



## *2021 SIMB Election for Board of Directors*

The SIMB Election for positions on the Board of Directors will commence March 1, 2021. The election will end at noon EDT on March 31, 2021, and members must join/renew by March 30, 2021, noon EDT, to be eligible to vote.

Current members for 2021 will receive login instructions for accessing the voting module.

The first step in the election process is the identification of the Nominations Committee (NC) consisting of the chair and least two members. The committee members are approved by the Board and serve only for the current year and cannot be reappointed within a three-year period. The NC proposes a slate of candidates (usually at least two candidates for each position) with input from the membership. The candidates must be current SIMB members with a demonstrated interest and involvement in SIMB. Upon acceptance of the nomination, the NC informs the candidates of the duties and responsibilities required by each position. In addition to the NC, candidates can be identified via Article 5, Section 4 in the SIMB Constitution using a petition process.

The final slate of candidates is due to the president by the first board meeting during the annual meeting. Candidates must submit a biography and photograph by October 1, 2020, for publication in the October-November-December issue of *SIMB News* and for posting on the website. After voting ends, the Election Committee, consisting of a minimum of two SIMB members, receives access to the voting module and certifies counts from online voting, as well as any paper ballots previously requested and postmarked no later than the deadline date for electronic voting ballots, and delivers the results to the SIMB President and SIMB Secretary for announcement.

The election process and ballots are available for inspection for at least 30 days following the annual meeting. Ballots and records are destroyed six months after the election (unless otherwise directed by the Board) and final tabulation of the votes is preserved.

# Candidate for President-Elect

## Hal Alper



Dr. Hal Alper is the Z.D. Bonner Professor of Chemical Engineering at The University of Texas at Austin where he leads the Laboratory for Cellular and Metabolic Engineering. Since earning his PhD from MIT he has been focusing on development strategies and tools for the rewiring of fungal and bacterial systems for new biochemicals, biofuels, and biopharmaceuticals. His primary area of focus is on the strain engineering and development of synthetic biology tools in oleaginous organisms.

Dr. Alper has been an active member of SIMB since first serving as a session chair for the 2009 annual meeting in Toronto and has since served as session chair, as a presenter at several SIMB conferences, as a programming committee member for metabolic engineering, and as Chair of the

2017 annual meeting in Denver. Dr. Alper also serves as a frequent reviewer and contributor to *JIMB*.

Among several recognitions of his work, Dr. Alper is the recipient of the 2015 SIMB Young Investigator Award and a fellow of the National Academy of Inventors for his research on engineered cells and synthetic biology tools.

### SIMB Vision Statement:

I am strongly committed to improving the quality and diversity of societies and conferences (as can be seen in my planning for the 2017 annual meeting as well as more recent conferences including the Metabolic Engineering conference). I plan to formalize these policies and best practices within SIMB to ensure that we plan conferences and events in a meaningful manner with the mission to establish a professional community that is welcoming and inclusive for all researchers. Likewise, young researchers (at the graduate and post-graduate level) are the future of any society and we must foster newer ways to engage, mentor, and involve more young professionals into our society. I plan to create a young professionals group within SIMB and subsequently create a focus group to assess and respond to needs from the society. Finally, we should recognize that we live in a very challenging time that has brought a number of issues to the forefront (including the future of conferences, the importance of connectivity, and the systemic injustices that have been a part of our society). I seek to create a strategic plan that will integrate technology and in-person events to create a sustainable model for engaging conferences in the future while recognizing the importance of work-life balance.

# Candidate for President-Elect

## Nigel Mouncey



Since March 2017, I am the Director of the Department of Energy's Joint Genome Institute, located at Berkeley Lab. I have a long-standing interest in microbial genetics that started with my education (BSc Hons, Microbiology, University of Glasgow; DPhil, Biochemistry, University of Sussex) and carried forward into my roles in industry at Roche Vitamins, DSM Nutritional Products and Dow AgroSciences. where I directed R&D teams that focused on the discovery, development and commercialization of novel production organisms and fermentation processes for vitamins, insecticides, fungicides, platform chemicals, cosmetics and new crop traits. I have successfully built integrated, inclusive and highly effective multi-disciplinary teams, and today, focus on continuing to build and position JGI as a leading integrative genome science user facility. My research interests are in the biosynthesis, regulation and roles of novel secondary metabolites and biomaterials, and in the field of synthetic biology.

I have been actively engaged in helping lead SIMB by serving as Chair of the SIMB Publications Committee, leading the *JIMB* contract negotiations for the Springer Nature renewal and now the transition to Open Access with Oxford University Press. I also serve as a co-Chair of the SIMB Natural Products conference in 2020 and 2023 and as a member of the 2020 SIMB Nominations Committee and an ad hoc member of the SIMB Diversity Committee. I have given many talks at SIMB meetings, including the keynote address at the 2018 SIMB Natural Products conference.

As President-Elect and President of SIMB, my mission will be to strengthen and position SIMB as the leading industrial microbiology society that fosters an inclusive, diverse and equitable community of industrial microbiologists spanning academia and industry from students, to early- and late-career researchers. I will achieve this through comprehensively updating the SIMB strategic plan and establishing new mentorship and internship programs, educational resources and expert forums.

# Candidate for Secretary

## Elizabeth Elder



Elisabeth (Betty) D. Elder appreciates the opportunity to be re-elected as Secretary of SIMB. Her degrees are from SMU, SFA, and Texas A&M. She held academic positions at GSW, LSUA, and AU which involved teaching a broad spectrum of biology courses plus research in applied and environmental microbiology. Research support came through grants from the NSF, NIH, NASA, and through the universities. In addition, she has experience in developing best practices in a food microbiology laboratory. Both the teaching and research activities were greatly supported by participating in SIMB which facilitated remaining current in microbiology and having productive interactions with SIMB members. She is retired but remains active in SIMB.

Betty has been a member of SIMB for approximately 35 years. In addition to attending meetings, convening sessions, and making presentations, her activities in SIMB have included serving as Chair of the Education Committee (six years); Editor-in-Chief of *SIMB News* (two terms; ten years); a member of the Publications Committee (10 years and ongoing); Chair of the Exhibits Committee (two years); and working with Bob Schwartz to organize the Annual Meeting 5K Run Walk (many years). She is in her third term as Secretary (nine years to date). Her position as Secretary has resulted in her serving as a member of the Finance Committee (nine years to date). Her goals as Secretary will be to attend the four Board of Directors (BOD) meetings and the Business Meeting held annually; to participate in any additional BOD meetings that are called; to contribute to, and provide broad support for, the activities of the BOD; to maintain records of the Society's BOD meetings and business meetings; to review and sign contracts for the Society; to support the activities of the headquarters staff as needed; and to support the Society's committees as needed. With all members of the Board of Directors (BOD) having been asked to do committee work, Betty has volunteered to be a member of the Archives Committee. An immediate goal will be to support the efforts of the Society to develop hybrid/virtual meetings and to resume in-person meetings. She will rely on past experience and ongoing interests to do her best to serve the Society if re-elected to this position.

# Candidate for Secretary

## Melanie Mormile



Melanie Mormile currently serves as the Associate Dean for Research and External Relations for the College of Arts, Sciences, and Business at the Missouri University for Science and Technology (Missouri S&T). She started as an Assistant Professor at Missouri S&T in 1999 and has since risen through the ranks to Professor. Her research is focused on environmental microbiology with an emphasis on extremophilic bacteria. This research has resulted in numerous publications and three patents. Melanie also teaches courses that include Environmental Microbiology, Bioremediation, Geomicrobiology, and Astrobiology.

Melanie earned her B.S. in Biological Sciences at the University of Cincinnati. She was also able to perform research as a student worker at the U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency Branch in Cincinnati, Ohio. She earned a Master's degree in Biological Sciences at the University of Louisville. Melanie then went to the University of Oklahoma to work on her PhD. After completing her PhD, she accepted a Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Pacific Northwest National Lab.

In 2010, Melanie received an invitation to give a talk during the SIMB Annual meeting. Two years later, she organized and convened two sessions at the Annual meeting. She found the members of SIMB to be very warm and welcoming and felt a part of this community. From 2013 until 2018, Melanie served as an associate editor for *SIMB News*. In January of 2019, she took on the responsibilities of Editor-in-Chief of *SIMB News*. She would welcome the opportunity to continue to serve SIMB as the Society's secretary.

# Candidate for Director

## Yoram Barak



An Industrial Microbiologist, Environmental Microbiologist specialized in enzymes discovery and evolution as well as microbial production of biobased chemicals. Dr. Barak is currently a Global Product Manager in Applied Materials Automation Group. Dr. Barak held various positions at BASF with latest a Scientific Marketing Manager and New Business Development for NA at BASF Human Nutrition Division. Prior to this Dr. Barak held an Innovation Manager Position for BASF Biosciences R&D division and Group Leader position at BASF White Biotechnology Department. Prior to BASF Dr. Barak was at Codexis Inc. Leading R&D team for development of novel biobased chemicals and fuels. Dr. Barak got his PhD from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and

carried a PostDoc at the Microbiology & Immunology Department at Stanford University.

Dr. Barak's activities at SIMB:

- Co-chairing Membership and Sponsorship committee since 2017
- Program committee of newly established Microbiome conference (IMMM)
- Part of 2019 nomination committee
- Fermentation Session Program Committee since 2018 (chair in 2019)
- Convener and speaker

I'm passionate about the SIMB mission and vision and find it a great home for the community of experts we are. I'm a strong believer in Industry, Academia & Government working together for a better future and SIMB is one of the best places to enable such fruitful discussions and knowledge sharing. I see the SIMB role in acting across the many Industrial Microbiology domains and training new scientists in this space to be an effective source of innovation and new ways to help humanity without harming the environment. The family spirit and democratized nature of SIMB made me feel at home right from the beginning and I will be more than happy to maintain and promote this spirit further.

# Candidate for Director

## Ben Shen



Born and raised in China, Ben Shen received B.Sc. from Hangzhou University (1982), M.S. from the Chinese Academy of Sciences (1984), Ph.D. from Oregon State University (1990), all in chemistry, and carried out postdoctoral research in molecular biology and biochemistry at University of Wisconsin-Madison (1991-1995). He served on the faculty at the University of California, Davis (1995-2001) and University of Wisconsin-Madison (2001-2010) before joining The Scripps Research Institute (TSRI) in 2011. Currently, he is Professor of Chemistry and Molecular Medicine and serves as the Chair of Department of Chemistry, Florida Campus and Director of Natural Products Discovery Center at Scripps Research. Current research in the Shen Lab concerns chemistry, biochemistry, and genetics of natural product biosynthesis

and engineering in actinobacteria and development of enabling technologies to leverage the large strain collection at TSRI for natural products and drug discovery. The Shen lab has authored >280 publications and 11 published patents.

He has been an active member of SIMB for the past 20+ years. He has attended and presented at 13 SIM(B) annual meetings, co-chairing the natural products program for five of them, attended and presented at six SIM(B)-organized natural products meetings, serving as the program chair for one of them, and served on the Editorial Board since 2002 and as an Editor since 2017 for *JIMB*. He was recognized by SIMB with the Charles Thom Award in 2018. He has fondly called SIMB his professional home and is committed to serve SIMB by promoting science, sharing knowledge, encouraging participation, and building community.