



American Committee of Molecular, Cellular and Immunoparasitology (ACMCIP)

We welcome all ASTMH members with interests in basic parasitology to join our subgroup and contribute to our programs.

ASTMH Annual Meeting

November 15-19, 2020

Wherever you are! (virtual meeting)



Welcome Message from our President, Dr. Mike Ferdig



Hello friends in Parasitology!

Dear ACMCIP members, I hope you are finding a way forward in these challenging times. Of course, the health and well-being of you and your loved ones is by far what matters most. I can't help but also feel a flicker of 'anything is possible' during such disruptive times, with the once unfathomable becoming suddenly possible. Perhaps, with the November 15-19, 2020 ASTMH Annual Meeting going to an All Virtual format, we can leverage this unique platform to energize the communications and community that are integral to our professional lives and programs. ASTMH provides an unmatched venue to put your work in context of global health and to emphasize the essential link between data, experiments and parasitic disease elimination. Please join us! This Newsletter is to draw your attention to the important events during the upcoming annual meeting. Especially, please note the ACMCIP Pre-Meeting Course (*The Science and Business of Vaccines Against Tropical Parasitic Diseases in the COVID19 Era*, and the impressive slate of speakers organized by Steve Hoffman and John Adams; register at <https://www.astmh.org/annual-meeting/pre-meeting-courses>), as well as our innovative ACMCIP symposium (*Friend or Foe: The many faces of Myeloid cells in parasitic infections*, organized by Keke Fairfax). Most importantly, I hope this Newsletter will alert you to the incredible energy and innovation happening within the ACMCIP.

This Newsletter shines a light on our newest recipients of awards designed to recognize and empower trainees and early career researchers from around the world. There is no doubt that the energy, passion

and smarts of our young, global scientists are the foundation of our dynamic and growing role in ASTMH and beyond. Our Twitter account, @ACMCIP, continues to improve our real-time communication with our diverse and world-wide membership. Special thanks to Joanne Power for generously implementing and overseeing this account, now with 1,054 followers! Note that the election for 2021 ASTMH Board of Directors is NOW OPEN and due by September 30; we welcome your votes to empower basic parasitology and communication at ASTMH! Please also welcome Trainee Councilor, Lọla Fagbami, and best wishes to our recent past Trainee Councilor, Aabha Sharma. Lọla is working closely with an impressive and newly minted trainee team. Read further here about their exciting ideas and innovative work with significant creative outreach for ACMCIP and ASTMH. Our new International Councilor, Carolyne Kifude, *Kenya Medical Research Institute*, is a superb match with our big aspirations. Congratulations to recent ACMCIP Past President and immunoparasitologist, Christy Petersen, for being named ASTMH Program Chair. Finally, I am very pleased to be passing the gavel to our new ACMCIP President Elect, Mahalia Desruisseaux; Dr. Desruisseaux is ideally suited to complete our emphatic move to a new generation that I am certain will be central to defining future of ASTMH in this dynamic new era.

Mike Ferdig, ACMCIP President

Remember to Follow @ACMCIP on Twitter

Welcome Message from our incoming President, Dr. Mahalia Desruisseaux



I am honored to be standing on the shoulders of giants and to begin my term as President of the ACMCIP subgroup!

We are thrilled to begin the year working with an energized group of young faculty starting their terms on the ACMCIP council, including [Keke Fairfax](#), this year's Councilor for Annual Meeting Symposia who will be the Chair of this year's ACMCIP symposium. Keke's laboratory at the University of Utah focuses on using *Schistosoma mansoni* as a tool to understand the contributions of schistosome antigen vs IL-4 in inducing host immuno-modulation, and on elucidating the mechanisms underlying optimal T and B cell memory responses to the parasite.



And [Amy Bei](#), our incoming Councilor for communications, who will be replacing Robin Stephens as “Editor-in-Chief” of the ACMCIP newsletter. Amy's research interests in *Plasmodium* lie at the intersection between population genetics, genomics, molecular genetics, epidemiology, and immunology. She uses a translational systems biology approach to study the impact of antigenic diversity on immune evasion,

transmission, and virulence and is working on malaria vaccine candidate discovery and validation. She has ongoing research projects in Senegal in addition to many active collaborations in Sub-Saharan African countries in both East and West Africa.

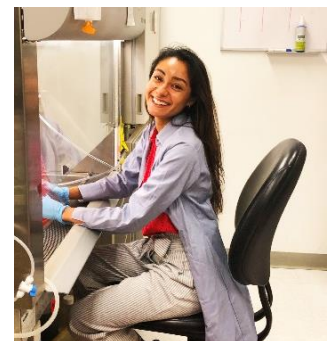
We congratulate [Robin Stephens](#) on completing her term as Councilor for Communications. In addition to producing the newsletter, Robin was one of the founding moderators of the [@ACMCIP](#) twitter page, growing its following and curating its content since its inception!

This year, we are also excited to debut a “Trainee Corner” led by our Trainee Councilor, [Lola Fagbami](#) and the amazing trainee team, who develop content and events to engage our trainee members. Speaking of trainees, we have not one, but two formidable ACMCIP trainee members on the ballot as candidates for the 2021 ASTMH Board Member representing students, trainees, residents or post-docs:



[B. Joanne Power](#), a postdoctoral scholar working on the molecular mechanisms of malaria transmissions in the laboratory of Scott Lindner at Pennsylvania State University. Joanne is not only one of the driving forces behind our [@ACMCIP](#) twitter page and member of the trainee team, she has been a fierce advocate for women in science, running the “Women in Malaria Research” website along with Elena Gómez Díaz, and serving as a General Secretary to ScienceGrrl Glasgow (a movement to increase women’s visibility in science).

[Amanda Elyssa Ruiz](#), a PhD candidate in the laboratory of Dr. Jonathan “Jake” Kurtis at Brown University, whose research focuses on the relationship between protective immune responses to *Schistosoma japonicum* and naturally acquired resistance to schistosomiasis in populations living in endemic regions. Amanda has been an ardent advocate for diversity and inclusion in science and higher education and has had a long commitment to addressing barriers to educational equity and to fostering a more diverse and inclusive environment in academia. She currently serves on multiple New York City Department of Education councils. At Brown University, Amanda serves as a student representative on the University Diversity Advisory Board, as well as the President of the Brown chapter of the Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS).



This year has been marked by turmoil from the COVID-19 pandemic and from racial unrest, which not only exposed the effects of structural racism and of longstanding health inequities on the devastation seen with COVID-19 but is also shedding light on the disparities in our justice system. It is with this in mind that I urge you, wherever you fall on the political spectrum, to vote! Not only in the election for 2021 ASTMH Board of Directors, but in what is turning out to be one the most important elections in our lifetime.

...AND THE AWARD WINNERS ARE:

ACMCIP Travel Award for Low-Middle Income (LMIC) Trainees

This ACMCIP sponsored award provides funding for one LMIC trainee (student or postdoc) to attend the ASTMH Annual Meeting. To be eligible, the trainee must be primarily working and living in a Low or Low-Middle Income Country (LMIC), not based full-time in a US or European research institute. The applicant must be a member of ACMCIP, and submit an abstract to the ASTMH Annual Meeting in the fields of molecular, cellular or immunoparasitology research. The award winner will receive meeting registration and a contribution towards travel, and will be recognized at the ACMCIP Council Meeting.



2020 Recipient: **Laura Baquedano Santana**, Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia

ACMCIP Exchange Fellowship



Aimed at all levels of trainees, including junior independent researchers seeking to gain new or additional research skills by visiting laboratories employing cutting-edge methods. The trainee must be or become an ASTMH and ACMCIP member at the time of application submission to be eligible.

2020 Recipient: **Fehintola Ajogbasile**, Redeemers University, Nigeria

ACMCIP Award for Advanced Training

This ACMCIP sponsored award is designed to encourage trainees to explore new parasitological systems, obtain advanced knowledge in cutting-edge research topics and technologies and make new collaborative connections. Applicants must be members of ACMCIP and can use the award to attend a post-graduate level training course in any field of molecular, cellular or immunoparasitology research that is at least one day in duration. To avoid conflicts of interest in selection, ASTMH Pre-Meeting Courses are not courses that can be supported by this award. The award will defray *up to* \$750 of travel expenses and the winner will be recognized at the ACMCIP Business Meeting.



2020 Recipient: **Lisa Gibbs**, University of Utah, United States

MEETING REMINDERS

Council Meeting

Sunday, November 15, 2020; 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. EST.

All members are invited to attend the ACMCIP Council Meeting and become involved in your subgroup. Our goal is to make sure that the basic science of parasitology remains a central part of the ASTMH meeting, and all help is very welcome. Following the business meeting, we will be recognizing this year's award winners, including the recipients of our ACMCIP Travel Award for Low and Low-Middle Income country trainees, and ACMCIP Award for Advanced Training. Please join us!

Pre-Meeting Course: The Science and Business of Vaccines Against Tropical Parasitic Diseases in the COVID19 Era

Friday, November 13, 2020; 7:45 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. EST.

There is no vaccine for a human parasitic infection that has marketing authorization (licensure) anywhere in the world. However, we are on the verge of licensed vaccines for malaria and are making enormous progress for diseases caused by other protozoans like leishmaniasis and helminths like hookworm. A distinguished international faculty from the biotechnology industry, the government, and academia will communicate their experience and insights regarding how to approach successful development of vaccines against parasites, including identification of the immunological mechanisms of protection and the antigenic targets of protective humoral and cellular immune responses, the construction of vaccine delivery systems (recombinant proteins, recombinant viruses, nucleotide (eg. mRNA), and whole wild type and genetically altered parasites) and achieving regulatory approval for conducting phase 1-3 clinical trials and translating from the laboratory to the clinic to assess safety and vaccine efficacy in the era of COVID-19. Find more information and register at <https://www.astmh.org/annual-meeting/pre-meeting-courses>

The 18th Annual American Committee of Molecular, Cellular and Immunoparasitology (ACMCIP) Symposium

Friend or Foe: The many faces of Myeloid cells in parasitic infections.

The ACMIP symposium is focused on the role of myeloid cells in parasitic infections, both the good and the bad. The presenters are Nathan Peters from the University of Calgary, Tracey Lamb from the University of Utah, Melissa Lodoen from University of California Irvine, and Keke Fairfax from the University of Utah. The symposium covers the breadth of parasitic infections, leishmania, malaria, *Toxoplasma gondii*, and *schistosoma mansoni*.

Chair: **Keke Fairfax**, University of Utah

Keynote Speaker: Christiana Figueres



Photo by Jimena Mateo

Christiana Figueres, who helped deliver the historic Paris Agreement on climate change during her tenure as Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), will present this year's opening keynote at the 2020 Annual Meeting.

Trainee Corner

Our amazing trainees have been very busy organizing enriching activities and events that truly represent the global representation of our trainees! We are adding a Trainee Corner in each newsletter to highlight and celebrate the amazing work they are doing.

In the 2019 Fall Newsletter, Council committed to increasing trainee focus and engagement across the subgroup. Early efforts spearheaded by Jenna Oberstaller (University of South Florida) and Aabha Sharma (Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health) have expanded into an active team working to realize that vision. In the past 3 months, the team has administered a trainee survey, assembled a workshop on science communication, and launched a fireside chat series. Each event has garnered participation from trainees across the globe with a total of 70 institutions on 6 continents. We are still hoping for Antarctica to be represented!



Global distribution of participants at the workshop "Science Communication in the Time of COVID19"

Based on feedback from these events, there will be additional programming for trainees including (but not limited to) journal clubs, 3-minute thesis presentations, writing hours for grants/manuscripts and more! If you would like to help facilitate these events or suggest others, please send an email to acmcip.astmh@gmail.com. The [@ACMCIP](https://twitter.com/ACMCIP) twitter account has also become a significant avenue of

engagement with our global membership. We encourage all trainees to join twitter and follow the [#ACMCIPtrainees](#) hashtag to keep up with our activities and connect with the broader parasitology community.

Meet your trainee team & connect with us on Twitter!



Adesola



Jennie



Joanne



Kate



Lola

Adesola Olatunde	University of Utah	@DesolaOlatunde
Jennie Dumaine	University of Pennsylvania	@DumaineJennifer
Joanne Power	Penn State University	@hanniepower
Kate Vendrely	University of Notre Dame	@VenderKat
Lola Fagbami	University of Georgia	@naijaLola

ParasiteSlack: a new resource for parasitology online

Sign up to access the ParasiteSlack at [ParasiteSlack.slack.com](#) where you can share job opportunities, fellowships, meeting information or ask questions of the community. They are requesting that the community upload protocols as a resource also. If you have any ideas for how to make it more useful to you, let them know, or suggest new channels for your parasite to the people below. I asked for a #ParasiteImmunology channel, et viola, we have a new community! So get Slacking!

This is happening thanks to some enterprising #WomenInScience: Joanne Power, a postdoc at Penn State University, and 2 new PIs, Mimi Ho (Columbia University) and Monica Mugnier (Johns Hopkins University).

ACMCIP Scientific Sessions

As in past meetings there will again be a number of ACMCIP-associated paper and poster sessions on numerous topics focused on cellular, molecular and Immunoparasitology. These will include the Burroughs Wellcome Fund sponsored award-winning trainee presentations selected from this year's Woods Hole Immunoparasitology and Molecular Parasitology Meetings.

The program is being finalized so stay tuned for the latest on ACMCIP scientific sessions and symposia: <https://www.astmh.org/annual-meeting>

Your ACMCIP Council

Position	Member
President	Michael Ferdig, <i>University of Notre Dame</i>
President-Elect	Mahalia Desruisseaux, <i>Yale School of Medicine</i>
Immediate Past President	Christine Petersen, <i>University of Iowa</i>
Secretary/Treasurer	Amanda Lukens, <i>Broad Institute/Harvard Chan School of Public Health</i>
Councilor for Annual Meeting Symposia	Keke Fairfax, <i>University of Utah</i>
Councilor for Awards and Pre-Meeting Course	Jeff Dvorin, <i>Boston Children's Hospital/ Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health</i>
Councilor for Communications	Robin Stephens, <i>University of Texas Medical Branch</i>
Councilor for Communications-Elect	Amy Bei, <i>Yale School of Public Health</i>
International Councilor	Carolyne Kifude, <i>Kenya Medical Research Institute</i>
Councilor for Trainees	Lola Fagbami, <i>University of Georgia</i>

If you have any questions regarding ACMCIP, please don't hesitate to contact us.