

the development and implementation of a microbiology mentoring program. One-on-one microbiology mentoring efforts were established in Adama and Bahir Dar regional laboratories in September 2011, and expanded to Hawassa and Mekele regional laboratories in May 2012.

The Microbiology Mentoring Program aims to strengthen technical and quality systems-related skills of laboratory staff for microbiology services; strengthen microbiology laboratory networks to support disease surveillance; strengthen regional laboratories as referral testing centers; enhance systems of data collection, analysis, and reporting; and, fortify regional laboratories' ability to respond promptly to outbreaks and epidemics.

ASM LabCap's engagement in microbiology mentoring and capacity building in selected regional laboratories in Ethiopia continues through 2013. The goal of ASM LabCap's efforts in Ethiopia is to build and enhance local microbiology capacity. Efforts will continue at the Regional laboratory with efforts ultimately focused upon the District level.

To learn more about ASM International Affairs and the LabCap Program visit www.asm.org.

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Branches: ASM Activities at the Local Level

Branches, Student and Postdoctoral Chapters—the Spirit of the General ASM Meeting x35 at the Local Level!

The 35 ASM Branches continue to fulfill their promise of providing compelling and exciting programming for their members. Over the past few

months, they have been actively planning fall programs that will serve to advance our discipline, provide training for our next generation of scientists, and offer each of us an opportunity to network with our friends and colleagues. I continue to watch with

pride as our Branches deliver services to a diverse array of constituencies, from research faculty to educators to graduate students and to the many outstanding clinical microbiologists at the bench who help keep the microbial menace at bay.

Student and Postdoctoral Chapters Funded in 2012

Sponsoring Branches are indicated in parentheses:

Region One

Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University
(*Branch Organization Committee*)
Eastern New York (*Eastern New York*)
Maine Society for Microbiology (*Northeast*)
University of New Hampshire (*Northeast*)

Region Two

Rutgers (*Theobald Smith Society, NJ*)
Shenandoah Valley (*Virginia*)

Region Three

Michigan State University (*Michigan*)
Michigan Tech (*Michigan*)
Ohio Wesleyan University (*Ohio*)
Western Kentucky University (*Kentucky-Tennessee*)

Region Four

Auburn University (*Southeastern*)
Mississippi State University (*South Central*)

Region Five

Des Moines University (*North Central*)
Iowa State University (*North Central*)
Missouri University of Science and Technology (*Missouri*)
South Dakota State University (*North Central*)
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
(*Branch Organization Committee/Illinois*)
University of Washington (*Northwest*)

Region Six

Kansas State University (*Missouri Valley*)
University of Nebraska at Lincoln (*Missouri Valley*)

Region Seven

Hawaii (*Hawaii*)
California State University, Chico (*Northern California*)
University of California, Berkeley (*Northern California*)
University of Nevada Las Vegas (*Arizona/Southern Nevada*)

Students and postdoctoral fellows play some of the most active roles at our Branch meetings—presenting posters, giving oral presentations, participating in informal discussions with visiting ASM Distinguished Lecturers and serving as a source of pride for the mentors who are witnessing their growth and transition into welcomed colleagues. Some Branches, such as the Eastern New York Branch, have further advanced the role for students and postdocs by asking that they serve on their executive planning committees. Here they work with their future colleagues, gaining experience in organizing and conducting scientific meetings and exerting influence in selecting the “right” topics that will provide the best meeting experience for attendees.

Branches also mentor our future colleagues by supporting ASM Student and Postdoctoral Chapters. Through Chapters, students and/or postdoctoral fellows at a single university or from multiple institutions within a Branch area assemble as a focused group, and together with the Branch, tailor programming to suit their specific needs. Meetings and topics cover a wide variety of subjects and have been as diverse as “how to select your first postgraduate post” to “how to pre-

pare a seminar on an unfamiliar lecture topic” to simply “what’s micro all about?” In short, Chapters provide excellent member value by offering relevant programming and a convenient and focused way for students and postdocs to network, participate more fully with their science, and gain valuable leadership experience.

ASM, through the Branch Organization Committee (BOC), recognizes the vital contributions that Chapters make to our discipline, and appreciates the role that Branches play in fostering Chapters in their region. To support Chapter activities, the BOC administers funding provided by ASM. Chapters may apply for funding once per calendar year. To date this year, the BOC has approved funding for 24 Chapters for an impressive array of activities. Funded Projects include: Chapter-sponsored scientific meetings, including student symposia, research conferences, and “Works in Progress” seminars; community outreach and awareness activities; field trips to industry, such as food-related (e.g., beer, wine, cheese) microbiology facilities, waste management facilities, and a local zoo for a tour focused on infectious diseases of zoo animals; education and outreach activities with

local K-12 schools, including mentoring and tutoring, judging science fairs, and providing prizes for participants; networking activities, such as hosting a breakfast at a local Branch Meeting for universities interested in starting Student Chapters, and hosting a mixer after the opening session of a local Branch meeting; and general activities such as travel to Branch meetings, Chapter meeting expenses, and more. To learn more about the Student and Postdoctoral Chapter program, find a list of current Chapters, learn how you can start a Chapter in your area, or to apply for Chapter funding, go to <http://www.asm.org/index.php/student-members/student-chapters>.

The Branches and the BOC stand ready to assist any individuals or groups wishing to join or start a Student or Postdoctoral Chapter in their area. We welcome your creative ideas for advancing the science on the local level! As always, to learn of your next Branch opportunity, go to: www.asm.org/branches or to the ASM website at <http://www.asm.org>, and toggle the dropdown menu, *Membership/Branches*.

Michael G. Schmidt

Chair, Branch Organization Committee