

Undergraduate Research Symposium - October 2004

The Symposium on Undergraduate Research that was held at our annual meeting in Rochester in October 2004 was incredibly successful. The talks given by these emerging young scientists were fantastic. The students were all poised, prepared, informed, articulate, and otherwise superb. The morning and afternoon sessions were presided by Carl Grossman of Swarthmore and Kiko Galvez of Colgate. They featured 14 talks from students at 11 institutions, small and large, from all over the country. Some did their research projects in various European laboratories under a program run by Martin Richardson of CREOL.

Perhaps even more significant was the overflow. We had 22 presentations in all, but only 14 could be oral because of the time slots we were allowed. Consequently, there was a poster session during the lunch period (DLS provided lunch for the students) presided by John Noé of Stony Brook that featured 8 posters from an additional 7 institutions. Because of the convention setup, the posters had to be mounted out in the hallway that connected the meeting rooms. They were therefore exposed to a wide range of the conference participants (remember, this was a large meeting because DLS meets jointly with the OSA annual meeting). The students were swamped with curious participants and there was highly animated discussion all around the foyer/hallway area. So even though most of those poster presenters initially expressed a preference for talks, in the end they were thrilled with the level of interest in their work and the exposure they gained. Many wrote back saying they were glad that their presentations turned out to be posters after all.

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