

Interview with Current President David Traver about the Upcoming 45th Annual Scientific Meeting of the International Society for Experimental Hematology (ISEH)

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ISEH Headquarters

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In advance of the upcoming 45th Annual ISEH Scientific Meeting, we spoke with current ISEH president David Traver, Professor of Cellular and Molecular Medicine at the University of California San Diego, about the highlights of the upcoming meeting in his current hometown and his thoughts on the society.

What is the focus of this year's ISEH meeting?

We have tried to maintain the excellent breadth in all major areas of hematopoiesis research, with cutting edge talks across each discipline. For example, we have a superb lineup of speakers in our Gene and Cell Therapy session, as well as a variety of thought leaders in our Leukemia and Developmental Hematopoiesis sessions. As always, we have also worked to highlight our best young scientists at the meeting.

Are there any new formats/features that are not to be missed?

Yes, speaking of our trainees, we have started a new Pre-meeting Workshop this year for 50 of our young scientists. It will feature posters and several short talks by students and fellows. This format will encourage informal interactions among our trainees and mentoring by several noted scientists in the field, including Jim Palis, Nancy Speck, Anna Bigas, Dan Kaufman, Marella de Bruijn, Mick Milsom, Sofie Singbrant, and Merv Yoder.

Are there any particular speakers that you are excited are participating this year?

Well, as president it has been particularly fun to invite three of my favorite scientists to speak in the Presidential Symposium – Nancy Speck, Leonard Zon, and Gordon Keller. This will really be a special treat to feature them together at our meeting in August.

What makes ISEH special?

ISEH has always been my favorite meeting as it is large enough to attract the top speakers in the field but small enough to feel like family. There remains a core group that nearly always attends, making sustained interactions possible over the years. In addition, it is the best meeting that I attend in regard to fostering meaningful interactions between our young scientists and the leaders in the field. I think this is due to both informal scientific discussions over posters / trainee sessions and “Meet the Expert” style social sessions over drinks.

How long have you been involved with the society?

My first real talk came at an ISEH meeting when I was a graduate student in Irv Weisman's lab. I remember being terrified to present in front of what seemed a huge and intimidating audience. But the talk went well and served to introduce me to many of the fantastic scientists in our field that I continue to interact with today.

Is there an advantage to joining a society as a student or postdoc, rather than wait until it's clear you will remain in the field?

I think so. Aside from the obvious financial incentives, being part of the ISEH provides a real sense of community. I recall being impressed at how easy it was to approach many of the brand-name scientists in the field when attending my first few ISEH meetings. Their encouragement helped me want to stay and succeed in science, and within the hematopoiesis field in particular.

Do you have any dream goals for the meeting or the society in years to come?

I hope that we can continue to improve the impact of our journal, [Experimental Hematology](#). It is the key to keeping our society and meeting going strong. Most of our funding comes from the journal, so improving the quality of manuscripts submitted is more important than most realize. We have seen a large increase in submissions over the past year, with similarly large increases in downloads from the website. If we can keep this up, the impact factor (IF) should improve over the next few years. With the journal publishing only a moderate number of papers per month, it actually doesn't take a huge increase in citations to move the IF up in a significant manner. If we can accomplish this, more will submit their work, with further increases in the IF to create a positive feedback loop. This is key to maintaining a strong society and to continue our great meetings for years to come.

We hope to see you at the upcoming ISEH meeting! To learn more about the meeting in San Diego this August 25-28, visit the [ISEH website](#).



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