

Resources for Student Members

By Mitch Tobias

More than 60 percent of the Section of Science & Technology Law's membership base is students. Section leaders engage this group in special projects, which offer students networking and leadership opportunities. Key student activities include serving as the Law Student Division Liaison to the Section, serving as a student representative to various Section committees, and entering the Section's Annual Student Writing Contest. In addition, many students contribute to the Section by participating in discrete committee projects, on an as-needed basis.

Just as the Section addresses issues at the intersection of law, science, and technology, law student members have quite varied backgrounds. In this article, three current student members are profiled in order to demonstrate this variety. Lisa von Biela is the student representative to the Biotechnology Law Committee, Andrew Robertson is the student representative to the Committee for Rights and Responsibilities of Scientists, and Mitch Tobias was the Law Student Division Liaison to the Section for the 2007–2008 term. Each took a unique path to law school and to involvement in the Section. These students have had the opportunity to interact with each other either in person at the ABA Annual Meeting at social events or via email or conference call to coordinate efforts. Ruben Rodrigues, who won the Section's 2008 Section Writing Contest, also attended the Annual Meeting. Other key students include Laura Beason and Tinna Otero, Ph.D., who worked on a new life sciences and physical sciences database project for the Section.

Lisa von Biela earned her un-

Mitch Tobias served as the Law Student Liaison to the Section for the 2007–2008 bar year. He continues to work with the Section to increase law student interest. He will complete his degree in May 2009.



dergraduate degree in biology (more specifically, prevet) from UCLA, and her MBA from Loyola Marymount University (Los Angeles). She spent 25 years in the information technology field before making the decision to attend law school.

Lisa is currently a 3L at the University of Minnesota and the student representative for the Biotech Committee. As student representative, one of Lisa's main activities is editing the weekly *BioBlurb* newsletter, which she's been doing for nearly a year. This past summer, in addition to her *BioBlurb* contributions, she also participated in two working groups to review and comment on resolutions from other ABA entities. The first resolution addressed "Physicians' Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment" from the Commission on Law and Aging, and the second was a resolution opposing legislation and policies that interfere with a medical

provider's ability to recommend and provide procedures to best protect the patient's health from the Section of Individual Rights and Responsibilities. She then presented the groups' recommendations on each of these during the Section Council conference call.

Prior to becoming the student representative, Lisa also participated in a working group to review the Section of Family Law's proposed model act concerning assisted reproductive technologies. The group provided comments on several versions of the proposed act, which was eventually adopted by the ABA. Hugh Wellons (chair of the working group) and Lisa then coauthored an article about the model act itself and the Biotech Committee's involvement with it for the quarterly *Biotech Briefing*.

Andrew Robertson earned his bachelor's and master's of science in molecular biology from the University

of California, San Diego, in 2000, and his Ph.D. in genetics and structural biochemistry from the University of Cambridge in 2004. From 2004–2005, he was a faculty research fellow at the Wellcome Trust Sanger Center, and from 2005–2008, he was an American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Science & Technology Policy Fellow.

Andrew joined the Committee for Rights and Responsibilities of Scientists (CORRS) in 2008 as a student member. He also serves as a student representative to that committee. His focus with the committee is on the promotion and development of science as a diplomatic tool, and the balance between international scientific collaborations and national security. Andrew also publishes the *SciStatus Update*, a monthly email distribution detailing scientific advances in areas of science policy.

Andrew is currently a member of the 2010 class at UC Berkeley School of Law, and a post-doctoral researcher at the newly established UC Berkeley Center for Life Science Policy. Andrew is also working as a science advisor for the Life Sciences Division at McKenna, Long & Aldridge, LLP.

Mitch Tobias earned his undergraduate degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Rochester in 1998. He has worked as a mechanical (structural) engineer since then, and is currently a part-time law student at Capital University Law School.

In 2007, Mitch was selected as the Law Student Division Liaison to the Section of Science & Technology Law. In this role, he was the Section's representative to the Law Student Division, and the Law Student Division's representative to the Section. Most of his activities were focused on increasing student interest and membership in the Section. He attended both the 2007 and 2008 Annual

Meetings, as well as the Law Student Division Fall Roundtable for the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Circuits and Spring Meeting for the Sixth Circuit. As a member of the Section's Membership Committee, he gathered information about the Section to share with students at each of the meetings, and he shared students' thoughts and concerns with the Section.

In addition to these three students, other students have also had an impact on Section projects. For example, Ruben Rodrigues, a third-year student at The University of Chicago Law School, won the Section's 2008 Student Writing Contest. As the winner, he received a trip to the ABA Annual Meeting in New York City and had his article, "You've Been Poked: Privacy in the Era of Facebook," published in the summer issue of *The SciTech Lawyer*. Mitch, Ruben, and other Section Committee representatives enjoyed social events and educational programs at the Annual Meeting. Attending the Annual Meeting also allowed the students to network with other students and lawyer members from the Section.

Section Chair-Elect Christine Grant worked closely with two students on another Section project to build a life sciences and physical sciences database resource. Student Tinna Otero, Ph.D., presented the new life sciences and physical sciences database resource she created with fellow student Laura Beason at the Annual Meeting to leadership via conference call. Laura graduated in spring from Nova Southeastern University. Tinna is a third-year student at The Arizona State University Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law.

These students, and many others, have greatly contributed to the work of the Section. Look for additional opportunities in upcoming issues of *The SciTech Lawyer*, *SciTech E-Merging News*, and postings to the student list serve. Go to the Section's student resource page at www.abanet.org/scitech/students. ♦