix C

### Guidelines for the LEMTTF

Applications to the Trainee Travel Fund are due in mid to late May depending on the dates of the annual meeting. The awardees of the travel fund must be members of SSR at the time of abstract submission, present an abstract at the annual meeting, and show financial need. The chair should contact the business office to verify the current membership status of the applicants and determine how much money is available to award. The chair should send the business office a list of awardees and the amounts of the awards. The chair is responsible for typing award letters to awardees, and an explanation to trainees who did not receive awards. The chair will forward these letters to the business office who will issue checks and mail the award letters. Alternatively, the award letters may be held at the registration desk for pick up at the annual meeting. The chair is encouraged to have the business office, his/her mentor, or a trainee rep review the award decision before anything is finalized.

#### Specifics:

- 1) The SSR office has a copy of the application form which is used with slight changes (changing the address to send it to) every year.
  - 2) Applicants should be notified by e-mail as soon as their applications are received.
  - 3) All applications should include a copy of the notice of abstract acceptance from SSR.
  - 4) To qualify for funds, applicants must be presenting (i.e., first author) on an accepted abstract.
  - 5) Send an alphabetical list of all qualified applicants to the business office to determine whether all applicants are paid SSR members.
  - 6) Once you have the list of everyone who meets the LEMTTF criteria, group them by University or Institution.
  - 7) Find out from Judy (ssradminAssr.org) how much money is available for travel funds.
  - 8) The money can be distributed at your discretion as long as everyone from the same institution receives the same amount of money.
- Suggestion: It is easiest to create three levels of funding - one for driving (\$150-\$200), one for flying (\$300), and one for flying overseas (no more than \$600).
- 9) Contact the SSR office with the final list of recipients and amounts.
  - 10) Notify all applicants.

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## Appendix D

### History of Funding for Trainee Travel to Annual SSR Meeting

Burroughs Wellcome (BW) is interested in supporting only post-graduate career development. The money comes from discretionary funds currently controlled by Dr. Martin Lonescu-Pioggia. Money must be requested each year in November and again in January (Judy writes the letters). For 2001, BW pledged \$1,000 to the Trainee Forum and \$2,000 to support Postdoctoral Travel Fellowships. The Travel Fellowships are to be awarded competitively to postdoctoral students, in a manner and individual amount determined by the Awards Committee. Conditions of the gift are that BW receive a detailed description how the funds are spent and what has been accomplished. BW is interested in supporting post-graduate career development. However, when the check arrived, it was for \$5,000 rather than \$3,000. At the last minute, BW decided to increase the funding for Postdoctoral Travel Fellowships, increasing the number of awards from 4 to 8.

#### History:

1997 \$5,000 for Postdoctoral Travel Fellowships (10 awards of \$500 each);  
1998 \$10,000 for Postdoctoral Travel Fellowships (20 awards of \$500 each);  
1999 \$7,500 for Postdoctoral Travel Fellowships (15 awards of \$500 each);  
2000 \$5,000 for Postdoctoral Travel Fellowships (10 awards of \$500 each);  
2001 \$4,000 for Postdoctoral Travel Fellowships (8 awards of \$500 each) and  
\$1,000 for the Trainee Forum  
Total of \$31,500 for travel

Thirty percent of the meeting grant from the USDA National Research Initiative is allocated to the support of Postdoctoral Trainee travel to the meeting. These grants are also to be awarded competitively, in a manner and individual amount determined by the Awards Committee. The USDA NRI grant proposal is written by the President of SSR; the deadline is around February 1.

#### History:

1999 \$4,800 (16 awards of \$300 each)  
2000 \$3,000 (10 awards of \$300 each)  
2001 \$3,000 (10 awards of \$300 each)  
Total of \$10,800 for travel

In 2001, the Lalor Foundation stepped forward and donated \$8,000 to support Trainee Travel to the meeting. The grants were to be awarded competitively, in a manner and individual amount determined by the Awards Committee. It seems that the Lalor people are interested in continuing this kind of support in the future. In 2002, 16 Lalor Travel Fellowships of \$500 each were awarded.  
Total of \$16,000 for travel

#### Larry Ewing Memorial Trainee Travel Fund (LEMTTF)

Funding comes from the sale of t-shirts, donations, Board allocation, and since

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1998, 25% of the NIH U13 grant (~\$7,250). This is the only fund restricted to Trainee members of SSR.

LEMTTF History:

1990 \$

1991 \$12,000

1992 \$10,000

1994 \$10,000

1995 \$10,000

1996 \$10,000

1997 \$14,000

1998 \$14,000

1999 \$14,000

2000 \$14,000

2001 \$16,000

Total of \$129,000

CIHR Canadian Trainee Travel Fund \$1,625 (\$2,500 CDN) 2001

Total of \$1,625

Over the course of the above eleven years, Trainees have received \$180,625 in travel grants.