

EDITORIAL

SfN 2023 Report: It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year JUNE and FUN Faculty Awards

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The 2023 Society for Neuroscience meeting in November was wonderful. It was great to see colleagues, hear the latest research (glia were everywhere!) and to plan for a glorious future. The Faculty for Undergraduate Neuroscience (FUN) had a strong presence at the meeting in terms of numbers and participation. Once again, we had a booth, which sold out of most inventory by Tuesday, and gave our membership a place to meet and discuss important issues. This year we also did tremendous outreach to the larger neuroscience community as many people stopped by to chat and ask us about our community and mission. Many of our members presented in professional development workshops at the meeting. FUN sponsored an undergraduate poster session in conjunction with the SFN's Trainee night with 130 undergraduate poster presentations. This is always a highlight of the meeting, seeing our work with our students on display, and watching them transition into young scientists. We awarded 19 travel awards, and you can see the complete list of awardees, their mentors and our travel award sponsors at

<https://www.funfaculty.org/content.asp?admin=Y&contentid=148>.

We held a business meeting where bylaws, committee reports, and recommendations from a strategic planning committee were presented, and these recommendations will be discussed and implemented in the coming year. A slate of new officers took over the reins of FUN, including Connie Kang as president, Jackie Rose as president-elect, Erin Rhinehart now as past-president, Jennifer Willhelm as secretary, Melanie Leussis as treasurer, Ron Bayline as treasurer-elect, and councilors Mathew Abrams, Lorenz Neurwirth, Tari Tan, Monica Gaudier-Diaz, Marc Nahmani and Aparna Shah. We thank past officers for their service to FUN.

And at the FUN social which took place Sunday night, faculty and students mingled over snack and drinks and awards were presented. Overall, the new structure for our events were well received and the meeting was a success. Thanks to all who were involved in organizing the SfN events and to all who attended.

JUNE Awards

JUNE presented several awards to recognize and thank authors, board members, and reviewers that make the journal strong.

Article of the year (Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 issues) was awarded to **Meredith Minear**, **Veronica Rodriguez-**

Carey, Brandon Gellis, and Alexandra Krosley, at the University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY for their manuscript **The Creation of High-Resolution Brain Cross-sections for 3D Printing and Virtual Reality Applications**. This work created a set of 3D printed and virtual brain cross-sections that are available to all through online repositories. In addition to a well written manuscript, this group did an outstanding assessment of the value of this active learning tool in the classroom.

Reviewer of the year was award to **Ian Harrington**, Associate Editor, Augustana College. In addition to fielding the Amazing Papers category of JUNE and as a founder of Project Divine, Ian reviewed many papers for these issues and was always present with advice and encouragement. A Big Thank You was award to **Bill Grisham**, UCLA, **Kristen Frenzel**, Emory University, **Leah Anderson Roesch**, Emory University, and **Kurt Illig**, University of St. Thomas, for their service to JUNE.

FUN Faculty Awards for 2023

Each year, the Faculty for Undergraduate Neuroscience (FUN) opens a call for nominations to recognize outstanding contributions to undergraduate education in the neurosciences. These awards are presented to FUN members who have exhibited exceptional teaching or research in an undergraduate setting, who have provided fundamental service to advancing the mission and values of FUN, and those who have demonstrated achievements in these areas over sustained periods of time. Nominations are solicited and reviewed by the Awards committee, which consisted of Kurt Illig (Past President, Chair); Erin Rhinehart (President); Tari Tan (Councilor); and Stefan Pulver (FUN member).

CAROL ANN PAUL EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR:

Chris Swart, Trinity College

The Educator Award is given annually to a regular member or fellow of FUN in recognition of notable efforts related to promoting effective teaching of neuroscience at the undergraduate level and is based on a nominating letter from a member.

Chris is a dedicated teacher and popular mentor and advisor to over 50 neuroscience and pre-health students. Chris designed and oversaw building of the first lab dedicated to teaching neuroscience at Trinity College, creating a lab space that engages students in hands on neuroscience experiences. He is particularly adept at

teaching these labs and has created several unique exercises, including tract tracing the visual system using Asian shore crabs, measuring EMG in snails and crickets, and measuring the effects of nutritional supplements on acetylcholinesterase levels in invertebrates. He has also created several lecture and seminar courses, including one specifically designed for Psychology majors who are not comfortable with the biology course. In addition, he has continued to be actively involved in research exploring fundamental questions about invertebrate ecology, behavior and neurophysiology, and has mentored approximately 50 undergraduates in independent research projects in the neuroscience lab, leading published research papers with undergraduates and more than dozen student poster presentations at neuroscience symposia

FUN MENTOR AWARD:

Shubhik DebBurman, Lake Forest College

The Mentor Award is given from time to time to recognize individuals who have made outstanding contributions as mentors for young neuroscientists.

Dr. DebBurman (or “Dr. D” as we all know him) is an incredibly dedicated educator. He teaches his students practical skills and goes above and beyond mentoring students both in and out of the classroom. He teaches students to critically appraise scientific literature while he sparks their curiosity for the unknowns in the field of neuroscience. Dr. D is not only a fantastic educator within the classroom, he also is an outstanding career mentor. He makes himself abundantly available to his students and alumni, offering late evening meetings with students and reaching out regularly to alumni to offer support. He created a paid summer undergraduate research program in collaboration with Rosalind Franklin University that has now trained over 190 undergraduates in scientific research expanding research opportunities, and he created a Teacher Scholar collaboration with Rosalind Franklin and Northwestern University for graduate students and postdocs that has provided mentored undergraduate teaching opportunities to seventeen trainees. Dr. D has been, without a doubt, one of the most important influences in my life and that of many, many students at Lake Forest College. His outstanding commitment to mentorship makes him most deserving of the FUN Mentorship award.

FUN SERVICE AWARD:

Raddy Ramos, New York Institute of Technology and Rachael Murdock, Davidson College

The Service Award is given from time to time to recognize individuals who have made outstanding efforts towards the continuing development of FUN as an organization.

Raddy Ramos has been an excellent editor for *JUNE* and steered our journal through some rough waters. Raddy was the editor through the pandemic period which created upheaval at multiple levels for the journal. There was a reduction in the number of submissions and even more difficulties in finding people to review papers. Despite the problems associated with this, Raddy continued to curate issues and met publication deadlines. A bright spot of the pandemic was the fact that the FUN community responded

to the pandemic with a host of innovations that help everyone navigate the new teaching environment we now find ourselves in. This response culminated in the online workshop where ideas and innovations were shared, and Raddy worked hard with special editor Bruce Johnson to make it possible for *JUNE* to develop an extra issue to disseminate these innovations. His efforts kept *JUNE* alive through the pandemic times.

The heroic efforts outlined above were supported by the dedicated work of Rachael Murdock. As copy editor and production manager for *JUNE*, she performs copy editing duties and works with the editor and the authors to get the articles in good shape for publication. She also handles the website and the PubMed submissions. In addition, she offered important advice for some of the tough decisions that needed to be made, while having her own experience of the pandemic. Her work kept *JUNE* available to faculty through the pandemic and we extend our thanks with this award.

THE FUN AWARD FOR FOSTERING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY: Veronica Martinez Acosta, University of the Incarnate Word

The FUN Award for Fostering Diversity and Inclusivity is given from time to time to recognize individuals who have made extraordinary efforts promoting diversity and inclusivity in undergraduate neuroscience education. Outstanding support of diversity may include the development of programs that substantially enhance the advancement of students and/or faculty from diverse backgrounds, successful and inclusive mentoring of diverse students and/or faculty or fostering inclusive classroom and laboratory environments for all to succeed in science.

Veronica has served many important roles in FUN, as Treasurer and more recently as a member of the DEI Self-study Committee. Veronica has co-authored three papers published in *JUNE* directly related to DEI, including a 2015 paper on improving recruitment and retention of underrepresented faculty. Veronica also has served as a mentor to junior faculty and senior postdocs through the BRAINS (Broadening the Representation of Academic Investigators in NeuroScience) initiative, improving the prospects for underrepresented scientists in our field. She continues to have positive impacts on DEI efforts at her home campus of University of the Incarnate Word, which is a Hispanic serving institution. Veronica serves on the President’s Council for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and is a Co-PI on an NSF REU that serves underrepresented students at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole. Consecutive Sloan Foundation grants have helped to support her efforts to create a post-baccalaureate program at Woods Hole. In addition, she was recently awarded an NSF-LSMAP (Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation) at UIW to increase retention and graduation rates of historically underrepresented students in STEM. Veronica’s continued efforts toward improving access, supporting retention, and improving success for underrepresented students in STEM is simply impressive. In 2020 Cell Press and Cell Signaling Technology, Cell MENTOR named Veronica one of the top 100 inspiring Hispanic/Latinx scientists in America. FUN should honor

Veronica as well by awarding her the 2023 Award for Fostering Diversity and Inclusivity.

FUN CAREER AWARD: Barbara Lom, Davidson College

The Career Achievement Award is one of FUN's highest honors. This award is given from time to time, to recognize individuals who have made outstanding efforts on behalf of undergraduate neuroscience education and research. Outstanding efforts may include singular achievements that have provided wide benefit to the undergraduate neuroscience community, or sustained efforts across years.

It would be difficult to identify a person who has contributed more to the development of undergraduate neuroscience education over the past 2 decades, and with greater dedication towards catalyzing systemic change, than Barbara. In 2003, Barbara was a Founding Steering Committee Member for SYNAPSE: Symposium for Young Neuroscientists & Professors of the Southeast, a regional organization through which many FUN members promote undergraduate neuroscience research. She has continued as a member of the steering committee up to the present. Since 2003, Barbara has been a Staff Facilitator for the Associated Colleges of the South Summer Teaching & Learning Workshop, serving as the Director from 2009-2014.

Barbara has served on Society for Neuroscience committees, as the FUN-appointed liaison to the Committee on Neuroscience Departments & Programs (cNDP) and an appointed member of the Scientific Rigor Working Group (2013-2015). Barbara currently is the PI of the HHMI Inclusive Excellence Grant that supports the Fostering Inclusivity and Respect in Science Together (FIRST) program, of which Barbara serves as Program Director. FIRST supports professional development toward inclusive

pedagogy, increased opportunities, and success for first generation and historically marginalized college students and increasing leadership opportunities for students.

To speak of her varied and continuing contributions to FUN, Barbara served on the Education Committee from 2001-2011 and again from 2019-2021, making critical contributions to the ability of the organization to launch the FUN 2020 Summer Virtual Meeting after the planned in-person workshop at Davidson had to be canceled due to the pandemic. Barbara served as the founding Editor-in-Chief of JUNE from 2002-2006, continuing as Senior Editor from 2007-2010 and remaining active as an Editorial Board Member from 2011 up to the present. She has also been keeping up the spirit of pedagogical discussion and exchange as a member of the FUN Final Fridays organizing committee member since 2021.

In summary, Barbara's support of students and colleagues through her decades-long efforts in classroom innovation, her success in forging professional development opportunities in support of inclusive Neuroscience education, and her continuing commitment to FUN, make her an ideal candidate for this award.

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