



Summer Newsletter 2022

Welcome to the summer 2022 and 10th issue of the ASMB e-Newsletter

Summer is finally here! For some, like ASMB President Dr. Jeff Miner and ASMB ambassador Ireti Eni-aganga, this means a new season of in-person conferences (read more about this below), for others, an opportunity to be back in the lab after a semester of teaching or to take some well-deserved time off.

And if you are already wondering what to do when fall comes, rest assured, the ASMB has you covered! You are a trainee or young investigator? Join our [mentoring program](#), attend a series of [webinars](#) on career development organized in partnership with the Histochemical Society and the American Society for Investigative Pathology, or attend the virtual [PISA2022](#), all are free to ASMB members, so do not forget to [renew your membership](#).

If you just can't wait until the [2023 biennial meeting](#), how about attending the 2nd edition of the ASMB [Fibroblast Workshop](#)? And there is much more, so read on to see what the ASMB has in store for you!

I wish you all a safe and relaxing summer,
Alexandra Naba, Editor-in-Chief



From the President's desk and across the ocean

Greetings from Washington University in St. Louis, where the science is hot but the outside temperature is even hotter!

I know from Twitter that many of my friends and colleagues have been attending various scientific meetings in the US and abroad over the last few months, while hopefully staying safe and taking advantage of opportunities that have been unavailable to the scientific community for too long. ASMB 2021 was a welcome bright spot for matrix biologists that managed to “sneak in” between the Delta and Omicron surges, but most other fields were not so lucky.

I was fortunate to attend and present at the first Extracellular Matrix Pharmacology Congress in Copenhagen last month, as did a few other ASMB members. It was kind of thrilling to attend a vibrant conference of 400 attendees in what felt like a safe--though unmasked--environment. (My own bout with COVID-19 in early May made me feel invincible.) I heard new stories about the impact of various matrix proteins on organ pathology that I would have otherwise missed. I enjoyed meeting many new people from academia, from industry, and from the venture capital world, and am in the process of exploring and hopefully establishing new mutually beneficial collaborations. As I tweeted while there, the “new normal” felt a lot like the old normal.

I am even more excited by the promise of “Tissue, Matrix, and Pathobiology”, the joint meeting of ASMB, the Histochemical Society, and the American Society for Investigative Pathology that will be held in October 2023 in beautiful Salt Lake City. Both the ASMB and the joint society organizing committees (especially ASMB President-Elect and our Meeting Chair Ambra Pozzi) are hard at work planning what should be an outstanding conference with something(s) for everyone. Please mark your calendars for October 21-25, 2023, and enjoy the rest of the summer.

All the best,

Jeff Miner, PhD.
President, ASMB

ASMB mentoring program

The new ASMB volunteer Mentoring Program is open! The goal of this program is to provide individualized support and guidance for ASMB members and the next generation of ECM scientists. You can determine the level and type of interactions you would like in order to help advance your career in science. We are excited to have already gathered **16** incredible mentors. We are now inviting prospective mentees to apply to the program. If you'd like to work with a mentor, read on!

<https://asmb.memberclicks.net/mentor-program>

ASMB Mentoring Program

ASMB is pleased to offer a new volunteer Mentoring Program for its members! The goal is to provide individualized support and guidance for the next generation of matrix scientists. You can determine the level and type of interactions you would like in order to help advance your career in science.

Who are the mentors?

Mentors are ASMB members, typically at faculty level or similar established position in biotech, pharma, etc. Mentors have volunteered to participate in this mentoring program and are interested in guiding and assisting the next generation of matrix scientists! The ASMB Mentoring Program will attempt to match mentors with mentees who have similar scientific interests.

Who qualifies for mentoring?

Any trainee (undergrad, grad, post-doc, medical student/resident) or scientist in a transitional or early faculty position who is a member of ASMB is eligible for mentoring through this program. Mentees are required to have the approval of their thesis advisor/post-doctoral mentor in order to participate in this program.

What kind of activities are involved?

Mentoring activities will be tailored to your individual needs. This could involve informal activities such as advice on career guidance or help with networking of appropriate scientific contacts, but also could be more formalized interactions. For example, your ASMB mentor could be invited to become a member of your thesis or formal institutional mentoring committee. The ASMB mentor could review your draft manuscripts or grant applications to provide advice or just be there to discuss strategies for a career in science!

What happens after I apply?

The ASMB Mentoring Committee will match mentees with mentors based on desired types of interactions and appropriate scientific expertise. You will both be notified by the Committee as to your "pairing." It is then up to you both to contact each other to discuss your interests and to make arrangements for interactions. The ASMB mentoring committee will periodically follow-up to determine satisfaction with the program.

[**Apply to the mentoring program**](#)

Interested in becoming a mentor? If you'd like to participate in the program as a mentor, just let us know. We encourage ASMB members to serve as mentors and to get involved in this important society program.

[Sign up to be a mentor](#)



ECM2022 - A first-hand account from Ireti Eni-aganga, ASMB ambassador



This spring, ASMB awarded Ireti Eni-aganga a complimentary registration to attend the ECM2022 Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark. Ireti, an ASMB member, is a doctoral candidate at Meharry Medical College (MMC). Her dissertation research focuses on the transcriptional regulation of prolidase under the mentorship of Dr. Jui Pandhare. Ireti's research focuses on understanding the regulation of prolidase, an enzyme that degrades dipeptides containing a C-terminal proline or hydroxyproline, in the context of wound healing. Her work increased her interest in the extracellular matrix and its regulation concerning disease progression, which is why she enjoyed attending the Extracellular Matrix Pharmacology Congress.

ECM2022: As Reported by Ireti Eni-aganga

The first-ever International Extracellular Matrix Pharmacology Congress (ECM2022) occurred in Copenhagen, Denmark, from the 23rd of June to the 25th of June. The function of the extracellular matrix (ECM) in disease progression is becoming a significant and popular area of study. ECM2022 meeting primarily focused on organ disorders, where the extracellular matrix is shown to have a substantial impact on cell biology and disease progression & prognosis. The meeting also focused substantially on pharmacology, providing updates on current compound trials for use in treating fibrotic diseases.

The first day of the conference began with the most extraordinary start to a conference I have experienced, with a Danish marching band popular in Copenhagen and a guitar display (though not played) by Dr. Morten Karsdal, CEO of Nordic Bioscience, who I'm convinced loves collagens more than any scientist you will ever meet. The first presentation, "exploiting the tumor extracellular matrix to potentiate anti-tumor immunity," was given by Dr. Valeria Weaver, who discussed tumor stiffness, collagen crosslinking, and its impact on metastasis. Afterward, a series of talks presented on the essential components of the ECM and the importance of ECM in cancer. The day culminated with a friendly debate on the history of the ECM with panelists Dr. Valerie Weaver, Dr. Raghu Kalluri, Dr. Jeffery Miner, and Dr. Sylvie-Ricard Blum. Dr. Kalluri raised an intriguing question: is fibrosis a tumor without cancer cells?

Though the danish band did not reprise their performance on the second day, the discussions on the role of the ECM in lung disease, the cardiorenal axis, and the ECM, and pharmacological targets and ECM modulation more than made up for it. The following day featured a one-of-a-kind panel discussion: "should we treat the ECM or the cells?" following talks on ECM signaling. On one hand, the cell produces ECM components that can lead to a diseased state, while the ECM components regulate the cell to keep it in a disease state, worsening the disease. Furthermore, the cell's connection with the surrounding ECM changes as a condition prognosis. With no particular conclusion made, we all return to the comparable infamous conundrum: which came first - the chicken or the egg?

The great Dr. Mina J. Bissell delivered the conference's concluding speech, which began with something we frequently forget in the hustle of science: remembering those suffering around the world, the most recent being the war in Ukraine. She gave an overview of some of her lab research and her years in the field. It is impossible to explain the full experience due to the many amazing speakers, posters, and debates. However, the recurring themes and topics in ECM research concerning fibrotic-related disease are endotrophin, tumor/ECM stiffness, pro-C6, fibroblasts heterogeneity, and the scar-in-ajar fibrotic model.

Join the ISMB and become eligible to apply for travel awards!

The International Society for Matrix Biology (ISMB) provides international travel grants to allow members to attend major meetings in matrix biology anywhere in the world. While priority will be given to meetings directly supported by ISMB (including Matrix Biology Europe, the American Society for Matrix Biology, and the Pan Pacific Connective Tissue Societies Symposium), applications are accepted for any meeting, provided that the scope of the meeting agrees with the aims of the Society.

In the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic, applications for on-line, hybrid and in-person meetings will all be considered.

Candidates for a travel grant should be members of the ISMB (<https://www.ismb.org/join>), and will need to provide: a letter giving information about the meeting, the amount requested and a detailed justification for support; the abstract of your poster/short talk; your curriculum vitae and list of publications. More details and application forms are available at: <https://www.ismb.org/copy-of-travel-grants>.

Grants are for international travel only and will be awarded on the basis of scientific excellence and relevance to matrix biology. Successful candidates will be notified no more than one month after each deadline.

Following the meeting, awardees will be expected to send to the ISMB a certificate of attendance as well as a short report (to appear on the ISMB web site with some selected for the ISMB newsletter) in the form of a personal perspective on their experience at the meeting.

Save the date for these terrific events!



Be a part of the science!

Join Other Young Investigators Virtually at PISA 2022

The American Society for Investigative Pathology (ASIP) invites you to be part of the science at the annual Pathobiology for Investigators, Students, and Academicians (PISA) 2022 Young Investigator Virtual Meeting, September 28 - 30, 2022. For PISA2022, ASIP welcomes **the American Society for Matrix Biology (ASMB)** as a partner society. **ASMB members can register at NO COST.** Abstract submission deadline is August 1.

Read all about this meeting and how to register on the ASIP website: <https://pisa22.asip.org/>

e-Symposium
July 27, 12:00pm US EDT

Career options in science - Industry vs. Academia

Are you in academia wondering what it would be like to be an industry scientist? Are you in the industry contemplating a career move to academia? In a moderated discussion with a panel of mid to senior-level scientists with backgrounds in academia, industry, or both, we will compare and contrast the two professional environments. What are the tradeoffs? How do the environments differ? What strategies work best for navigating between the two? Other, career options such as government may also be discussed. Our panelists hail from ASIP, ASMB, and HCS in this our second tri-society webinar!

Coming this fall....
e-Symposium
October 26, 12:00pm US EDT

Family life balance in science careers: How to balance it all?

Don't miss this one! We all need the advice of our sage panelists. Join the three societies, HCS, ASIP and ASMB for wisdom and discussion on this very important topic.

Read more about these upcoming e-symposia on the [ASMB website](#).

2022 ASMB Fibroblast workshop - registration and abstract submission NOW OPEN!

The Many Faces of Fibroblasts

October 16-18, 2022

University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia.

Organized by ASMB members

Thomas Barker, *University of Virginia* and

Merry Lindsey, *Meharry Medical College*

Full program information available on the [website](#).

Abstract submission deadline Friday August 19.

We are pleased to announce that ASMB will meet in Salt Lake City, UT, October 21-25, 2023 at the Grand America. We will be meeting jointly with the American Society for Investigative Pathology and The Histochemical Society. We have enjoyed collaborating with both of these groups for past events and look forward to planning this 2023 joint venture. Mark your calendar now!

Join us in Salt Lake City, October 21-25, 2023
Tissues, Matrix, and Pathobiology

Virtual Event!
37th Critical Issues in Tumor Microenvironment
Angiogenesis, Metastasis and Immunology

October 24 – 27, 2022

For information about this course, including faculty, schedule, and pricing, please visit the website of the meeting at: <https://steele.mgh.harvard.edu/tumorcourse>

ASMB
1801 Rockville Pike, Suite 350
Rockville, MD 20852
info@asmb.net



Visit the ASMB Calendar for all the latest events and future happenings. If you have something to add to the ASMB Calendar, [\[info@asmb.net\]](mailto:info@asmb.net) let us know!

[Website](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Contact Us](#)