

General Interest Group Report 2011

The officers for the General Interest Group (GIG) for the 2011 calendar year are:

Chair: Marilyn Olmstead

Chair Elect: Allen Oliver

Secretary: Peter Mueller (through 2012)

At the 2011 meeting in New Orleans the General Interest Group sponsored or co-sponsored the following four sessions:

02.01: General Interest I, Chaired by Peter Mueller

02.02: General Interest II, Chaired by Allen Oliver

SP.01 Etter Early Career Award, Chaired by Jamaine Davis

08.10: Educational Inspiration: Crystallographic Teaching Techniques (educational session)
Chaired by Amy Sarjeant

The first General Interest Session, 02.01, on Sunday was very well attended (approximately 50-70 listeners throughout the session) and had the two general themes of crystal growth and computational crystallography. The second General Interest Session, 2.02, will be held on Thursday and has the general themes of instrumentation and crystal growth.

The Student Etter Award winner for the GIG was Jason Mercer (University of Newfoundland) who gave an outstanding presentation on “Massively Parallel Geometric Computation of Small Molecule Crystal Structures” in Sunday’s General Interest Session.

There were 17 members at the Business Meeting, held directly after the first session.

Candidates for Chair Elect, 2012 are

Jeanette Krause (University of Cincinnati) jeanette.krause@uc.edu

Xiaoping Wang (Oak Ridge National Lab) wangx@ornl.gov

The General Interest Group wants to organize the traditional two General Interest Sessions with 100% submitted abstracts. Chairs for these two sessions will be Allen Oliver and Jeanette Krause.

In addition, the Group would like to co-sponsor the Transactions Symposium in honor of Bruce M. Foxman and an Educational session. Details are as follows.

The proposed Transactions symposium for the 2012 ACA Meeting is in honor of Bruce M. Foxman: “Transformations and Structural Oddities in Molecular Crystals” to be organized by Graciela Diaz de Delgado, Magali Hickey, and Kraig Wheeler. The two half-day sessions are designed to honor the extensive contributions of Bruce M. Foxman to the supramolecular, crystal engineering, and crystallographic communities. Topics such as crystal transformations, supramolecular assemblies and synthesis, polymorphism, and function and reactivity of engineered materials will be addressed by both invited and general audience participants. Kraig Wheeler intends to ask the Small Molecule SIG to sponsor this Transactions Symposium, but wants General Interest to co-sponsor.

The second proposal is for an educational session to be sponsored by General Interest together with the Continuing Education Committee. Kraig Wheeler suggests a session to be held at the 2012 annual meeting in Boston with the topic “Protein and Small Molecule Crystallography at Undergraduate Institutions: Research, Pedagogy, and Professional Development” to be chaired by Kraig Wheeler and Roger Rowlett. This proposed half-day session should focus on the practical aspects of developing X-ray crystallography at a Primarily Undergraduate Institution. Topics such as curriculum development, best practices for integrating X-ray crystallography and undergraduate research, equipment acquisition (navigating funding agencies), and strategies for faculty success at PUI’s should be addressed by both invited and general audience participants. In collaboration with the Continuing Education Committee, the General Interest Group will therefore sponsor this educational session at the Planning Meeting on Friday.

At the Business Meeting, several of the present GIG member felt that the booklet with CD-ROM, which all attendees received with the registration material, was insufficient. The index should be improved and other options than CD-ROMs should be considered (such as USB-memory sticks or online versions suitable for smart phones). Herbert Bernstein moved to urge Council to improve the handout material, Peter Mueller seconded and all were in favor. One of the 2012 Program Chairs, Bruce Noll, was in the room and noted this motion.

Several GIG members further felt that the ACA meetings have become too expensive and that measures should be taken to reduce cost, especially for students and postdocs. Herbert Bernstein suggested finding dormitory housing at local universities. Peter Mueller, Local Chair for the 2012 meeting, promised to look into this option, but cautioned that there might be contractual reasons hindering such an attempt (namely with regards to the contract with the hotel). This discussion about cost elicited several other comments/suggestions such as a return to university venues; however, there was no general agreement except for the desire to have this concern passed on to Council. In retrospect, it would have been preferable to ask members to attend the Member’s Business Meeting on Tuesday to obtain further information.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn Olmstead, Chair