

Retrospective on the NSYCC 2008-2009

Submitted by the outgoing NSYCC Chair, Leland (Lee) Johnson (leland.johnson@nsycc.org)

Over the past four years, I have had the privilege and pleasure of being involved with our section's exchange program with Germany, the NESACS Younger Chemists Committee (NSYCC), the YCC at Boston University, and now as Public Relations Chair for NESACS. Since my term as NSYCC chair has come to an end, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my executive committee for their tremendous efforts. I would like to mention a few accomplishments of the group, and encourage those who follow to continue expanding the effectiveness of the NSYCC network.

Immediately after the first NSYCC officer elections had taken place at Tufts University in May 2008, we held our first executive committee meeting to discuss our plans for the year. While enjoying food and beverages, the plan took shape, and we began the work of re-establishing our social and professional networks across and beyond our section. By

August 2008, the executive committee had approved our constitution. As a group effort, each officer proposed and integrated her/his changes into the original document. As a working manual for the group, the document will faithfully serve its purpose. As committee leaders develop new ideas, the constitution should provide an operational framework with minor changes. Adopting a constitution for our committee was an early and important achievement of the group.

In preparing a presentation for the YCC symposium at the ACS National Meeting in August 2008, I was able to include some of our early successes in re-establishing a network of Campus Representatives across the section. Our "Campus Reps" volunteer to be the primary campus contact for the NSYCC and as a liaison for chemistry students to the NSYCC. Helping to implement the idea, Kathryn Bewley (Boston University, Publicity Chair) and I began the work of building a reliable infor-

mation network. Over the year, the group of Campus Reps grew to fifteen. Kathryn and others on the executive committee were able to inform and involve more than fifteen campuses simultaneously with emails, flyers, and updates about NSYCC activities. The future of this network greatly depends upon the Campus Reps choosing their own dependable successors and perpetuating on-campus enthusiasm for the benefits of the YCC.

One of the moderately successful networking activities was the "Seminar-of-the-Month" (SOM) program. We utilized the calendars of events from campuses and NESACS websites in order to pick a seminar each month, and did our best to send NSYCC committee members to meet younger chemists at each seminar. By the end of September, we had really overworked our Campus Reps: we had assigned two seminars for that month AND arranged a tasting for beer enthusiasts at Cambridge Brewing Company in Kendall Square. While the beer tasting was a smashing success, the SOMs, through the months, proved difficult to attend for most committee members.

Through October and November, the Campus Reps again helped spread information about seminars and events like the German Exchange program, NESACS monthly meetings, the Northeast Regional Undergraduate Day at Simmons College, and the MassBio Career Fair. Thanks in part to the Campus Reps, the NESACS-GDCh German Exchange Selection Committee received the largest number of applicants in the history of the program. In order to show our appreciation, the executive committee hosted some Campus Reps for a night of bowling and other fun in December to end the semester.

We began 2009 with a January tour of the Broad Institute in Cambridge and with increasing regional interest in the activities of the committee. By February, Lynell Skewis (Career Chair, Boston University) had

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begun talking with regional companies about the Northeast Student Chemistry Career Fair and the Northeast Student Chemistry Research Conference, which would be combined into the Northeast Student Two-Day Chemistry Symposium. In late February, there was a very successful Career Symposium, hosted by Patrick Gordon and Daniel Eustace, with panel members from industry and academia.

The months leading up to the Northeast Student Two-Day Chemistry Symposium were busy for the executive committee. The NESACS-GDCh Exchange to Germany occurred in March (see the Summer 2009 Issue of *The Nucleus*). Before attending this year's exchange with Germany, Vice-Chair Deniz Yüksel (Tufts) implemented her plan for a Student-Invited Lecture for the Two-Day Symposium. The on-line selection process yielded a preference for MIT professor Gregory Fu for the keynote address. He accepted our invitation to give his lecture entitled "Asymmetric Catalysis

with Planar-Chiral Heterocycles".

As the symposium dates approached, several companies agreed to attend the Chemistry Career Fair on Friday, May 1st, others sponsored travel grants for eligible students, and still others generously provided marketing materials for one or both days' events. The companies attending the Career Fair were Adante Staffing, CreaGen Biosciences, Eisai Research Institute, Merck, and Sigma-Aldrich. Adante Staffing and NESACS sponsored the travel grants for three students, Joseph Meany (Keene St. College), Jie Du (UNH), and Deidre Blackwell (URI). This funding allowed these students to stay in Boston for the entire two-day event.

Even in the less-than-stellar economy, the Chemistry Career Fair was successful for many attendees. Students, unemployed chemists, and recruiters were able to establish contacts and learn techniques to achieve a successful career. On Friday evening, several attendees met for dinner and refreshing adult beverages in Boston's Back Bay. The Chemistry Research Conference on Saturday, May 2nd was

also quite successful. It was held at Boston University's Photonics Center. Lynell Skewis and Stefanie Cantalupo, both graduate students at BU, were crucial in making the on-site arrangements and ensuring the programs success. After a few technical glitches, the day progressed nicely, culminating in the keynote address by Greg Fu, the awards for excellent presentations, and election of next year's NSYCC executive committee. The awards for excellent presentations follow:

Brian Steinberg—Boston College
Top Award, Excellent Oral Presentation (Strem Chemicals, Inc.)

Christina Li—Harvard University
Excellent Oral Presentation (Waters Corporation)

Alena Carlson—UMass Boston
Top Undergraduate Poster (Waters Corporation)

Erin Iski—Tufts University
Top Graduate Poster (Waters Corporation)

Tricia May—Boston College
Excellent Poster Presentation by a Woman (Graduate Women in Science)

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Samuel Beal—Wheaton College
Phyllis A. Brauner Memorial Book Prize (NESACS)

Raeanne Napoleon—Boston University
Excellent Poster Presentation by a Congenial Scientist (NESACS)

Following the NSYCC executive committee elections and an evening break, several committee members, as well as Brian Steinberg (top award winner) and Raeanne Napoleon (newly elected Chair) joined Gregory Fu for a lively discussion over dinner at the Beacon Street Tavern. We extend our thanks to Professor Fu for his gracious participation in the events of the day, his informative seminar, and his support of the younger chemists in the section.

The Two-Day Symposium would not have been possible without the careful attention of the executive committee. I would also like to thank two stellar folks, Timothy Dunn (BU Parking) and Fernando Sousa (BU Photonics Center Facilities), who helped (under extreme time pressure) with parking and facilities details. They were professional, efficient, and polite additions to the list of people who helped coordinate the day's events at Boston University.

Throughout 2008 and into 2009, the NSYCC executive committee (all are volunteers, most are students) gave selflessly to the causes of the group. Vice-Chair Deniz Yüksel and Career Chair Lynell Skewis served as sounding boards for ideas of the group. Their candor allowed me to focus the efforts of the committee on feasible goals. Kathryn Bewley, in addition to all of her work as Publicity Chair, had many suggestions to help smooth the operations of the committee. Treasurer Olga Makhlynets (Tufts) performed efficiently and admirably on the many activities which required her prompt attention. Webmasters Subrahmanian T K (Tufts) and Patrick Cappillino (BU) worked together to produce an up-to-date website according to the requests of many on the executive committee. To our social chairs, Gül-

benk Anarat and Gökçe Su Pulcu (both from BU): They tirelessly worked to make our social events much more fun and interactive, and I wish to thank them personally for their efforts. I consider myself very fortunate that each member of the executive committee is an intelligent chemist with a tremendous sense of humor.

Finally, our Campus Reps should also be recognized for their great work this year: Elisha Fielding (BC), Kathryn Bewley (BU), Ce Feng (Brandeis), Jolene Schuster (Dartmouth), Raymond Moellering (Harvard), Joseph Meany (Keene State), J. Adam Hendricks (NEU), Deniz Yüksel (Tufts), Abha Sood (UMass, Boston), Leslie Farris (UMass, Lowell), Jie Du (UNH), Andrea Johnston (Wellesley), Koyel Bhattacharyya (MIT), Shaniaz Landge (UMass Boston, now at Dartmouth), and Dele Olubanwo (UMass, Dartmouth). This group has really made it possible to successfully expand the network of younger chemists in the Northeastern Section.

In closing, I wish the incoming executive committee, led by Raeanne Napoleon, all the best with the continued successes of the NSYCC. The coming term will include the ACS National Meeting in Boston, the 10th anniversary of the German Exchange Program, and preparations for the International Year of Chemistry in 2011. Please visit the NSYCC website (www.nsycc.org) for more details on upcoming events for younger chemists in the section. It has been a pleasure! LJ. ◇

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