

Report of the Committee on Lectureships for the Year ending June 30, 2021

It is my pleasure to report that the Distinguished 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, 2020 – June 30, 2021.

I. 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:

The Committee on Lectureships organized a special Distinguished Lecturer series inviting scientists who are at the forefront of COVID-19 research, public policy, and communication to address the pandemic from different perspectives. The six selected speakers engaged in online conversations and shared emerging research findings with Sigma Xi members and the public. The program focused on various topics related to COVID-19 including vaccine development; genetic structure and evolution; the use of big data to track the pandemic, and public health strategies to control viral transmission. The Society partnered with science communicator and producer and host of the This Week in Science podcast Dr. Kirsten (Kiki) Sanford to interview the speakers and moderate the discussions. All sessions were held virtually, and recordings are available on the Sigma Xi website.

The selected speakers were as follows:

- 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

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 calendar year 2021 but with the caveat that if travel restrictions are not lifted, the virtual lecture only modality will continue.

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, 2021, were:

Gilda Barabino	Georgia Institute of Technology
HollyAnn Harris	Creighton University
Marc Lee Imhoff (chair)	University of Maryland
Tammy Maldonado	University of Colorado
Amy Stockert	Ohio Northern University

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

Sincerely,
Marc Lee Imhoff, PhD
Chair, Committee on Lectureships