

2019 APS Pacific Division Meeting Highlights



Two days of scientific presentations and interactions spanned a diversity of plant pathology topics at the APS Pacific Division Meeting in Fort Collins, Colorado. The meeting, held June 24–26, was preceded by a field trip organized by **Jane Stewart** (Colorado State University) to see diseases impacting trees in urban and natural ecosystems. The opening symposium explored hemp disease management, and the second day of the meeting began with a talk by **Jan Leach** (Colorado State University) on the impact of technology on agriculture. The meeting included oral presentations by six students and 14 members, plus 23 posters. Congratulations go to the following Pacific Division awardees:

- Lifetime Achievement Award: **Themis Michailides** (University of California, Riverside)
- First place oral competition winner: **Olga Kozhar** (Washington State University)
- Second place oral competition winner: **Elizabeth Hellman** (University of California, Davis)
- Third place oral competition winner: **Lederson Ganán** (Washington State University)

Thanks to **Amy Charkowski** and her staff at Colorado State University for organizing a great meeting. The 2020 meeting of the Pacific Division will be held during the APS Annual Meeting in Denver, Colorado. ■



APS Pacific Division student oral competition winners and APS leaders (left to right): **Jose Úrbez Torres** (APS Pacific Division president), **Lederson Ganán** (Washington State University), **Elizabeth Hellman** (University of California, Davis), **Olga Kozhar** (Washington State University), and **Lindsey du Toit** (APS president).

From Concern to Value—The Divisional Forum

Jay W. Pscheidt and Ashok K. Chanda

APS division leaders were concerned about a lack of representation when APS Council was restructured in August 2010. The Divisional Forum now consists of six divisional forum representatives and a divisional councilor who represents all the divisions on APS Council. The forum had approved a manual of operations by 2012 and summarized its implementation in 2015; another update is due shortly.

Just compiling a summary of division activities invited natural comparisons among the divisions, even though each division is unique in its geography, structure, and culture. These comparisons resulted in new poster sessions, career-building workshops for graduate students, and more student travel awards and at higher amounts, among many other activities. Currently, some divisions are working toward granting post-doctoral travel awards, involving more undergraduates, and adding student members to the Executive Committee.

A new session at the APS Annual Meeting was established to present the student winners of each division's oral presentation competition. This session has become popular at the annual meeting and has delivered top-notch presentations. Many of the student presenters have gone on to become active members of APS and plant pathology.

The Divisional Forum was instructed by APS Council to investigate division finances because of spending concerns. Ultimately, there were no changes in division finances, as APS headquarters handles most of the funds, registrations, and so on. The forum did make the broad suggestion that divisions should spend funds on their membership, just not too much!

There was concern (maybe only rumor) about the quality of division abstracts. We found that division students were not receiving the usual instructions for what goes into an abstract, as they would when submitting an abstract for the annual meeting. Not only can students now find those [instructions](#), but additional suggestions have been provided on how to review an abstract. These instructions have been harmonized between divisional and APS annual meetings.

Some people felt that division health could be monitored through membership numbers alone. The additional metrics of finances, meeting participation, and number of abstracts presented indicate that all the divisions are healthy, despite differences in size. The Divisional Forum continues to monitor student participation and will look for trends and opportunities to improve the divisional meeting experience and find ways to increase divisional membership.

How have we done? A recent APS-wide membership survey indicated that although the general membership is not especially familiar with what the Divisional Forum is all about, members have found *more value in and are more involved with division meetings* since formation of the forum. Concerns about APS Council's restructuring seem to have abated and become a force of positive change for the divisions.

If you are not yet a member of your division, it's the perfect time to join. ■



Divisional Forum with student award winners at the 2018 Pacific Division meeting in Portland, Oregon. Front row, left to right: **Kelsey Andersen** (Southern), **Jose Francisco Garcia** (Potomac), **James Hempfing** (Northeastern), **Andrea Garfinkel** (Pacific), **Chelsea Harbach** (North Central). Back row, left to right: Divisional Forum representatives **Olaya Gilberto** (Caribbean), **Jay Pscheidt** (divisional councilor), **James LaMondia** (Northeastern), **Natalie Goldberg** (Pacific), **Albert Culbreath** (Southern), and **Ashok Chanda** (North Central).