

Consortium Connections

Connecting campuses to promote excellence in science and mathematics

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Mark your calendar for upcoming events (see sections in newsletter for more information)

- Sept. 26, 2018 Application deadline for Research Symposia (<http://mathsciconsortium.org>)
- Nov. 2-3, 2018 Biological & Psychological Sciences Symposium in Chicago
- Nov. 9-10, 2018 Physical Sciences, Mathematics & Computer Science Symposium in St. Louis

Comments from the Director



With the start of another academic year the main focus is on new students, new classes, new challenges, and new opportunities, but it is also a time when many of our students become involved with some type of team based extracurricular activity. As members of the team they work together to accomplish outcomes that would not be possible by any one individual and as we all know, teamwork is an important personal trait that will contribute to the success of our students in many aspects of their life. While the teamwork in a sporting event is usually quite easy to see, the teamwork needed

to successfully put together the various programs presented by the Midstates Consortium is not as obvious, so I would like to briefly share with you the composition and function of the Midstates team, which is known as the Executive Committee (EC). Each of the 11 liberal arts schools has one faculty member as a representative on the EC, while the two research universities each have two members on the committee (current membership is listed at https://mathsciconsortium.org/college_affiliations). The Consortium Director is the effective chairman of the EC. The Director, along with the Midstates Assistant, take care of scheduling and planning Consortium programs, while it is the responsibility of the campus representatives to communicate to all the appropriate faculty the information on Consortium programs and to encourage participation by both students and faculty. Since the campus representatives know their colleagues on both a personal and professional basis, they are highly effective in promoting the Consortium programs. It is especially important that the EC members meet their responsibilities in a timely manner, since many of the programs have application deadlines. In the spring of each year all the EC members gather for a one-day meeting to review the operation of the Consortium over the past year, plan programs for the coming year, and approve the budget (income from member schools and program expenses). At this meeting there is discussion of the nominations for the Janet Andersen Award with subsequent selection of the recipients. The EC may also review proposals throughout the year and make funding recommendations. It has been a rewarding experience to work with all of the EC members and attend Consortium programs that are a success due to the teamwork that took place when preparing for the event. The next time you see your representative on campus, be sure to acknowledge them for being part of the Midstates team.



*Mike Seymour
MCMS Director*

The following pages of the newsletter have a brief description of activities that have already taken place during the spring and summer of 2018 and information on upcoming 2018 events. Best wishes to all for a great start of the 2018-19 academic year.

2018 Early Career Workshop



2018 Early Career Workshop participants at Gustavus Adolphus arboretum

The 2018 Early Career Workshop was held July 6-8 at Gustavus Adolphus College with facilitators Scott Bur and Brandy Russell from Gustavus Adolphus and support from Midstates Director Mike Seymour. With the 17 participants from 10 schools having diverse disciplinary backgrounds in the biological and chemical sciences, psychology, computer science, geology, mathematics, physics and educational technology, the workshop was not about the specific external factors impacting what each person needs to accomplish in terms of a certain job or to get tenure in a given department. Rather, the participants were asked to “think big” about themselves and their careers, to connect with their core values that support their mission and vision, to identify goals that align with their sense of purpose and to develop a strategy and objectives to achieve those goals. Through deep listening and peer coaching activities participants could reflect on their own sense of vocation and then consider how to structure an individualized strategic action plan that will be a guide for personal, meaningful and rewarding career development. Over the course of the weekend everyone created an outline of their plan on a poster that was shared with the group in order to get comments, suggestions or observations. The plans developed at the meeting are meant to be the beginning of a strategic planning process where reflection on the outcomes leads to a critical consideration of current goals, which may or may not need to be revised. New or modified goals would lead to new strategies, which in turn would result in new outcomes and further reflection about how well the plan is working. The workshop also provided the opportunity for participants to meet colleagues from outside of their institution and their discipline, which broadens and enriches one’s perspective of teaching and research in a liberal arts environment.

2017-18 Annual Executive Committee Meeting

The following is a brief summary of the Executive Committee meeting. Full minutes for the meeting will be included in the 2017-18 annual report that will be sent to the committee in late 2018.

The annual executive committee was held on April 14, 2018 at the Aloft Hotel in Rosemont, IL. Campus representatives from 12 of the 13 member institutions were in attendance, as well as the Director (Mike Seymour) and Administrative Assistant (Ann Schutt), with Rachel Bergstrom (Beloit) joining via Facetime. New committee members attending were Deanna Byrnes (Carthage), Shane Heschel (Colorado), Vince Eckhart (Grinnell), John Kennedy (Chicago Biological Sciences), and Jeff Ford (Gustavus Adolphus alternate).

Committee discussion of the Undergraduate Research Symposia affirmed the benefits to the students who attend the meetings, which continue to have participation at the maximum level. For the 2017 symposia, there were 117 students and 13 faculty at the biological sciences/psychology meeting in St. Louis, while the Chicago meeting for physical sciences/mathematics/computer science had 114 students and 20 faculty in attendance. The dates for the 2018 meetings were approved by the committee (see following meeting information) and will continue to follow the same general format of previous years.

The 2017 Early Career Workshop held at Gustavus Adolphus had 26 participants from 8 different schools, which appears to be the largest number of attendees for this program. The campus reps asked to be notified of faculty who attend so that they can remind them of Midstates opportunities such as the speaker exchange, short term consultations and the undergraduate symposia. During 2017-18 the consortium funded 2 short term consultations and 5 speaker exchanges.

The nominations for the Janet Andersen Award were discussed with the selection of Dr. Joanne Stewart (Hope College) and Dr. Neena Grover (Colorado College) as the 2018 recipients. Additional information on the recipients is given in the following announcement of the award.

The proposed budget for continuation of the above programs for the 2018-19 program year was approved, keeping the annual institutional support from each member school at \$10,000. The committee will entertain requests to support additional programs that would be of interest to the Midstates members. Contact the Midstates Director if you are interested in exploring options in this area.

A final footnote is needed for the significant spring snow storm over the weekend. Throughout the meeting everyone was aware of the potential travel issues and several members had to stop overnight on their return trip due to road conditions. Eventually everyone finally had a safe return, but this meeting will be recalled with memorable stories of travel challenges.

Undergraduate Research Symposium in the Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Computer Science, Washington University in St. Louis, November 9-10, 2018

The 2018 Physical Sciences, Mathematics and Computer Science meeting will be held on the Danforth Campus of Washington University in St. Louis with accommodations at the Sheraton Clayton Plaza Hotel. The Friday evening program held at the hotel will include a dinner buffet and the after-dinner presentation of the Janet Andersen Award Lecture by Joanne Stewart, the Elmer E. Hartgerink Professor of Chemistry at Hope College. On Saturday morning participants will convene at the Laboratory Sciences Building on the University campus to start the day with a continental breakfast followed by several sessions of podium and poster presentations throughout the morning. Lunch in the elegant Holmes Lounge will include an interactive panel discussion with graduate students (many who are from Midstates schools) about Life in Graduate School. The meeting will conclude with additional afternoon sessions of podium and poster presentations before students gather their box lunches for the return trip to their home campus. *Application Deadline September 26, see <http://mathsciconsortium.org>.*

Undergraduate Research Symposium in the Biological and Psychological Sciences Symposium, University of Chicago, November 2-3, 2018

The 2018 Biological and Psychological Sciences meeting will be held at The University of Chicago with accommodations at the La Quinta Inn and Suites Lakeshore in Hyde Park. The Friday evening banquet, to be held at La Quinta Inn conference center, will feature a keynote address by Carole Ober, the Blum-Riese Professor and Chair of the Department of Human Genetics at The University of Chicago, as well as presentation of the Janet Andersen Award Lecture by Professor Neena Grover, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, Colorado College. The Saturday program will be on the University campus at the Gordon Center for Integrative Sciences (GCIS). Several poster sessions will be held in the spacious atrium of the GCIS and oral presentations will be held in the adjacent Kersten Physics Teaching Center. *Application Deadline September 26, see <http://mathsciconsortium.org>.*

Short Term Consultations (STC) and Seminar Speakers for 2018-19

These programs provide funds to facilitate connections among faculty at Consortium institutions. The STC grants fund faculty and students to visit a member campus for many reasons including consultation on curriculum, collaboration on research projects, participation as an outside examiner in a senior thesis exam, demonstration of a laboratory technique suitable for an undergraduate laboratory or advising faculty or departments on proposal writing or project assessment.

The Consortium has a searchable database of speakers available to visit other consortium campuses to give a seminar. Consortium funds are available for travel, lodging, and meals and the online application process is simple. See <http://mathsciconsortium.org> for complete information on these programs.

The 2018 Janet Andersen Lecture Award Recipients



*Dr. Neena Grover
Professor of Biochemistry and Chair of Faculty Executive Committee
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
Colorado College*

The nomination letter for Dr. Grover introduces her as an active and ambitious scholar, an engaged and wise mentor for her research students, and a leader and role-model for the women and women-of-color scientist community within her department and in the Division of Natural Sciences. An example of her innovative learning-centered and student-centered pedagogy is the Community Based Learning approach used in Biochemistry II to understand HIV/AIDS transmission, prevention and treatment. Through Dr. Grover's relationship with the Southern Colorado Aids Project students from the class make community presentations on these topics and use their conceptual learning in interdisciplinary community engagements. Dr. Grover consistently mentors students in collaborative research and regularly publishes results with student co-authors. Her outstanding engagement of students in science outreach and research was recently recognized by a commendation from the Association for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. Dr. Grover's authentic passion for learning and discovery is seen in comments to a group of faculty: "the joy of science is really in doing it. It's really about having a sense of wonder. I want students to get an idea of why, as well as how one does research, and to see that they can ask and make progress toward answering complex questions." Dr. Grover will be recognized for her contributions to undergraduate research and education by presenting the Janet Andersen Lecture at the 2018 Midstates Consortium Undergraduate Research Symposium in the Biological Sciences and Psychology.



*Dr. Joanne Stewart
Elmer E. Hartgerink Professor of Chemistry
Department of Chemistry
Hope College*

Dr. Stewart's background in synthetic inorganic chemistry, her passion for supporting authentic student learning, and her innovative curricular approaches are evident in her work to establish *IONiC* and *VIPeR* (<https://www.ionicviper.org>). The *Intellectual Online Network of Inorganic Chemists* is a vibrant virtual 'community of practice' for the collaborative development and dissemination of learning materials through the *Virtual Inorganic Pedagogical Electronic Resource* website. During her 30 years at Hope Dr. Stewart has been eager to incorporate new pedagogies that more effectively engage students, such as group activities, case studies, and integrative learning, all with the goal of developing a community of learners who can relate their coursework to world issues, their lives and the community in which they live. Dr. Stewart has routinely involved students in her laboratory research and her studies in chemical education and the scholarship of teaching and learning, with students as co-authors in resulting publications. Through interactions with students in the classroom or laboratory, or as an advisor or a mentor, Dr. Stewart has provided a supportive, compassionate approach in helping all students learn about and explore career, calling and life. Dr. Stewart will be recognized for her contributions to undergraduate research and education by presenting the Janet Andersen Lecture at the 2018 Midstates Consortium Undergraduate Research Symposium in the Physical Sciences, Math and Computer Science.

Nominations for the 2019 Janet Andersen Lecture Award are due March 18, 2019. Contact your campus representative or Consortium Director for information (midstatesdirector@gmail.com).