

ASMS Undergraduate Research in MS Interest Group Report (10th Annual)

ASMS Reboot 2020

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Workshop

The Undergraduate Research in MS Interest Group focuses on mass spectrometry research and teaching pertaining to undergraduates and primarily undergraduate institutions (PUIs).

Our workshop this year, “Building PUI-R1 Connections: A Win-Win for Both,” was held online on Wednesday, June 3rd. We had three additional panelists join: Dr. Facundo Fernández (Georgia Tech), Dr. Elaine Marzluff (Grinnell College), and Virginia James (graduate student at UT-Austin; Brodbelt lab). Discussion focused on what PUI and R1 faculty can bring to the table in collaborative research work. Several graduate students and postdocs interested in PUI faculty positions attended, so we also discussed the PUI job market, what life is like at a PUI, and gaining access to high-quality instrumentation through collaboration and/or federal grants.

Attendance was somewhat low this year, with 13 attendees not including panelists. Our workshop focuses heavily on in-person networking, so this is perhaps not surprising. Also, several other prominent workshops were at the same time as ours.

Nevertheless, we felt it went well. Panelist Elaine Marzluff (former Chair of our Interest Group) noted that the majority of attendees stayed for the duration of the workshop and that signified it was useful. One attendee said: “Super informative and gave me a lot of things to think about as I move along in grad school. Thanks for putting it together!” Another attendee added: “I found the workshop very helpful! It gave me a better understanding of what PUIs are looking for and what I need to do to get myself in a position to be successful.”

Undergraduate Poster Session

An additional responsibility of our Interest Group is running the Undergraduate Poster Session. Moving this event online had both pros and cons. On one hand, the transition online made it easier for us to run the event. Typically, judges are pressed for time and must rush from poster to poster; this year, we had two full days to adjudicate them. On the other hand, students were obviously unable to present their work in person. Perhaps, in future years there will be a way to combine some aspects of online judging – which was very efficient – with in-person student presentations.

We had 47 posters uploaded online this year. This number is slightly higher than normal; in Atlanta, we had 37 presenters. It appears moving the conference online allowed some undergraduates to participate who would not have been able to attend otherwise.

We recruited a total of eight judges and split the posters into two general categories, “Omics” (23 posters) and “Instrumentation / Other Applications” (24 posters). Two winners were selected from each category. As usual, the overall quality of posters was top-notch – it was difficult to select only four winners.

Other Events at ASMS

The UG Research in MS Interest Group typically runs two other events at ASMS: the “What to See and Do at ASMS” Introductory Lecture and the “Meet the Experts” Luncheon. It was not feasible to move these events online and, thus, they were cancelled for 2020. We hope these will be able to continue next year in Philadelphia.

Slack Channel

Under Dr. Chrisi Hughey, the UG Research in MS Interest Group started a Slack channel in 2019 in hopes of stirring up conversation outside of the national meeting. We currently have 57 members from different types of institutions and different parts of the world. Discussion is rather sparse, but several new developments and new chemical education papers on mass spectrometry have been posted recently. We hope membership continues to expand and its use increases in the years to come.

Here is the link to the Slack group: <http://asmsugresearch-exx4211.slack.com>