

Minutes of NgoRS Conference Business Meeting (June 3rd, 2024)

Board Members Present at one or both NgoRS Conference business sessions:

Caroline Genco (President),
Jennifer Edwards (President-elect)
C. Wadsworth (Director of NgoRS Communications)
Alison Criss (Treasurer)
Nathan Weyand (Secretary)
Myron Christodoulides (At-Large Member)
O. Harrison (At-Large Member)
Trevor Moraes (At-Large Board Member)
Evgeny Semchenko (At-Large Board Member)
Julie Stoudenmire-Sayor (At-Large Board Member)
Alexis Branch (At-Large Trainee member)
Erin Garcia (At-Large Trainee member)
Hank Seifert (Past President)

NgoRS Members Present at NgoRS Conference Business Meeting:

- Session 1: 31 members, not including board members.
- Session 2: 18 members, not including board members were present for a portion of this session. Several members logged in and exited early (perhaps after noticing it was a repeat presentation of Session 1).

Business meeting summary:

1. Welcome by Caroline Genco

- a. Introductions of Board members.
- b. Discussed the NgoRS Society's history and previous meetings and the desire to have conferences between IPNC meetings. Six years ago, at the Asilomar IPNC meeting, Dr. M. Apicella organized gonococcal researchers to focus research on *N. gonorrhoeae*; how to promote Ngo research and bring in new researchers.
- c. Mentioned that society seeks input from NgoRS members for the development of worthwhile activities. NgoRS sponsored some seminars during the pandemic. The society is now regrouping and trying to decide how we can 1) best serve the research community; 2) encourage new scientists and scientists from outside of the field to join us; and 3) mentor trainees to independence.

2. **NgoRS Funds.** Treasurer, Alison Criss reviewed the current balance of \$17,277.81. As this reserve continues to build it can be used toward activities.

3. Overview of NgoRS Website by Hank Seifert

- a. Seeks input from NgoRS members to improve the website
- b. Reviewed website sections/links for:
 - i. Showed the "Make a Donation" Button.
 - ii. NgoRS Society Documents. Links to the NgoRS Board minutes are provided to foster transparency in leadership of society.
 - iii. Gonorrhea Disease Links. Needs to be updated. Please send links we are missing to Hank. We would like to ensure links related to clinical aspects of gonococcal research are well represented.
 - iv. NgoRS - Research Links.

1. The Seifert lab is mutating every non-essential gene in strains FA 1090 (60% done) and MS11. They are also developing CRISPR interference tools to make conditional mutants for essential genes. Please contact Hank if you need a knock out or conditional mutant strain constructed.
<https://sites.northwestern.edu/gcmutantdatabase/resources/>
2. Genomic Analyses. List of hyperlinks for useful resources. Patric has some of the best gene annotations.
 - v. NgoRS Protocols. Please contact Hank to post published protocols here. This section is password protected.
 - vi. State of the Field. Not a lot of content yet.
- c. If you have suggestions on resources you'd like to see please let NgoRS know.

4. NgoRS activities

- a. The board welcomes input on how NgoRS can best serve the society and keep it active and vibrant. NgoRS would like to have nearly quarterly webinars or workshops with many topics geared toward trainee members. Some of the broad goals of NgoRS include: 1) helping members to become well versed in knowledge about the gonococcus; 2) welcome new researchers; 3) bring some value to members; and 4) organize webinars or workshops that focus on topics informative for the field.
- b. Alison Criss presented an overview of the society's discussion about hosting regular meetings that are inclusive and useful to trainees. Alison mentioned that some of the board developed a list of possible activities that could be presented with the help of moderators in the future.
- c. Alexis Branch reported on feedback she solicited from NgoRS Trainee members in response to activities recommended by the board. 21 responses out of 86 Trainee members were received. Two of the topics trainees were most interested in included Omics (handling large data sets) and State of the Field webinars or workshops. The bulk of respondents were interested in Career and Networking events (like the mentoring lunch at the Boston IPNC). Career panels about research funding and career options after earning a PhD would be welcome. At mentoring events trainees would like to talk to people at different levels and at different places in their careers. They expressed interest in learning about transitioning between positions. Trainees expressed interest in getting help for building resumes and LinkedIn profiles. *See the end of this document for a review of Trainee member feedback.*

5. Open Discussion Portion of Meeting.

- a. Input was solicited from NgoRS members for workshop ideas or topics for 'State of the Field' presentations the NgoRS Society would like to hold approximately three times a year.
- b. Discussion and feedback in support of virtual meetings. *(Note: A show of hands indicated the majority of persons supported a virtual meeting).*
 - i. Trevor Moraes mentioned that the virtual format brings a lot of people together from all over the world. Let's people attend that wouldn't normally be able to (e.g., with travel costs, people may be forced between the NgoRSC and the IPNC). If we can make virtual conference more interactive it would be a good way to keep connections going.

- ii. Alison Criss – virtual format allowed meeting during COVID. Amenable to trainee focused program. Inexpensive and accessible. Lobbied for more interactivity at future virtual meetings.
 - iii. Aimee Potter – advocated for keeping virtual meeting; mentioned she has been able to interact more frequently with research community via these meetings versus at in-person events.
 - iv. Alex Merz – mentioned “As someone re-entering the field, these virtual meetings are incredibly valuable due to the low expense and smaller time commitment versus international meetings”.
 - v. Selma M – shared a positive experience at a regional meeting in Paris. Virtual poster sessions were held using Microsoft Teams. One room was assigned for each poster. It worked well and facilitated interactions in smaller groups.
- c. Discussion and feedback in support of in-person meetings.
- i. Odile Harrison suggested having country specific in-person workshops (i.e. European, USA, etc.). Workshops could be recorded for sharing with other regions not able to attend.
 - ii. Trevor Moraes – more conducive to networking.
 - iii. Shelley Peterson – “A benefit of in person meetings for people newer to the field is the chance to meet people in the first place. Virtual meeting[s] are great for keeping in touch but difficult for meeting people.”
- d. Virtual versus In-person NgoRS meetings. Alternative Ideas
- i. An idea of holding an infrequent in-person meeting was proposed; like on 5th year anniversary.
 - ii. Osman Dufailu – Can a hybrid approach be developed. This proposal was supported by Haris S.M.
 - iii. Anastasia Unitt – Proposed regional hubs for in-person meetings with a hybrid virtual aspect to watch talks at other international hubs (e.g. using a seminar room).
 - iv. Day or two before a big IPNC, NgoRS could hold career training workshops at the venue. The Gordon conference does this.
- 6. Logo Contest was discussed.**
- a. Several in attendance supported the concept.
 - b. Several advocated for contest to promote trainee interest in society. NgoRS does not need to be limited to just one logo. Submitted illustrations can be used for various SWAG – pins, stickers, T-shirts. Winner could perhaps receive a conference registration.
 - c. Board will discuss timing of contest at next meeting.
- 7. A survey** will be sent out after the NgoRS conference.

Respectfully submitted,

N. Weyand, NgoRS Secretary.

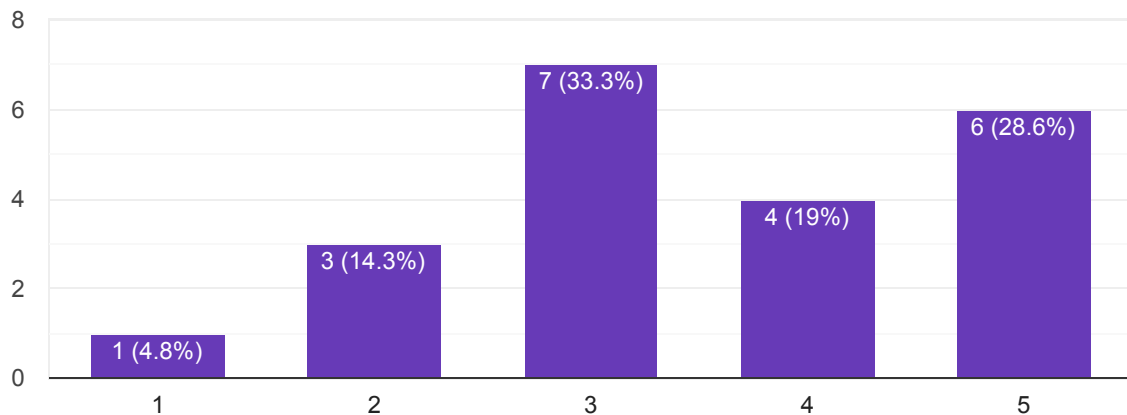
NgoRS Trainee Interest Form

21 responses

[Publish analytics](#)

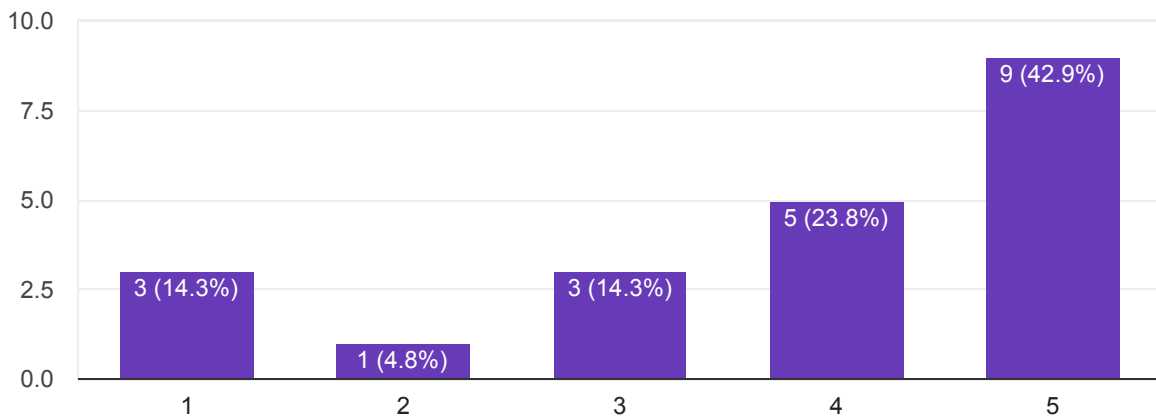
Ngo Research Funding (i.e. different funding mechanisms, best practices for writing federal grants, how grant budgets work, components of a grant, review process for grants) [Copy](#)

21 responses



Ngo Growth and Handling/ Ngo Techniques and Approaches (i.e. genetic manipulations of the gonococcus (in frame deletions, etc.), resources available like the Insertional Mutants resource at Northwestern) [Copy](#)

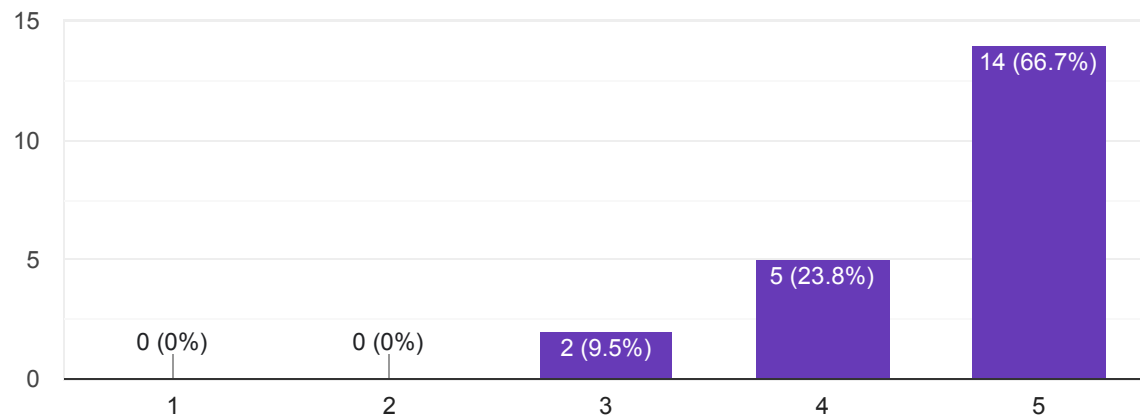
21 responses



Ngo 'omics (i.e. proteomics, handling large data sets, communicating with bioinformaticians, guidance on training resources, Biologists Developing Bioinformatics skills for processing large datasets; learning to use published pipelines on Github)



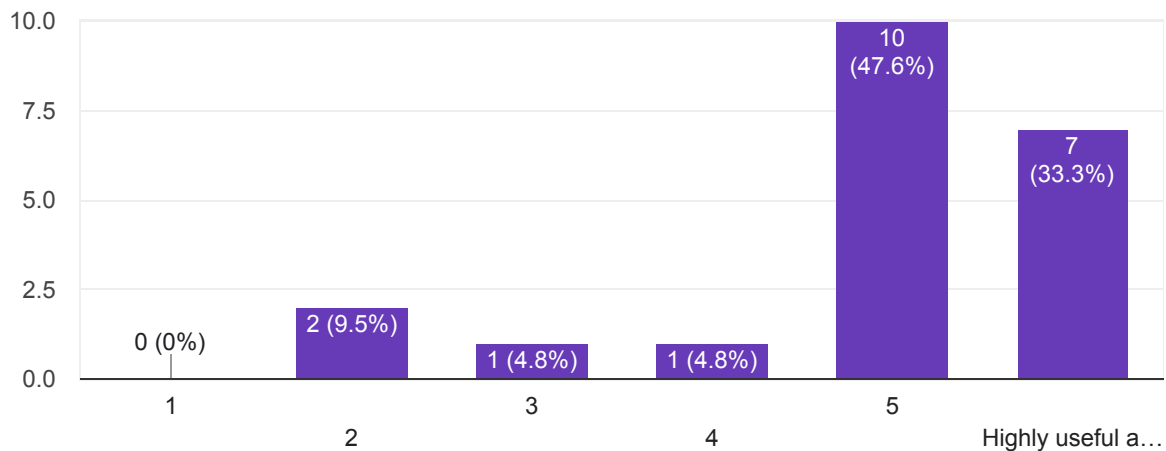
21 responses



State of the Field (i.e. AMR & antimicrobials, vaccines, global epidemiology of Ngo, diagnostics, clinical care and disease management, Ngo physiology and metabolism, immune responses to Ngo, new infection models)



21 responses



What type of events/training opportunities do you think would help NgoRS trainees achieve professional and scientific success? (e.g. career panel, networking opportunities, mentoring program, etc.)

21 responses

Career and networking events for trainees

Neisseria immune response

Career panels in academia and industry

Networking opportunities, mentoring and exchange programs

Mentoring programs and networking opportunities

Career progression and networking opportunities and capacity building on latest developments in the field

all three options suggested sound great

mentoring program, and maybe networking but academic? Also, I personally would be interested in the Ngo Research funding panel but I feel that it is US-focused.

Careers after PhD

Seminars

The Ngo growth, Ngo 'omics, and state of the field workshops would be incredibly useful! Given I am a New Zealand-based researcher, I don't think the Ngo research funding would be as beneficial given it will likely be tailored to the USA grant system.

I believe networking events and grant and funding opportunities update events would be more beneficial for the NgoRS trainees

networking opportunities

Career panel

I think a mentoring program would be great!

Career panel & networking opportunities



Last year's mentoring lunch during IPNC was awesome! Would be great to have that again.

Just a note that I only put not useful for grant writing as it should vary widely country-country

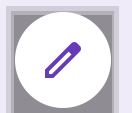
Networking opportunities

Mentoring program

I think any career-focused opportunities would be very useful, especially non-academic careers. Doesn't have to be a traditional panel, workshops on making LinkedIn profiles, networking, salary negotiation, etc. would be great skills to develop for all potential career paths.

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