



Division of Animal Behavior

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DAB Officers & Representatives

Diana Hews
Chair 2013-2016

Melissa Bowlin
Secretary 2012-2015

Allison Welch
Program Officer 2011-2017

Maxine Zylberberg
*Student/Postdoctoral Affairs
2012-2015*

Winners of DAB's Best Student Oral Presentation and Best Student Poster Presentation Awards

This year, DAB chose seven finalists to compete for the Best Student Oral Presentation Award at the Austin meeting. The finalists were Benjamin Goller, Jacquelyn Grace, Patricia Jones, Timothy Polnaszek, Devaleena Pradhan, Sehresh Saleem, and Daniel Sasson.

This year's Best Student Oral Presentation Award went to graduate student Patricia Jones for her talk titled, "Interactions between innate color preferences, individual experience and social information in bumblebee foraging decisions." Jones is currently a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Texas at Austin. She works with Dr. Mike Ryan on the role of social information in foraging decisions. The work she presented at SICB showed that while some foraging bees do use the presence of conspecifics to choose flower color, others are unable to overcome innate flower color preferences in order to use this information.

Mariam Okhovat, a Ph.D. candidate from the University of Texas at Austin, won the Best Student Poster Presentation with her poster titled, "Balancing selection promotes epigenetic variation in prairie vole spatial memory circuit." Okhovat currently works with Dr. Steven Phelps on prairie vole behavior. She found evidence for balancing selection between intra-pair and extra-pair paternity in her study population. This selection in turn affected the regulation of a gene involved in spatial memory in the voles.

Congratulations to the winners, and thank you to all of the judges—we could not give out these awards without your help!

Message from the Program Officer

Allison Welch, DPO.DAB@sicb.org

2014 Meeting Recap – Thanks to everyone who participated in the 2014 annual meeting in Austin! Animal behavior had a very strong presence at the meeting, with over 600 (30%) of 2000 meeting attendees listing Animal Behavior as an area of interest. The meeting featured six symposia co-sponsored by DAB, as well as twelve sessions and many posters on behavioral topics.

In response to SICB's steady growth over the past several years, a shorter (15 min.) format for contributed talks was introduced this year. This format has two main advantages. First, shorter talks let us pack more great science into the meeting without adding more concurrent sessions. And second, the 15 minute format synchronizes with the 30 minute symposium talks, allowing more opportunities for exchange between sessions. I hope this change worked well for you!



2015 Meeting Preview – Mark your calendar for our next annual meeting to be held January 3-7, 2015, in West Palm Beach, FL. We will have another great set of symposia, including five co-sponsored by DAB (<http://www.sicb.org/meetings/2015/>), and we expect another strong year for contributed presentations.

Although abstract submission is still several months off, please keep in mind the following tips and suggestions. Your choice of 'topic' is the primary determinant of where your presentation is ultimately placed. If you hope to be placed in a behaviorally-themed session, please select one of the topics in group A (Behavior and Neurobiology) as your first choice. Also, if you are in a position to give either an oral or poster presentation, please consider selecting "Either" for your presentation format. Those of you kind enough to do so give the program committee the flexibility to craft better sessions – thank you!

Call for Symposia – Are there conceptual areas that you'd like to see highlighted at SICB? Emerging ideas you'd like to explore? Then please consider proposing a symposium for an upcoming meeting! Symposium proposals for the 2016 meeting in Portland, OR will be due 29 August 2014, so now is the time to start planning. Symposium proposers are strongly encouraged to contact relevant program officers before submitting proposals. I would love to discuss your symposium ideas with you and provide tips for a successful proposal; please contact me at DPO.DAB@sicb.org.

Minutes of the Business Meeting, Austin, Texas 2014 ([click here](#))

Candidate Biographies: Election for DAB Divisional Secretary

DAB will be electing a new Secretary this spring. Below you can find a biography for the candidate that is running for the position.

Michele Johnson

Current Position: Assistant Professor of Biology, Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas.

Education: B.S. in Biology, Wake Forest University (2001); Ph.D. in Evolution, Ecology, and Population Biology, Washington University in St. Louis (2007).



Michele Johnson

Professional Experience: Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Zoology, Michigan State University (2007-2009); Assistant Professor, Department of Biology, Trinity University (2009-present).

SICB Activities: Member of the Division of Animal Behavior (DAB) and the Division of Ecology and Evolution (DEE; 2006-present); judge of student presentation competitions in DAB (2008-present); member of SICB Education Council (2014-present).

Other Memberships: Animal Behavior Society, Association for Women in Science, Society for Behavioral Neuroendocrinology, Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles, Society for the Study of Evolution.

Research Interests: Ecology and evolution of lizard behavior; neuroendocrine and physiological mechanisms of social behavior.

Goals Statement: Like so many of us, SICB has been my intellectual "home" since I was a graduate student. SICB has been critical in my own academic and professional development, and as I now work with undergraduate research students, I have a broader perspective on how valuable SICB conference experiences are for new scientists. Through the position of DAB Secretary, I hope to continue our strong tradition of supporting graduate and undergraduate student research, to increase the opportunities for student involvement in the activities of the division, and to promote communication among our members. Further, as the study of animal behavior is inherently interdisciplinary, there are many opportunities to connect with other divisions at the annual meetings through symposia and workshops, and I will work with the other DAB officers to enhance the presence of behavior in society-wide activities.