



Division of Phylogenetics and Comparative Biology

Contents

Message from the Chair	1
Message from the Secretary	1
2016 Wake BSP Awards	2
2016 DPCB Business Meeting Minutes ...	3
Elections	3

DPCB Officers & Representatives

Kerin Claeson
Chair 2016-2018

David Blackburn
Secretary 2016-2019

Todd Oakley
Program Officer 2015-2018

Ryan Felice
*Student/Postdoctoral Affairs
Committee Representative
2015-2018*

Message from the Chair

Kerin Claeson, Chair.dpcb@sicb.org

It is my pleasure to step into the role of Chair of the Division of Phylogenetic and Comparative Biology. The last three years as Secretary have taught me a lot about the society and our division. I look forward to increasing our division's awareness within the society, starting with a call to action for upcoming symposia proposals.

At the most recent meeting of the DPCB, I suggested we develop a symposium that would act as a platform for interesting scientific research as well as a teaching platform to provide the SICB membership with up-to-date tools for their own research. This symposium will cross all society division boundaries — help us show the society how and what can and should be done once a phylogeny is in hand.

Thank you to the steadfast members of DPCB who have already enlisted in this symposium effort. To those of you interested in being involved, write to us and let us know! We are looking in particular for names of people that YOU want to hear speak. Do you have a favorite professor or up-and-coming academic researcher to suggest? Please let us know!

I'd like to extend a special congratulations to Jonathan Chang and Alexandra McCoy, the winners of our student research contest, the David and Marvalee Wake Award for Best Student Presentations. Thank you for demonstrating the importance of phylogenetics in comparative biology. Best of luck to you both as you move forward in your research careers.

Message from the Secretary

David Blackburn, Secretary.dpcb@sicb.org

This spring, our division must vote for the DPCB Program Officer-Elect, and we have two excellent candidates, Todd Oakley from UC Santa Barbara and Lars Schmitz from the Claremont Colleges. Biographies for both candidates are available at the end of this newsletter. Please be sure to vote in May!

In the coming months, I plan to update our 'Career Information' page. Please contact me if you might be interested to share information about your career path, chosen field, and the day-to-day of what you do. This is an excellent opportunity to articulate why students, colleagues, and the public should care about the field of phylogenetics and comparative biology.

I'd like to encourage DPCB members to provide (or update existing) profiles for the DPCB Researchers Database (<http://bit.ly/DP-CBresearchers>). An image and a short paragraph about your work



provide a way for interested SICB members to find about your work and be directed to your webpage, etc., for more information.

Interested to find jobs in Phylogenetics and Comparative Biology? Please help direct DPCB students and postdocs to SICB's 'Jobs & Fellowships' page (<http://bit.ly/SICBjobs>). Because our interests tend to cut across many SICB Divisions, there are many opportunities posted here that may be of interest to our DPCB members.

Last, thank you to all of the students who participated in the Wake Award Competition during the SICB Annual Meeting in Portland, Oregon, in January. Congratulations to our two winners, Jonathan Chang for 'Best Talk' and Alexandra McCoy for 'Best Poster.' DPCB is proud of our student participation and we look forward to next year's competition for similar high quality presentations.

Winner of Wake Award for Best Student Oral Presentation

Jonathan Chang, University of California, Los Angeles



Jonathan is a comparative biologist whose research focuses on the evolution of morphological diversity in ray-finned fishes, the largest and most species-rich group of vertebrates. He was named an Encyclopedia of Life Rubenstein Fellow in 2013, with the goal of using crowdsourcing to collect huge amounts of data about the diversity of body shapes present in the fishes. The first paper describing his novel crowdsourcing technique was published in December 2015 in *Methods in Ecology and Evolution*, and he is currently preparing a follow-up manuscript based in part on the results he presented at SICB. Jonathan

received his undergraduate degree in Biology from UCLA and is currently in his fifth year as a PhD student, also at UCLA. His interest in biological research was stimulated when he joined Dr. Michael Alfaro's lab as an undergraduate work-study student, where he worked closely with Dr. Alfaro and his postdocs to formulate an independent research project. This work eventually expanded and continued into his dissertation research as a PhD student. Jonathan aims to graduate next year and continue his investigation into the dynamics of macroevolutionary diversification as a postdoc.

Winner of Wake Award for Best Student Poster Presentation

Alexandra McCoy, University of California, Santa Cruz



Alexandra is a Marine Biology and Environmental Studies major at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her research interests include field biology, with an emphasis in ecology and conservation of marine resources and biodiversity. Last summer, she developed an independent research project as part of the Summer Systematics Institute, a REU program at the California Academy of Sciences. The project investigated how Cenozoic climate change affected the species richness of sand dollars in the North Pacific Ocean. Her future research plans include research on the ecological effects of climate change and the dynamics of complex ecosystems. Her career goal is to acquire a degree in environmental law, allowing her to use her knowledge of biodiversity and the law to promote the health of marine ecosystems and humanity as well.



Minutes from DPCB Division Meeting

Minutes from our most recent division meeting at the SICB Annual Meeting in Portland, Oregon are available on the SICB website: <http://www.sicb.org/divisions/DPCB/DPCBMeetingMinutes2016.pdf>

Nominees for DPCB Program Officer-Elect

Todd Oakley

Professor, Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Marine Biology
University of California, Santa Barbara
<https://labs.eemb.ucsb.edu/oakley>



Education: B.Sc. (1993) and M.Sc. (1996), University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee; Ph.D. (2001), Duke University.

SICB Activities: SICB Student Support Committee Member (2010–2013, interim chair in 2013); Symposium Co-Organizer (2003, 2013); Symposium Speaker (2003, 2013, 2015, 2016); Best Student Paper Committee, DSEB (now DPCB); DSEB/DPCB Secretary 2009–2013; DPCB Program Officer (2013–present).

Research Interests: Comparisons of independent evolutionary transitions such as convergence, parallelism, duplication, and homoplasy. Current topics include the evolutionary origins of complex traits, like bioluminescence, eyes and nervous systems, and the phylogeny and evolution of ostracod crustaceans.

Goals Statement: My overarching goal is to promote the science of phylogenetics and comparative biology to a new generation of students. My goals as DPCB Program Officer are to help DPCB grow by promoting visibility of SICB to other organizations, like the Society of Systematic Biologists, especially by targeting early-career systematists, and spreading the word that SICB is a student-friendly meeting. I envision strengthening DPCB even further. Related to this, I also aim to promote and grow the Wake Award for best student presentations.

Lars Schmitz

Assistant Professor of Biology, W.M. Keck Science Department
Claremont McKenna, Pitzer, and Scripps Colleges, Claremont, CA
<http://schmitzlab.info>



Education: B.Sc. (2000) and M.Sc. (2003), University of Bonn; Ph.D. (2008), University of California, Davis.

SICB Activities: Affiliate of both DPCB and DVM.

Research Interests: I am an integrative biologist who is interested in organism-environment interactions

and their impact on the evolution of diversity. My research program, which is centered on vertebrate sensory systems, reflects a unique trajectory. I began my graduate education at the University of Bonn, Germany, where I received a Diplom (M.Sc. equivalent) in Geology and Paleontology. My main interest at that time, sparked by Martin Sander, was the evolutionary anatomy of ichthyosaurs, arguably one of the most successful groups of Mesozoic marine reptiles. I subsequently went on to obtain my Ph.D. in Geology at UC Davis, working with Ryosuke Motani, and my research shifted from traditional paleontology to evolutionary functional morphology. As a postdoc with Peter Wainwright, I internalized the mechanistic approach to understand the evolution of form, function, and diversity.

Goals Statement: “Tree thinking” and hence DPCB is fundamentally important for all aspects of SICB-related research and teaching. I would love to have the opportunity to represent our division in planning meetings and special programs, helping to synthesize an integrative approach to research and education with tree thinking at its core.