

SRP grantees gather in Baton Rouge for annual meeting

At the annual meeting of the NIEHS Superfund Research Program (SRP), more than 250 researchers, trainees, and administrators from across the nation gathered Oct. 15-17 in Baton Rouge, La.

The SRP supports multidisciplinary research to address human and environmental health challenges related to Superfund and other hazardous waste sites. Hosted by SRP grantees at Louisiana State University (LSU), the meeting provided a forum for discussing new research, technology, communication, and community engagement in critical areas related to the SRP mission.

The main meeting opened with remarks by Stephania Cormier, Ph.D., LSU SRP co-director. She discussed the state of the program and the wide range of SRP scientific disciplines featured in journal publications, grantee research highlights, and community engagement and research translation activities over the past year.

Following Cormier, LSU President and Chancellor F. King Alexander, Ph.D., related the mission of the SRP to his own background, describing how he grew up near a Superfund site and observed negative health effects firsthand. He spoke highly of the transdisciplinary group of researchers at the meeting and tasked them with continuing their substantial work to improve human health and the environment in the U.S. and around the world.

"This kind of university-wide research program is exactly the type of approach necessary for LSU to really make an impact in the health of its citizens," Alexander said. "When you add that to the combined efforts of researchers at every Superfund site across the country, you get the kind of impact that truly affects a nation. I'm proud that LSU can play a part in that."

Sessions highlight science and other activities

Scientific session speakers shared research findings and implications of their work, with a focus on four main topics - halogenated pollutants; emerging contaminants and pollutant mixtures; developmental and other human health effects; and arsenic and heavy metals. Presentations ranged from research to better understand the health effects, mechanisms of actions, and variability in toxicity of legacy and emerging chemicals, to fieldwork and bench-scale projects to remediate these chemicals at hazardous waste sites and nearby communities.

For a full day prior to the beginning of the main meeting, grantees involved in research translation and community engagement gathered to hear speakers and participate in discussions related to communication strategies for forming stronger connections with communities, non-government organizations, and public agencies. They explored ways to engage communities facing environmental exposures, identify research gaps in understanding the societal effects of hazardous waste sites, and interact more effectively with each other and federal stakeholders.

Celebrating research by trainees

Along with the traditional presentations and plenary sessions, the meeting set aside time for celebrating award-winning students.

SRP trainee Corin Hammond, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Arizona, accepted the 2013 [Karen Wetterhahn Memorial Award](#). During her talk, she described her research on phytoremediation of mine wastes in semi-arid environments.

Six students also received prizes for their efforts in the annual student poster competition. In the non-biomedical poster session, the winners were Jing Sun of Columbia University; Leslie Knecht of the University of Miami; and Minghui Gui of the University of Kentucky. In the biomedical category, the winners were Daniel Gusenleitner of Boston University; Fabian Grimm of the University of Iowa; and Peter Wagner of Harvard University.



Cormier highlighted some SRP successes from the past year, from high impact publications to community success stories. (Photo courtesy of Kelli Palmer, LSU SRP)



Hammond, right, with LSU SRP Training Core leader Robin McCarley, Ph.D., who presented her with the Karen Wetterhahn Memorial Award. (Photo courtesy of Kelli Palmer, LSU SRP)



Margaret Reams, Ph.D., LSU Community Engagement Core leader, left, introduced MacArthur Fellow Wilma Subra, who discussed her work after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, during the research translation and community engagement session. (Photo courtesy of Kelli Palmer, LSU SRP)



During a special lunch session, trainees were able to sit with principal investigators and learn about other SRP-funded research and the history of the program. (Photo courtesy of Kelli Palmer, LSU SRP)



Along with the main judged poster session for students, above, there was also a special job seekers' poster session to give potential employers the opportunity to meet trainees who are within one year of finishing their program. (Photo courtesy of Kelli Palmer, LSU SRP)



Grantees involved with research translation and community engagement met over lunch to discuss specific topics of interest, including engaging with tribal communities, using mobile apps to promote environmental health engagement, and incorporating environmental health topics in K-12 education. (Photo courtesy of Kelli Palmer, LSU SRP)



Some of the 2013 [KC Donnelly Externship](#) awardees (see the [SRP website](#) for more information on the winners) and poster winners gathered for a photo at the meeting. From left, Gui, Sun, Leah Chibwe, Peter Wagner, Shohreh Farzan, Grimm, and James Rice. (Photo courtesy of Kelli Palmer, LSU SRP)

(<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/>)

, Office of Communications and Public Liaison. The content is not copyrighted, and it can be reprinted without permission. If you use parts of Environmental Factor in your publication, we ask that you provide us with a copy for our records. We welcome your [comments and suggestions](#).
(bruskec@niehs.nih.gov)

This page URL: NIEHS website: <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/>
Email the Web Manager at webmanager@niehs.nih.gov