

Swarthmore College

Works

Biology Faculty Works

Biology

2-1-2005

Connecting Branches To Student Activities

Amy Cheng Vollmer

Swarthmore College, avollme1@swarthmore.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://works.swarthmore.edu/fac-biology>



Part of the [Biology Commons](#), and the [Microbiology Commons](#)

[Let us know how access to these works benefits you](#)

Recommended Citation

Amy Cheng Vollmer. (2005). "Connecting Branches To Student Activities". *ASM News*. Volume 71, Issue 2. 90-91.

<https://works.swarthmore.edu/fac-biology/12>

This work is brought to you for free by Swarthmore College Libraries' Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Biology Faculty Works by an authorized administrator of Works. For more information, please contact myworks@swarthmore.edu.

Connecting Branches to Student Activities

As the new chair of the Student Membership Committee for the ASM, one of my responsibilities is to encourage the establishment and maintenance of Student Chapters. I also want to increase the number of student members in the national ASM organization as well as in the local Branches. If we want the future of microbiology to be vibrant, each of us needs to help to recruit students in some way. One way to do this is through local ASM Branches. Some Branches have been associated with universities, and students are an integral part of Branch activities. Other Branches have been instrumental in clinical microbiologists' networking activities and may or may not actively involve students. Each of us appreciates that interested students represent a robust pipeline of future faculty, investigators, clinicians, and technologists, as well as people to fill sales, government, and industrial

positions. How can Branches support student activities? Here is a list of examples:

- Host a symposium or poster session at which undergraduate and graduate students can present posters and papers. Give prizes for best poster in a category; it doesn't have to be a big prize—a gift card or a book from ASM Press would be fine.
- Participate in a local science fair as a judge. Schools and districts are always searching for judges; sponsor a prize for the best project involving microbiology. Give a prize to the student and one to his/her teacher (prizes can be an ASM book—for example, *Infections of Leisure* or *The Other Side of the Microscope* are popular titles).
- Invite a microbiology educator (or a panel of several) to talk about their teaching activities—you will be surprised how creative and innovative they are.

Contacts

Amy Cheng Vollmer
Chair, Student Membership Committee
Department of Biology
Swarthmore College
500 College Avenue
Swarthmore, PA 19081-1390
Phone: (610) 328-8044
E-mail: avollme1@swarthmore.edu

Toby K. Eisenstein, Ph.D.
Chair, Membership Board
Department of Microbiology & Immunology
Temple Univ School of Medicine
3400 N Broad St.
Philadelphia, PA 19140
Phone: (215) 707-3585
E-mail: tke@temple.edu

For Branch activities:

Stephen A. Sonstein
Co-Chair, Branch Organization
Committee
Department of Associated Health
Professionals
Eastern Michigan University
328 King Hall
Ypsilanti, MI 48197-2207
Phone: (734) 487-1238
E-mail: stephen.sonstein@emich.edu

Norman P. Willett
Co-Chair, Branch Organization
Committee
Department of Microbiology and
Immunology
Temple University School of Medicine
3400 N Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19140-5104
Phone: (215) 707-4905
E-mail: Norman.Willett@temple.edu

- Partner with a community college colleague in teaching microbiology.
- Sponsor an undergraduate student's summer project in your lab.
- Organize a career day for microbiology students. Have members of your Branch give talks about their different careers—what they do and how they trained for their jobs.
- Have an annual lecturer whom the students invite—many very busy and prominent scientists are much more likely and willing to accept if invited by students.
- Help to sponsor a Student Chapter by providing funds for a group of faculty to network. I have organized such a group in eastern Pennsylvania, with the help of the Eastern Pennsylvania ASM Branch and have written about the details of this network of about 17 other microbiology educators in *Focus on Microbiology Education*. We have funding to meet three times each year—once each semester (faculty only) to talk about teaching (in the spring) and research (in the fall) and once during the summer so that our students can present posters at a symposium that features a keynote speaker.

Those whose jobs do not involve much contact with students will find these activities energizing, and you will see great promise for the future of microbiology. If all who students see are professors, they might not realize that there are other jobs for those with our training. For those who are educators, this is an opportunity to expand your network and to meet potential guest speakers or research mentors for your students. Branches have several free student memberships to give to interested students; perhaps the officers of the Student Chapter could be considered to receive those benefits.

We look forward to a reinvigoration of Student Chapters and Branch interactions. If you are a student or full member of ASM or would like to become one, or if you are interested in local Branch activities and helping with Student Chapters, please feel free to contact Amy Cheng Vollmer, Chair, Student Committee, about student activities. The grass roots activities of the Student Membership Committee are coordinated through the ASM Membership Board, chaired by Toby K. Eisenstein.

Amy Cheng Vollmer