Message from the Assembly Chair

It has been an extremely busy past year with planning and programming for the upcoming virtual ATS meeting for 2021. 2020 has brought many challenges to the ATS community with many members of the assembly still on the front lines of this pandemic. However, we are encouraged by the impressive US vaccine roll out for several FDA approved vaccines. 2020-2021 has also been a difficult and tragic time, revealing racism and disparities that tear at our core mission of equity and inclusion. Facing these issues head on has strengthened the assembly’s resolve in keeping equity in the forefront when meeting our demands along the key lines of research, education, career development, and patient care. In writing this, I want to acknowledge and thank all of the committee members that have been tireless leaders through this very difficult year. I want to thank my co-Chair and incoming assembly Chair, Dr. Anne Sperling. I look forward to her leadership! She has already started a number of initiatives that will further support the mission of the assembly. In closing, it has been a pleasure and an honor to serve the assembly membership. The dedication of the membership and the support of the ATS staff has been impeccable as we continue to strive to improve health care for all.

COVID-19 Resources:


World-wide COVID-19 cases: https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/#countries


PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT
Benjamin Suratt, MD, Chair

The Planning Committee composed of 12-15 members and an apprentice, who work on several critical tasks in the AII Assembly. These include: 1) Soliciting, assisting, and reviewing Planning Project submissions from AII members and recommending them to the ATS Project Review Subcommittee for funding; 2) Soliciting and reviewing nomination for the AII Assembly Awards (Early Career Rising Star, Early Career Achievement, International Early Career, and Scientific Accomplishment Awards); and 3) Assisting in the development of ATS Patient Education & Information sheets. With the upcoming 2021-2022 season, we have a new committee chair, Sumita Khatri, MD, from the Cleveland Clinics. Congratulations to Sumita on assuming this position!

This was a banner year for All Planning Project Applications, as 4 were funded, including one renewal. They are: “Microbiome, Metabolism and Immunoregulation of Asthma,” (Workshop Report, new; Yvonne Huang PI), “Research Bronchoscopies in Mechanically Ventilated Subjects” (Workshop Report, new project; Carmen Mikacenic, PI), “Official ATS Statement: Research Questions in Mild Asthma” (Research Statement, new project; Ar-
jun Mohan, PI), “Advancing Lung Immunology Research” (Workshop Report, new project; Rod Rahimi, PI); and “Update On The Features and Measurements Of Experimental Acute Lung Injury In Animals” (Workshop Report, project renewal; Hrish Kulkarni). Congratulations to the PI’s – this is the best we’ve done at PRS in at least a decade or more!

I encourage members to submit new projects and keep in mind that planning committee members can be a great resource for guidance during the preparation phase of the proposal. Information for applicants can be found on the PRS Resource Center. The application process is open through July.

The AII Assembly Awards are being reviewed at this time and will be awarded at the Annual AII Business Meeting in May. Please consider nominating colleagues for the next cycle. To nominate a college, visit the nominating portal.

For questions about Planning Project applications, AII Award nominations, or joining the AII Planning Committee, please reach out to Sumita Khatri: khatris@ccf.org

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**ASSEMBLY AWARD WINNERS**

**All Rising Star Award:**

William Bain, MD  
University of Pittsburgh  
Pittsburgh, PA  
Nominated by Janet S. Lee, MD

Dr. Bain is Assistant Professor of Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh whose research focuses on improving our understanding of how the lung interacts with and employs cellular and humoral elements of innate immunity to combat pathogens and manage injury. Dr. Bain has elucidated the protective role of platelets and their factors against lung epithelial cell death during severe pneumonia and how increased fluid-phase alternative complement pathway function is a key defense mechanism during the biological stress of critical illness in patients with acute respiratory failure.

**All Rising Star Award:**

Rod Rahimi, MD, PhD  
Harvard University/Massachusetts General Hospital  
Boston, MA  
Nominated by Benjamin Medoff, MD

Dr. Rahimi is Assistant Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School whose research focuses on defining the mechanisms regulating the development, maintenance, and function of memory CD4+ T cells in immune-mediated pulmonary diseases. Specifically, he utilizes both animal models and human subjects to investigate the biology of tissue-resident and re-circulating memory CD4+ T cells in allergic/eosinophilic asthma. Dr. Rahimi’s laboratory is affiliated with the Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine and the Center for Immunology and Inflammatory Diseases at MGH.

**All International Early Career Award:**

Niki DJ Ubags, PhD  
Senior Scientist, Division of Pulmonary Medicine, Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Vaudois  
Lausanne, CH  
Nominated by Benjamin Suratt, MD

Dr. Ubags completed her PhD in a collaboration between Maastricht University (NL) and the University of Vermont (US) studying the effects of obesity and metabolic syndrome on pulmonary host defense. Following this, she pursued postdoctoral studies first in Maastricht on the effects of obesity on pulmonary epithelial barrier function and its role in the impairment of the pulmonary host defense, and then at University Hospital of Lausanne (CH) where she investigated the effects of host-microbe interactions in early life respiratory health and disease, with resulting publications in Mucosal Immunol, JACI, and Immunity. During this time, she received multiple awards from both the ATS and ERS, as well as a Kootstra Talent fellowship (NL), and funding from the Fondation Placide Nicod (CH) and Swiss Lung League (CH) to support her studies. In 2020, she became head of research in the division of respiratory medicine at the University Hospital Lausanne. Her independent research program is inspired by both her graduate and postdoctoral studies, in which she combines her knowledge on obesity-associated effects on immune function and microbiome-mediated early life immune maturation, to decipher the effects of early life exposures on immune cell seeding and susceptibility to respiratory disease development in infants and adulthood.

(Continued on Page 3)
AII Early Career Award:

Rachel G. Scheraga, MD
Cleveland Clinic Lerner Research Institute
Cleveland, OH
Nominated by Mitchell Olman, MD

Dr. Scheraga has opened up a heretofore unstudied field. She identified the signaling pathway and defined the role of mechanosensitivity, to physiological range matrix stiffness, on key macrophage functions and phenotype. She identified that the cation channel, TRPV4, mediates the integration of the stiffness response signal with that of LPS to enhance macrophages phagocytosis, and alter cytokine production, and further, that this response is signaled through a MAPK switch (Scheraga et al, J Immunol. 2016 and 2020). Her work was extended to an in vivo model where she demonstrated the role of TRPV4 in bacterial clearance and cytokine secretion in P. aeruginosa pneumonia-associated lung injury (Scheraga et al, J Immunol. 2020). In addition to her roles as a highly trained intensivist in the medical ICU, and her service to the ATS, her compelling research work sheds new light on the pathogenesis of infectious-associated acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS).

AII Scientific Accomplishment Award:

Joseph (Jay) Mizgerd, PhD
Pulmonary Center, Boston University School of Medicine
Boston, MA
Nominated by Lee Quinton, PhD

Spanning nearly 3 decades, Dr. Jay Mizgerd has been committed to unraveling the molecular mechanisms controlling pneumonia outcome and susceptibility. He has made seminal contributions to the field, including but not limited to the discovery of cell-specific immune signaling hubs and the biology underlying immune remodeling in the experienced lung. His substantial efforts advocating for the importance of pneumonia as a public health concern and critical research area have made him the steward of this field in the ATS and beyond. He is a Professor of Medicine, Microbiology, and Biochemistry, and the Director of the Pulmonary Center at the Boston University School of Medicine.
Despite all the challenges conferred by navigating a rapidly shifting environment of virtual meetings, the AII Program Committee found new opportunities to schedule scientific symposia requested by our AII members independently of the ATS International Meeting. These virtual meetings were highly attended and included several topics, including those related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The AII Program Committee has put forward a very exciting content for the ATS 2021 Virtual International Conference. We have five scientific symposiums covering basic and clinic topics, including immune mechanism in allograft dysfunction in lung transplantation, asthma obesity and metabolism, adult and pediatric asthma genetic studies, using omics to endotype COPD and the pathophysiology of eosinophils in asthma; two mini symposiums on “Oomics in Asthma and COPD”, and “Advances in Asthma Therapies”. There are also several thematic poster sessions, covering translational studies in asthma and COPD, inflammation and pulmonary infections, ARDS, sepsis, ILD pathogenesis, COVID-19, clinical studies of allergic airway diseases and case reports. Overall, the breadth of program content expands across many areas and disciplines of pulmonary and critical care, ensuring exiting and novel content for clinicians and researchers.

(Continued on Page 5)
The SIC team is actively working on what content can be put in online in lieu of ATS 2021 being virtual.

ATS ASSEMBLY CHALLENGE RESULTS
Assembly on Allergy, Immunology, and Inflammation Raised Most Dollars

ATS Assembly Members Give Back!

The results of the 2020 ATS Assembly Challenge are: the Assembly on Allergy Immunology & Inflammation raised the most dollars with $66,072; Nursing had the highest member participation with 18 percent; Critical Care had the highest number of first-time givers in December with 9 new donors!

The annual ATS Assembly Challenge taps into the grassroots community — and competitive spirit — of the ATS Assemblies in support of the ATS Funds for the Future Campaign.

You provided a big boost to our year-end giving campaigns—and a boost to our upcoming grant-making capacity. The tremendous energy around the Challenge is truly inspiring and your support has been crucial for developing the next generation of researchers, clinicians, and medical educators.

The ATS would like to thank all ATS Assemblies for their outreach and generosity during the Challenge.

Congratulations to the Allergy Immunology & Inflammation, Nursing, and Critical Care Assemblies!

To learn more about the ATS Research Program or to make a gift, visit research.thoracic.org.

SCIENCE AND INNOVATION CORE REPORT
Stephanie Christenson, MD, MS, and Lee J. Quinton, PhD, Co-Chairs

The SIC team is actively working on what content can be put in online in lieu of ATS 2021 being virtual.
The AII Early Career Working group has created a Women in Medicine group to promote the academic development of women through Webinar and Workshop forums. Bethany Moore, PhD, Chair and Professor of Microbiology & Immunology at the University of Michigan delivered the first webinar on February 2, 2021 entitled “Leadership in Academic Medicine: Reflections on the journey.” The session was highly attended with the recording posted to the AII Early Career Working group website. Our next Women in Medicine forum is scheduled for April 12th at 2-3 pm EST and will focus on supporting the pipeline of women and underrepresented physician-scientists. Drs. Suber, Neptune, and Lee will lead the discussion based on their recent ATS Scholars article “Inclusion in the Pulmonary, Critical Care, and Sleep Medicine Physician-Scientist Workforce. Building with Intention.” The Early Career Work group is also working on initiatives to promote the training of the next generation of pulmonary researchers in the areas of Genomics and Immunology. In collaboration with the Section of Genetics & Genomics, we are developing a podcast series on building tools for a career in Pulmonary Genomics research. In addition, we are developing a podcast series on building tools for a career in Lung Immunology. The Early Career Working group also continues our Webinar journal club series on important papers in the field of lung immunology. Lastly, we are preparing for the annual ATS meeting with an Early Career Kick Off Meet and Greet as well as a Teaching competition with other ATS assemblies to promote our medical educators.

The web committee has been active over the past year coordinating activities with other assemblies to create and disseminate content related to COVID-19, mainly in the form of webinars. These webinars were very well attended, and we received great feedback. Our podcast group has also been active in other topics including therapeutics of cystic fibrosis and asthma. Our group will continue to organize content, including new webinars and we are looking for new ideas and topics of interest. This year we recruited a social media editor, Dr. Sara Assaf to assist in getting AII relative content out on various social media platforms. Anyone interested can send his or her contact information to Dr. Gomez-Villalobos at jose.gomez-villalobos@yale.edu.

Our group is broadly interested in hearing from international members about ways the AII assembly can be most beneficial. One important aspect of our work is to provide an opportunity to mix and mingle among international attendees at the conference, but we also seek to nominate international members as facilitators and chairs for the ATS programming events.

The nominating committee elected in 2019 consisted of Bethany Moore, Sally Wenzel and Janet Lee. Under their leadership, the AII ran a successful 2020 election to elect Anne Sperling as Assembly Chair Elect, Blanca Himes as Program Committee Chair-Elect. There was also an election to seat Lee Quinton, Yvonne Huang and Gerard Koppelman as the 2020-21 Nominating Committee with Beth Moore remaining as chair. The 2020-21 committee reviewed the program descriptions for Program Committee Chair-Elect, and the Nominating Committee. We were delighted to solicit 2 nominations for Program Committee Chair-Elect and 4 nominations for the Nominating Committee.

The AII assembly boasts 3178 total primary and secondary members. This number is down somewhat from the 3251 members in 2020. Participation in the 2021 assembly voting was down from 8.5% of total assembly members participating in 2019 and 2020 to only 7.5% of members participating in 2021. This represented 239 total votes (32% from primary U.S. members, 5% from international members and 63% from secondary members). We attribute the declines this year to issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic and likely lapsed (Continued on Page 7)
memberships when many universities instituted discretionary funding freezes which some members may use to pay for ATS dues. Regardless, we had an outstanding slate of nominees to run for the open positions.

We are pleased to announce the results of the 2020-21 election:

Program Committee Chair Elect: Laura Crotty-Alexander
Nominating Committee Members: Farrah Kheradmand and Carmen Mikacenic.
An international member will be appointed to the committee by the incoming chair, Jay Kolls.

We do think one of the most important things you can do as an ATS member is vote for your local leadership, so spread the word and be sure to watch for the new slate of candidates running for office in 2021.

- Assembly Chair Elect for 2020 will be Dr. Anne Sperling
- Program Committee Chair Elect for 2020 will be Dr. Blanca Himes
- Nominating Committee Members for 2020 will be Drs. Lee Quinton and Yvonne Huang

Congratulations to the elected winners. We look forward to working with each of you.

SECTION ON GENETICS AND GENOMICS REPORT
Victor E. Ortega, MD, PhD, ATSF, Chair, Ann Chen Wu, MD, MPH, Co-Chair

Members of the Section on Genetics and Genomics (SGG) span most of the ATS assemblies and include scientists with MDs, PhDs, MD-PhDs, and other degrees. Some of our members practice medicine, while others devote all of their time to research and/or teaching. Our research interests are broad in terms of diseases and processes related to pulmonary, critical care, and sleep medicine. What we share in common is that our approaches to study these diseases and processes involves omics techniques such as: genetics, genomics, epigenomics, metabolomics, proteomics, integrative, multi-omics analyses, and systems biology.

Our goals in using these techniques are to better understand functional mechanisms underlying pulmonary disease processes, and to achieve precision medicine in pulmonary, critical care, and sleep medicine.

The section hosts frequent journal clubs and webinars (special thanks to Katie Steiling and Dara Torgerson) of which several have been related to COVID-19 genomics. [Journal clubs can be found here](#).

- Our website has profiles of [featured researchers](#) (special thanks Kaity Allen)
- Our website also has a [publication spotlight](#) (special thanks Kaity Allen)

PhD, BASIC AND TRANSLATIONAL SCIENTISTS WORKING GROUP REPORT
Bethany Moore, PhD, Chairs

Our PTBS working group is composed of members from multiple assemblies that get together monthly to discuss issues of importance to members of ATS that are non-practicing clinicians. We also welcome input from physician-scientists who are primarily research-focused. Because ATS is such a large organization and largely one that is clinically focused, the PTBS working group is focused on creating a smaller community structure for support, networking and advocacy to ATS leadership. The co-chairs for the past year have been Beth Moore from the University of Michigan and Tom Mariani from the University of Rochester. The PTBS working group is currently housed within the RSF assembly despite membership being across the ATS.

Accomplishments and Ongoing Projects:

1. **Reception for researchers:** In 2019, we helped to host the PBTS reception as part of virtual ATS in the Science and Innovation Center (SIC). There were 225 people registered with over 70 attendees. We also actively participated in the planning of events in the SIC. We are actively helping to plan the 2020 event now.

2. **Seminar Database:** The COVID disruption created real challenges to performing research, networking and opportunities for speaking engagements for faculty. In response to this, we created a database of researchers eager to provide seminars (virtually or in per-
son) on a variety of topics. Our hope was that this database would increase opportunities for institutions to include more research-oriented seminars in their weekly offerings. As of March, 2021, the database has 133 scientists! You can fill a lot of seminar series with that! Check out the database here.

3. **Social Justice:** We have a subcommittee talking about ways our PTBS working group and ATS overall can better respond to issues of racism and social injustice within our society and institutions. We welcome you to join this ongoing conversation!

4. **Job Postings:** We advocated for the ability to advertise for post-docs and to have post-docs be able to post their CVs to the ATS job board site free of charge. Be sure to check out this resource here: https://careers.thoracic.org/

5. **DocMatters:** We have been working with DocMatters to determine if this platform can be useful for discussion of issues pertaining to research and non-clinical matters. We met with DocMatters executives to help map out strategies for better engagement with research-focused members of ATS.

6. **Technique videos:** We have a subgroup working on identifying common and important research techniques and getting quality videos made and published in an ATS venue to share that knowledge more broadly.

7. **Awards:** We are working to be sure that non-practicing clinicians are identified and nominated for many of the assembly-based and society-based awards.

8. **Important Survey:** We are planning a survey of Pulmonary, Sleep and Pediatric Division Chiefs to gather data to better understand how PhD and non-practicing clinical faculty are hired and what barriers and opportunities may exist for strengthening engagement between researchers and clinicians. We hope these data will provide the foundation for an ATS project proposal that aims to address this important issue. Let us know if you want to be involved!

If you want more information, want to suggest a topic for us to tackle or are interested in joining, please email Beth Moore, bmoore@umich.edu or Tom Mariani, tom_mariani@urmc.rochester.edu.

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**MICROBIOME WORKING GROUP REPORT**

Stavros Garantziotis, MD, Chair

Microbiome working group reports the following progress in the past year:

- Finalizing ATS Book on “The Microbiome in Respiratory Disease: Principles, Tools and Applications”. Editors: Yvonne J Huang, Stavros Garantziotis
- Joined Section on Genetics and Genomics with the goal of expanding microbiome outreach
- Planning Journal clubs on microbiome-related lung research

**SCIENCE CORE IC PROJECT REPORT**

Wonder Puryear Drake, MD, and Gary Peter Anderson, PhD, ATSF, Co-Chairs

The Science Core theme for 2021 will be Sex Differences in Lung Diseases. We encourage all AII members to submit program content in this area for 2022!
The American Thoracic Society is pleased to announce our new

2020 ATS Fellows

David Itiro Kasahara
Arrowhead Pharmaceutical

Abeabaw Yohannes
Azusa Pacific University

Elena Goncharova
University of California, Davis

Jose Antonio Castro Rodriguez
Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile

David Griffith
National Jewish Health

Alexander Sy
Wake Forest Health

Susmita Chowdhuri
School of Medicine, Pulmonary/Critical Care and Sleep

Samya Nasr
University of Michigan

Adam Benjafield
ResMed

Richard Casaburi
Lundquist Institute for Biomedical Innovation at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center

Obianuju Ozoh
Department of Medicine, College of Medicine, University of Lagos

Lida Hariri
Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School

Yuksel Peker
Koc University School of Medicine

Usha Raj
University of Illinois at Chicago

Basak Coruh
University of Washington

James Donohue
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Marcus Jones
Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul

Lisa Maier
National Jewish Health

Branca Himes
University of Pennsylvania

Yvonne Jean Huang
University of Michigan

R. Scott Stephens
Johns Hopkins University

Timothy Girard
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine

Motoo Yamauchi
Department of Respiratory Medicine, Nara Medical University

Jennifer Ingram
Duke University

Mei Lan Han
University of Michigan

Sanjay R. Patel
University of Pittsburgh

Mariani Sockrider
Baylor College of Medicine

Micheala Aldred
Indiana University

Max Salfinger
University of South Florida College of Public Health & Morsani College of Medicine

Peter Calverley
University of Liverpool

Angela Rogers
Stanford University

Rodney Britt
Nationwide Children’s Hospital

L. Kecki Williams
Wayne State University School of Medicine & Center for Individualized and Genomic Medicine Research (CIGMA), Henry Ford Health System

Praveen Akuthota
University of California San Diego

Sunil Sharma
West Virginia University

Erin Wetherbee
University of Minnesota / Minneapolis VAHCS

Jacqueline Kaqima
Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine

Ammar Saadoon Alishash
The University of Alabama at Birmingham

Nandita Nadig
Medical University of South Carolina

Daniel Obaseki
Obafemi Awolowo University

Julie A. Barta, MD
Korman Respiratory Institute at Thomas Jefferson University

Sivaraja Subramaniam
Delta Care Hospital

Dr. Neeraj Vij
Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Precision Theraonotics Inc & VU Biotech

The ATS Fellow designation is a mark of distinction, conferring recognition on members for their accomplishments, dedication, and contributions to the Society as well as to the fields of pulmonary, critical care, and sleep medicine.

The ATS Fellow application period will open in May 2021. The new ATS Fellows will be announced this Fall and recognized at ATS 2022.

For more information about the ATS Fellows, visit our website: https://www.thoracic.org/members/membership/ats-fellows.php