



*Reminder:  
2018 SIMB Election for Board of Directors*

The SIMB Election for positions on the Board of Directors will commence March 1 and end March 31 at noon EST.

Current members will receive login instructions for accessing the voting module.

After voting ends, the SIMB Election Committee, currently chaired by Kristien Mortelmans, SRI International UC and consisting of a minimum of two SIMB members, receives access to the voting module and certifies counts from online voting, as well as any paper ballots previously requested and postmarked no later than the deadline date for electronic voting, and delivers the results to the SIMB President and SIMB Secretary for announcement.



# Candidate for President-Elect

## Janet Westpheling



Janet Westpheling is a Professor in the Department of Genetics at the University of Georgia. She was a graduate student with David Hopwood at the John Innes Center in Norwich, England, and was a postdoc with Julian Davies at the University of Wisconsin and Geneva, Switzerland, and Richard Losick at Harvard. Her current research is focused on the development of genetic technologies for micro-organisms that convert lignocellulosic biomass to biofuels and industrial chemicals and is funded by grants from the Department of Energy. She is a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Society for Biological Engineering, and associate editor for the *Journal of Biotechnology for Biofuels*, and was an author of the 2006 report from the National

Research Council, "Review of the Department of Energy's Genomics: GTL Program". She is an Activity Lead and member of the BioEnergy Science Center, Oak Ridge National Laboratory/Department of Energy. She holds patents for microbial genetic technologies and is an active consultant to industries involved in the metabolic engineering of micro-organisms for the production of fuels, chemicals and pharmaceuticals. Jan has served the Society in many ways over many years. She has been active in presenting talks, chairing and organizing sessions and planning meetings for more than 20 years. Most recently she served as a member of the Board of Directors and as Treasurer of the Society for 6 years.

When asked about her vision for the Society, she wrote the following: "I gave my first talk at an SIM local chapter meeting and grew up in the Society. It has been a source of intellectual growth and professional support and that has meant a great deal to me. If I am elected president, my priorities will be to keep the science of our meetings strong and relevant and to encourage and support students. In this day and age of funding and the rapidly changing interests of industry, it will be critical to involve academic, industrial and national lab scientists to engage in the scientific direction of the Society. Intellectual and cultural diversity has always been a strength the Society and I will strongly support those efforts."



## Candidate for President-Elect: Brian Davison



The Society for Industrial Microbiology and Biotechnology is defined by what we DO rather than by an academic discipline. Likewise, while we come from academic, industrial and government backgrounds, we want our work and discoveries to be used. So how does SIMB serve its members and society? Our conferences are the primary means for sharing Information and new discoveries, and our meetings provide networking opportunities to accelerate our shared goals.

I have been a member for over 12 years because I find friends and colleagues in SIMB share my goals, interests values and interests in moving research to applications.

My primary participation has been in the Symposium on Biotechnology for Fuels and Chemicals (SBFC). I served 12 years as one of the two co-chairs of the meeting; during my tenure with the SBFC leadership the Symposium grew into the most important technical meeting in the biofuels area. During this time I served as Editor of the Proceedings in Applied Biochemistry and Biotechnology. Mark Finkelstein and I worked with SIMB to transfer management of the SBFC into the SIMB as its largest meeting. I continued to serve with SIMB on the SBFC organizing committee for another 7 years. I chaired numerous sessions at the SBFC, notably a series of six sessions over eight years on international bioenergy centers.

I am committed to our goal to move science from fundamental to applications – as illustrated by my R&D100 award for a process for succinic acid which led to the process now being commercialized by BioAmber and the new technology licensed by Vertimass to convert ethanol into hydrocarbon fuel blendstocks. I also strive for public outreach and working on our shared science visions and roadmaps. If interested, my CV is at <https://www.ornl.gov/staff-profile/brian-h-davison>

Due to recent strong leadership, the Society is in good shape so I see the role of the President to continue improving and preserving what works. One thing that works is the ability for new members to join into the activities of the Society and organization of the meetings. I would like to extend the committee structure used for the general SIMB meeting into the planning for the SBFC program. Wide participation in meeting organization is a core value that requires constant attention and promotion. In addition to assuring timely program topics, participation in planning enhances the professional development of our members.

Therefore: How does SIMB continue to improve and how can a President help? I will support the leadership and organizing committees of our annual and targeted meetings. Many of our recurring meetings have informal mentoring mechanisms and some continuity in the organizing committee. The President can ensure each new program chair has mentors in the process while allowing for innovation and turnover.

The utilization of webtools is one area. The SIMB abstract submission system is working well. I think we need to seek some best practices among our meetings to utilize webtools to ease meeting planning and then to share these with newer chairs and organizing committees. With the guidance of the SIMB board, this examination may be informal interviews or a more formal study. Likewise, we need to examine how to use webtools to improve networking. For example, how can the current SIMB group on LinkedIn provide better value for our members in their career and scientific networking?

Lastly, both my friend and fellow candidate, Dr. Westpheling, and I share a deep commitment to outreach. SIMB needs to help provide our members with talking points and perhaps draft presentations for adaptation in our conversations with the public and our students on current issues such as synthetic biology in industrial microbiology, biosafety and GMOs.



## Candidate for Secretary: Elisabeth Elder



Thank you for the opportunity to be a candidate for Secretary of the Society for Industrial Microbiology and Biotechnology (SIMB). I have had the pleasure of meeting many of you during my 31 year membership in the Society. For those I don't know, my academic background includes a BS in Biology from Southern Methodist University; an MS in Microbiology from Stephen F. Austin State University; and a PhD in Microbiology from Texas A&M University. My career has largely been in academia including positions at Georgia Southwestern State University in Americus, Georgia; Louisiana State University at Alexandria in Alexandria, Louisiana; and Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama. My teaching has covered general biology, human anatomy and physiology, comparative

vertebrate anatomy, ecology, environmental science, general microbiology, soil microbiology, medical microbiology, and immunology. My research areas have included isolation of antibiotic resistant bacteria from sewage, water, and sewage oxidation systems; development and control of biofilms; development of biocides; and interactions between soil microbes. Support for these projects came through grants from the NSF, NIH, NASA, and through the universities where I taught. In addition, I have experience in developing best practices in a food microbiology laboratory. Both the teaching and research activities have been greatly supported by participating in SIMB which facilitated remaining current in microbiology.

In addition to attending meetings, convening sessions, and making presentations, my activities in SIMB have included serving as chair of the Education Committee (6 years), as a member of the Publications Committee (approaching 10 years), as Secretary for two terms (6 years), and as Editor-in-Chief of *SIMB News* for two terms (approaching 10 years). I am very pleased to be a candidate for Secretary. My goals in this position will be to contribute to, and provide broad support for, the activities of the Board of Directors (BOD) and the Society's committees; to maintain records of the Society's BOD meetings and business meetings; to review contracts for the Society; and to work with the headquarters staff. I will rely on past experience and ongoing interests to do my best to serve the Society if elected to this position.



## Candidate for Secretary: Noel Fong



As Director of Strain Development at Nucleis (San Diego, CA), Noel oversees the ASAPTM (Accelerated Strain Adaptation Platform) program, where she works with partners to apply Nucleis' non-GM gene editing technology (RTDSTM) to fungi, yeast, algae and bacteria.

She has been at Nucleis/Cibus since 2007. She was at Zymogenetics/Novo Nordisk/ now Bristol-Myers Squibb in Seattle, where she did protein expression in a variety of yeasts. Before that, she had a joint appointment as a Research Fellow at the University of Michigan Medical School and Parke-Davis Pharmaceuticals (now Pfizer), studying insulin signaling pathways and identifying binding sites on a protein scaffold involved in insulin-responsive glycogen synthesis. Nucleis is her second startup company; she was employee number 55 at Chiron (now Novartis), where she worked on expression human growth factors (IGF-I, EGF, PDGF). While in graduate school, she studied regulation of glycolysis in yeast at the level of glucose transport, and characterized the activities of two unusual yeasts for the fining of wines. Noel received her PhD in Microbiology and M.S. in Food Science and Technology in the Dept. of Viticulture and Enology at the University of California at Davis, and her A.B. in Chemistry and Biophysics from the University of California at Berkeley. As a career yeast biologist, she also spent a year at the Seattle Culinary Academy training as a Pastry Chef to better understand its applications.

As an active 30+ year member of the Society for Industrial Microbiology and Biotechnology, she is the Conference Chair for the 2018 General Meeting in Chicago. She has been on the Program Committee for Fermentation for the last 7 years, as well as on the Education and Diversity committees. Formerly President of the Northern California local chapter, she is working to revive the Southern California chapter. She serves as a reviewer for the *Journal of Industrial Microbiology and Biotechnology*, and *Enzyme and Microbial Technology*.

As a board member, Noel promotes:

- ▶ Preparing students for the transition from school to industrial careers. This entails finding ways for students to get the kind of experience industry values while they are still in school.
- ▶ Outreach to college and graduate students in locations where we have meetings, especially groups normally underrepresented in microbiology. This may be their first introduction to a professional society, and provides ideas for careers.
- ▶ Cross fertilization with organizations with common interests such as the American Society for Microbiology, Institute of Food Technologists and American Chemical Society all touch upon different aspects of fermentation. When she was President of the Northern California section, Noel organized a Summit of local professional societies, where representatives from 30 groups gathered to network.



## *Candidate for Director: Eli Groban*



Eli is a recognized Industry Leader with 8 years experience in metabolic engineering at Intrexon and LS9 and has consistently demonstrated success in many aspects of biological engineering for Fuel and Specialty Chemical production including pathway optimization, enzyme evolution, genetic modification, protein/pathway/whole strain mutagenesis, fermentation, and scale up. Eli is currently Head of Science in Autodesk's Life Sciences group, a team committed to moving biological design software from a barrier to an enabler of scientific progress. Prior to Autodesk, Eli led a team at Intrexon to upgrade Natural Gas to higher value fuels and chemicals, managing all aspects of development from molecular biology through fermentation and scale up accomplishing

first of a kind production of liquid fuels from methane via microbial fermentation. Eli started his industry career at LS9, Inc, where his team engineered a microbial strain to produce fatty alcohol from sugar, meeting external specifications for composition, yield, titer, productivity, and scale. Eli earned a PhD in Biophysics from the University of California, San Francisco and has 6 patent applications/patents on the development of new technologies for engineering proteins, metabolic pathways, and microbial systems.

Eli is passionate about the application and championing of metabolic engineering for bioindustrial applications and is a highly active member of the Society of Industrial Microbiology and Biotechnology community, exemplified by presentations and chairing sessions at various SIMB meetings including the Annual Meetings and the Symposium on Fuels and Chemicals. Most recently, Eli chaired the Committee on Corporate Engagement, leading the development of a plan to increase corporate participation in the Society. Currently, Eli is serving on the SIMB Corporate Outreach Committee. Eli's vision of SIMB is to be the leading society for industrial microbiology, paving the way to a future where microbial produced products are ubiquitous across all sectors.



## *Candidate for Director: Tiffany Rau*



Tiffany D Rau is a Senior Consultant at BioProcess Technology Consultants and is a passionate and globally recognized expert in bioprocessing and a Six Sigma Master Black Belt. She has a wealth of international technical and managerial experience from Development to Post-Commercial Manufacturing (cGMP). Dr. Rau has been instrumental in designing and leading initiatives where Research and Development and Manufacturing come together to deliver current and future generations of products together to increase speed to market and minimize technology transfer challenges. Dr. Rau has been the advisor on over 100 different projects in the areas of process intensification, scale-up, variability reduction, and continuous improvement for both Microbial and Mammalian

Expression Systems Previously, Dr. Rau has held leadership positions at Evonik-Degussa, Eli Lilly, Pall and GlaxoSmithKline all focused in process development, tech transfer, and commercial manufacturing. Tiffany earned her Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering (ChE) from Vanderbilt University and received her B.S.E. in Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering from the University of Pennsylvania.

Tiffany is also very active in a number of scientific societies as well as in academia. Tiffany is currently on the Advisory Board of Vanderbilt University's Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering Department as well as on Florida State's and Florida A and M's ChE Advisory Board. She also enjoys designing capstone projects for undergraduate students and also mentoring them. Increasing the opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to interact with our members would be one of the initiatives Tiffany would like to be a part of and organize as a SIMB Director. This would allow the SIMB organization to continue to grow as an organization as well as positively impact the next generation of scientist.

Tiffany has been a member of SIMB for many years and her first industry presentation was made at a SIMB Annual meeting! Tiffany has also organized sessions at the SIMB National meeting focused on Fermentation and Cell Culture. RAFT™ (Recent Advances in Fermentation Technology) is one of Tiffany's favorite scientific meeting/conference and she has been actively participated in the meeting as a session organizer, paper presenter and poster presenter over the years. You can just imagine her excitement when she was named Program Chair of the 2015 RAFT™ meeting and she is also the 2017 RAFT™ Program chair. She brings enthusiasm and excitement to everything she does.

Over the years technologies and industries have changed as science is always evolving but one thing has not, the Mission of SIMB which is "Empower our members and others to address current and future challenges facing humanity using industrial microbiology and biotechnology." She is looking forward to the opportunity as a Society Director to ensure that Mission continues for many years to come.