

Report of the Committee on Lectureships for the Year ending June 30, 2020

It is my pleasure to report that the Sigma Xi Lectureship Program continues to be one of our Society's most successful endeavors. It provides outstanding lecturers to chapters and their host institutions, while offering an opportunity for outreach to the broader community interested in science. This is a report of the activities of the Committee on Lectureships from July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020.

I. THE SIGMA XI DISTINGUISHED LECTURERS

The Committee presented a selection of 15 speakers to serve as the 2020-2021 Distinguished Lecturers. These speakers addressed subjects and issues including geology, history, engineering, anthropology, biology, and physics. The Committee is pleased to announce that, in addition to the lecturers selected by the committee, the American Meteorological Society (AMS) sponsored a speaker for the series. AMS provided funding to subsidize Sigma Xi chapters as they engaged lecturers at local events.

The list of Distinguished Lecturers, along with their brief biographies and information about lectures on offer, was included in the January-February issue of *American Scientist*. The Lectureship Committee is keenly aware of the need to achieve a balanced class of lecturers in terms of discipline, geography, gender and ethnic plurality. These criteria inform our primary responsibility to offer, as lecturers, outstanding research scientists and engineers who deliver stimulating and effective lectures to a broad audience representing a wide range of disciplines.

Committee's Response to COVID-19:

Many of the scheduled lectures were canceled in Spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To address the issue, the committee discussed the use of on-line formats for Distinguished Lecturers both in response to COVID-19 travel restrictions and the desire to create a more flexible on-line library of lectures. Zoom is used prevalently for live lectures with Q&A and Sigma Xi is prepared to implement this for Distinguished Lecturers. Recorded lectures will be made available on Sigma Xi's You Tube Channel and advertised in *American Scientist* and the Sigma Xi website.

Selection of Special Guest Distinguished Lecturers in response to COVID-19:

The Committee selected and invited Guest Distinguished Lecturers that would explicitly address the pandemic from different perspectives. The lecturers who accepted invitations are as follow:

- Mark Peeples, The Ohio State University
- Michael Osterholm, The University of Minnesota
- David Deamer, University of California at Santa Cruz
- Shweta Bansal, Georgetown University
- Jessie Abbate, World Health Organization (Africa Region)
- Peter Hotez, Baylor College of Medicine

Lectures are being moderated by Kiki Sanford, neurophysiologist and science communicator. At the time of this report, there has been three lectures (Peeples, Osterholm, and Deamer) with attendance of over 275 people each.

Also due to the pandemic, there was the challenge of finding lecturers for the 2021-2023 cohort. Lecturers impacted by the pandemic with their term ending June 30, 2020 have been invited to serve for another year. Two new lecturers were selected to be added to this cohort: Kristie Macrakis from Georgia Tech, and Dr. Julie Demuth from Weather Risks and Decisions in Society (sponsored lectureship with AMS).

II. LECTURESHIP SUBSIDY PROGRAM

Lectureship subsidy requests identified the desired speakers and proposed budgets that included travel and honoraria. The committee agreed that COVID-19 travel restrictions would likely continue for the rest of calendar year 2020 and that the program would have to continue using virtual meeting technology. Therefore, travel funds for the FY2021 Subsidy Requests could be re-purposed to increase honoraria and/or increase the number of lectures. The committee agreed that future subsidy guidance would return to normal with travel requests in CY 2021 but with the caveat that if travel restrictions are not lifted, the virtual lecture only modality will continue. Sigma Xi will review policy on honoraria limits.

Subsidies were approved for the following chapters:

Kansas State University, Louisiana Tech University, University of Notre Dame, University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez, University of Delaware, Northwestern Pennsylvania, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, University of Calgary, Ramapo College of New Jersey, Northern Michigan University, Case Western Reserve University, Georgia Southern University, Fairfield University, Rockford University, Quinnipiac University, Greenbrier Valley, Columbia-Willamette, SUNY at Purchase, Charleston, and the University of New Mexico.

My sincere appreciation is expressed to the members, who serve, so ably, on this committee. The members of the committee for the year ending June 30, 2020 were:

Gilda Barabino	Georgia Institute of Technology
HollyAnn Harris	Creighton University
Marc Lee Imhoff (chair)	University of Maryland
Diandra Leslie-Pelecky	West Virginia University
Tammy Maldonado	University of Colorado
Amy Stockert	Ohio Northern University
Joel Primack	University of California at Santa Cruz

The committee is interested in comments and suggestions. Please forward your comments to Janelle Simmons, Manager of Programs.

Sincerely,
Marc Lee Imhoff, Ph.D.
Chair, Committee on Lectureships