

# THE SCOPE

A publication of the Michigan Branch of the American Society for Microbiology

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## President's Report

Steve Gorsich, MI-ASM Branch  
President

I hope this newsletter finds everyone doing great this spring semester even though it doesn't feel very spring-like yet. Hopefully by our spring meeting we will see some sunny days.

I want to begin by thanking everyone for a successful Fall 2013 meeting at Delta College. The planning committee, Michael Pressler, Audra Swarthout, Patrick Truszkowski, Carrie Burdzinski and Patricia Wood, organized a great meeting that touched on many aspects of microbiology. At the meeting attendees learned about using microbiology to transform science literacy and research advances in microbiology as it relates to the environment, genomics, and medicine. Finally, I want to thank all those who attended and presented their research.

Our Spring 2014 is right around the corner. The meeting will be at Davenport University (Lettinga Campus, Grand Rapids) on March 28-29, 2014. The meeting organizers, Susan Gunn and Kristyne Baumgarten, have planned an exciting meeting for all of us. The theme of the meeting is, "The Human Microbiome". On Friday night

we will kick the meeting off with a Student-Faculty mixer. This is always a great opportunity to get to know each other in a relaxing environment. The Saturday program will include three

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## Corporate Partners

American  
Proficiency  
Institute  
Corning  
Coy Laboratory  
Products  
Dot Scientific  
EMD Chemicals  
EMD Chemical  
Millipore  
Emergent BioSolutions  
Innovative Solutions  
Midwest Scientific  
Pearson  
Pfizer, Inc.  
Promega  
REMEL  
USA Scientific  
Whatman

# The Human Microbiome

March 28-29, 2014, Davenport University, Lettinga Campus, Grand Rapids

## Friday, March 28<sup>th</sup>

6:00 –8:00 pm	Student Mixer/Reception	Hilton, Grand Rapids
7:00 pm	Board Dinner	Spinnaker Room Hilton Grand Rapids

## Saturday, March 29<sup>th</sup>

7:45-8:45 am	Breakfast and Registration	Sneden Conference Rooms 1-3
8:50 - 9:00 am	Introduction and Welcome	Sneden Auditorium
9:00 - 10:00 am	<b>Plenary Session 1</b> <b>Joseph Petrosino, Ph.D.</b> Director, Alkek Center of Metagenomics and Microbiome Research Department of Molecular Virology and Microbiology Baylor College of Medicine, Houston <i>"The Human Microbiome: An Underappreciated Organ Important for Human Health"</i>	Sneden Auditorium
10:00 - 11:00 am	Poster/Vendor viewing Coffee break	
11:00 - 12:00 pm	<b>Student Speakers</b>	Sneden Auditorium
12:30 - 1:15 pm	Lunch and Business Meeting	Sneden Conference Rooms 1-3
1:15 – 2:15 pm	<b>Plenary Session 2</b> <b>Casey Theriot, Ph.D.</b> Department of Internal Medicine Division of infectious Diseases University of Michigan , Ann Arbor <i>"The Gut Microbiome and Metabolome in Susceptibility to C. difficile Infection"</i>	Sneden Auditorium
2:15 – 2:30 pm	Student Award Presentation and Board Announcements	Sneden Auditorium
2:30 – 3:30 pm	<b>Plenary Session 3</b> <b>Marius Vital, Ph.D.</b> Center for Microbial Ecology Michigan State University, East Lansing <i>"How to Investigate Specific Functions in Complex Microbial Communities: Butyrate-Synthesis in the Gut Microbiota as an Example"</i>	Sneden Auditorium
3:30 pm	Meeting adjourns	
3:30 – 4:30 pm	Board meeting	Sneden Auditorium

Planning Committee: Susan Gunn  
and Kristyne Baumgarten

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plenary sessions presented by, Dr. Joseph Petrosino (Baylor College of Medicine), Dr. Casey Theriot (University of Michigan), and Dr. Marius Vital (Michigan State University). They will present research advances on the human microbiome as it relates to human health, infection, and technology. There is still time for students to submit their abstracts, so encourage them to do so. Please refer to our website to see a complete meeting agenda.

Other important business will take place at the spring meeting. As usual we will have votes for President Elect, Treasurer, and Secretary. In addition, members will vote to approve a new Student Travel Grant that MI-ASM is proposing. The proposal will have students submit an application in the fall to attend the following General ASM meeting (or other approved meeting). We will offer this grant for the first time at our Fall 2014 meeting.

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone in Grand Rapids at Davenport University for our Spring meeting. Hopefully, we will have some nice weather that weekend.

## Fall Meeting 2014

*Jennifer Hess*

Plans are in the works for our Fall meeting at ??? in ????. Can you tell we are still trying to work it out? If your institution might be interested in hosting, please contact a board member. Stay tuned for updates at the meeting and on the website.

## Student Info.

*John Geiser*

### Student Chapters

Currently the branch sponsors ten student chapters. This makes us one of the most student-oriented branches that ASM has. The following Schools and Universities throughout the State have student chapters: Michigan Tech, Central Michigan, Western Michigan, Eastern Michigan, Michigan State, UM-Flint, UM-Dearborn, Wayne State, Delta College and Grand Valley State University. Student chapters are a great place to meet up with like-minded people. If you haven't already checked yours out, please do so; you will not regret it. No chapter at your school? Then maybe you are the one to begin a new chapter! Contact any board member to learn more about starting your chapter.

We would be happy to work with you to make this a possibility.

### Research and Travel awards

Through the generosity of Dr. Philipp Gerhardt and his wife Vera, the Michigan Branch of the American Society for Microbiology is able to provide substantial support for student research and travel. The Gerhardt Endowment is used to enhance the microbiology research training of undergraduate and early stage graduate students within the State of Michigan. Information for applying for

## Fall 2013 Awards

### Best Poster

**Ee Leng Choong**, Western Michigan University, graduate

**Olivia Walser**, Western Michigan University, undergraduate

### Best Talk

**Carol L. Beaver**, Western Michigan University, graduate

**Christopher McPharlin**, Wayne State University, undergraduate

**Elected Officers**

- PRESIDENT, Steve Gorsich**, Central Michigan University, [gorsi1sw@cmich.edu](mailto:gorsi1sw@cmich.edu)
- PRESIDENT- ELECT, Michael Pressler**, Delta College, [michaelpressler2@delta.edu](mailto:michaelpressler2@delta.edu)
- PAST PRESIDENT, Audra Swarthout**, Delta College, [audraswarthout@delta.edu](mailto:audraswarthout@delta.edu)
- SECRETARY, Jennifer Hess**, Aquinas College, [hessjen@aquinas.edu](mailto:hessjen@aquinas.edu)
- TREASURER, John Geiser**, Western Michigan University, [john.geiser@wmich.edu](mailto:john.geiser@wmich.edu)
- COUNCILOR, Joan B. Rose**, Michigan State University, [rosejo@msu.edu](mailto:rosejo@msu.edu)
- ALTERNATE COUNCILOR, Audra Swarthout**, Delta College, [audraswarthout@delta.edu](mailto:audraswarthout@delta.edu)

**Appointed Officers**

- EDUCATIONAL CHAIR, Kris Baumgarten**, [KBaum11944@aol.com](mailto:KBaum11944@aol.com)
- CORPORATE LIAISON, Michael A. Cohen**, [mbcman@charter.net](mailto:mbcman@charter.net)
- UNIVERSITY and COLLEGE LIAISON, Jeff L. Ram**, Wayne State University, [jeffram@med.wayne.edu](mailto:jeffram@med.wayne.edu)
- NEWSLETTER EDITOR, Jennifer Hess**, Aquinas College, [hessjen@aquinas.edu](mailto:hessjen@aquinas.edu)
- WEBSITE MAINTENANCE, John Geiser**, Western Michigan University, [john.geiser@wmich.edu](mailto:john.geiser@wmich.edu)
- ARCHIVE REPRESENTATIVE, Richard Bell**, Macomb Community College, [bellr@macomb.edu](mailto:bellr@macomb.edu)
- COMMUNITY COLLEGE LIAISON, Audra Swarthout**, Delta College, [audraswarthout@delta.edu](mailto:audraswarthout@delta.edu)

**Board Members-at-large**

- Kris Baumgarten**, Delta College, [KBaum11944@aol.com](mailto:KBaum11944@aol.com)
- Mary Ann Cardani**, UM-Flint (retired), [mcardani@comcast.net](mailto:mcardani@comcast.net)
- Dan Clemans**, Eastern Michigan University, [dclmans@emich.edu](mailto:dclmans@emich.edu)
- Ola Olapade**, Albion College, [oolapade@albion.edu](mailto:oolapade@albion.edu)
- Britt Ranson Olson**, Lake Superior State University, [branson@lssu.edu](mailto:branson@lssu.edu)
- Silvia Rossbach**, Western Michigan University, [Silvia.Rossbach@wmich.edu](mailto:Silvia.Rossbach@wmich.edu)
- Michael Ryan**, Ferris State University, [ryanm@ferris.edu](mailto:ryanm@ferris.edu)
- Jim VandenBosch**, Eastern Michigan University, [jim.vandenbosch@emich.edu](mailto:jim.vandenbosch@emich.edu)
- Judith Whittum-Hudson**, Wayne State University, [jhudson@med.wayne.edu](mailto:jhudson@med.wayne.edu)
- Anne Spain**, Ferris State University, [annespain@ferris.edu](mailto:annespain@ferris.edu)
- Michael Pressler**, Delta College, [michaelpressler2@delta.edu](mailto:michaelpressler2@delta.edu)
- Sonia Tiqua**, UM-Dearborn, [smtiquia@umd.umich.edu](mailto:smtiquia@umd.umich.edu)
- Susan Gunn**, Davenport University, [sgunn3@davenport.edu](mailto:sgunn3@davenport.edu)

**Student Chapters**

Check them out online, <http://www.mi-asm.org>.  
Most have links to their own websites.

- Central Michigan University
- Eastern Michigan University Microbiology Club
- Grand Valley State University Microbiology Club
- Michigan State University Microbiology Club
- Michigan Technological University Microbiology Club
- Tri-Cities Microbiology Club
- University of Michigan - Dearborn
- University of Michigan - Flint
- Wayne State University
- Western Michigan University

**\*\*\* Student Chapters,  
remember to apply for  
funding to help defray  
costs of attending  
Meetings!**

funding can be found on the branch website, <http://www.mi-asm.org>.

We encourage all of our students to apply for these resources. Feel free to discuss it with any board member or your chapter advisor.

## Finance Report

*John Geiser*

At last report, our current bank account balance is over \$18,000. We have two CD's that are currently collecting interest.

## Biographical Information of Spring 2014 Meeting Speakers:

*Joseph Petrino:*

**Dr. Joseph Petrosino** was hired as a tenure track faculty member at the Baylor College of Medicine (BCM) in 2006 with a National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Diseases-funded Career Development Award Project from the Western Regional Center of Excellence for Biodefense and Emerging Infectious Disease. As a result of his comparative genomics studies of *Francisella tularensis*, a pathogenic bacterium with the potential to pose a severe threat to public health and safety, the field has moved closer to the goal of

creating new rationally-designed attenuated vaccines for this Category A select agent. In 2007, Dr. Petrosino and his colleagues procured funding from the NIH Common Fund Human Microbiome Project (HMP). As a large-scale sequencing center Principal Investigator for the HMP, Dr. Petrosino lead consortium efforts for standardized clinical sample preparation, sequencing, and analysis. This allowed microbial communities from diverse body sites and niches to be compared with minimal technical bias. As a result of the success of his efforts and to extend the efforts of the HMP, BCM announced the opening of the Alkek Center for Metagenomics and Microbiome Research (CMMR) in January 2011, with Dr. Petrosino serving as the Director for the Center. Currently, the CMMR is pursuing over 50 metagenomics projects in humans and model systems that target the improvement of human health through detection and modulation of the microbes that reside on and in us.

*Marius Vital*

**Dr. Marius Vital** joined the lab of James Tiedje at MSU as a Post-doctoral fellow beginning of 2011, after finishing his PhD on drinking water microbiology at ETH Zürich, Switzerland. His current research involves many aspects of microbial ecology and evolution with specific focus on the principles governing

structure/function of the human gut microbiota. Major fermentation products such as short chain fatty acids are of particular interest and Dr. Vital is developing methods, based on both gene-targeted and '-omics' approaches, to reveal the functional diversity in those complex intestinal communities and to expose the key players. The techniques are assisting to identify specific processes promoting disease in humans and should, eventually, improve diagnostics and contribute to the development of strategies to treat disease/maintain health.

See you at  
MI-ASM

**Board Officer Elections** (cut off and bring with you to the Spring Meeting)

**President-Elect** (1 yr. term)

\_\_\_\_\_ Anne Casper, Eastern Michigan U  
\_\_\_\_\_ (write in)

**Secretary** (2 yr. term)

\_\_\_\_\_ Jennifer Hess, Aquinas College  
\_\_\_\_\_ (write in)

**Treasurer** (2 yr. term)

\_\_\_\_\_ John Geiser, Western Michigan U  
\_\_\_\_\_ (write in)

If you are interested in nominating yourself or any other faculty/staff member for one of these positions, please contact the [current board officers](#). If you are interested in serving as an appointed officer in one of the many service opportunities, please contact the board as well.