

Minutes for the first SPAN Conference Call
July 13, 2007

Attendees:

Jacob Parnell (Utah State University, formerly MSU), Chris Grandlic (U Arizona), Analee Etheredge (TAMU), Denise Hill (TAMU), Zuzana Majkova (UK), Amara Holder (UC-Berkeley), Brittany Prather (Iowa), Brooke Tvermoes (Duke), Larry Whitson (NIEHS-MDB), Maureen Avakian (NIEHS-MDB), Heather Henry (NIEHS-SBRP), Kathy Ahlmark (NIEHS-SBRP)

Meeting Objective: Discuss SBRP Student Postdoc and Alumni Network (SPAN) survey results and add comments or additional ideas for the SPAN Network and discuss future plans.

Survey Summary: Goal of SPAN is to link the various SBRP programs, students, Postdocs and alumni. There were 74 responses to the survey and most responses were from Ph.D. students. Survey Link:
(http://www-apps.niehs.nih.gov/sbrp/1/Training/student_survey_results_may_2007.pdf).

- **Listserv:** The listserv is intended for use by all trainees, not just the SPAN Committee. There will be a separate listserv for SBRP alumni. The last e-mail sent out on the listserv was the survey results and everyone received those, so listserv is working.
- **Message Board:** The message board is and will be moderated for SPAM. It has been very secure thus far. We discussed several options on how to notify people when new messages were posted on the message board. We can set up the message board so that an e-mail is sent out each time a new message is posted or people can just check the board on their own. Most people seemed to like the idea of some form of e-mail going out when a new message posted. Brittany suggested that an e-mail could be sent out indicating who posted the new message and what the topic was and then if you were interested you could go to the message board itself for more details. Jacob suggested a weekly e-mail that informed us of what topics were currently being discussed on the message board. Chris wanted to know if you could post a message to only a certain group of people instead of all trainees, perhaps only people in your field of research (e.g. remediation). Larry will look into the possibilities of that. It was suggested that at the Annual meeting in December we could see if there is interest in establishing particular themes (strings) for discussion on the message board and allow people to sign up for these discussions by giving their e-mail addresses.
- **Student/Alumni Website:** Larry explained that the SPAN webpage/website will be a repository for all SPAN activities and relevant information. There is potential, eventually, to add features to the webpages. For instance, would students be interested in posting their own information on a webpage. It was asked if having a personal webpage was of interest, who would you want to have access, and how much information would you post? It was pointed out that on the survey, 76% of people that responded would use the website to contact people but

only 56% would want to actually post their own contact information. We thought this might be due to privacy issues. A few people expressed that they would prefer for information like this to be available only to other SBRP alumni or students, not accessible to the public. Amara mentioned their alumni association allows you to INDIRECTLY contact people through the webpage - so that way the person's e-mail address would not be visible, but the message gets sent to the intended person. Larry said this might be possible. Jacob thought this webpage could be used to post "publications of the month" and start a virtual journal club.

- **Online Seminars:** Larry explained the online seminar is an opportunity for students to present their work to as large or small an audience as desired. Students could use it as a way to practice talks before meetings. The online seminar can also be used to present Programmatic information to students. For example, there was quite a bit of interest in having an online seminar about Grant Writing: how to write grants, what grants are available, how to navigate through them, etc. Kathy discussed having an online seminar to introduce students to the history of Superfund and SBRP, so trainees can get a better sense of how their research fits into the bigger picture. Trainees seem fairly interested in having these informational online seminars; however, there are still concerns about presenting student research through this mechanism. Many students may prefer to present their work to their own lab group. We had also talked about keeping the general audience small for student presentations.

Action Items/ Next Steps:

- 1) **All:** email Heather if you have any items you would like to discuss at the next meeting.
- 2) **All:** email Heather if you have examples of successful message boards or networking websites you have used in the past or if you have certain features you wish to see on our message board. Heather will compile the links and we can look at them and discuss them at our next meeting call.
- 3) **All:** email Heather if you have ideas or suggestions for activities (e.g. a grant writing session) that could be offered to the SBRP trainees either online or at the Annual Meeting in December.
- 4) **All:** introduce yourself on the message board and have a look at the other SPAN committee members: <http://www.bulletinboards.com/view.cfm?comcode=sbrp>.
- 5) **Denise:** send link from Jackson Lab Tutorial in regards to grant writing and how to find funding.
- 6) **Brooke:** will find the name of the instructor that teaches grant writing skills at NIH.

Next Meeting: Mid- to late- September we will have another conference call to go over the ideas from action item #2 and will allow time for SPAN Committee members to talk briefly about our specific interest with the group. Feel free to bring anyone else that may be interested in being part of the SPAN Committee.