
Student Voice at NABC: The Concept

To help increase graduate-student participation at NABC conferences, the *Student Voice at NABC* initiative was launched ahead of NABC 19. Grants of \$500¹ were offered to graduate students at NABC-member institutions (one student per institution) to assist with travel and lodging expenses. Registration fees were waived for the grant winners.

Student Voice delegates are expected to attend all of the annual-meeting plenary sessions as well as the breakout workshops then to meet as a group to identify current and emerging issues relevant to the conference subject matter. For the inaugural *Student Voice*, the students' discussions were focused on agricultural biofuels and agricultural biotechnology in general. Their report to NABC 19 is provided on pages 215–216.

¹The *Student Voice* grants for NABC 20—*Reshaping American Agriculture to Meet its Biofuel and Biopolymer Roles*, hosted by the Ohio State University at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Columbus, OH, June 3–5, 2008—will be up to a maximum of \$750. Information: <http://oarc.osu.edu/nabc20>.

*Student Voice*¹ at NABC 19

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KEY ISSUES FOR AGRICULTURAL BIOFUELS

- Public awareness/education is needed on biofuels, emphasizing potential environmental benefits, effects on greenhouse gas emissions and global warming, and possible effects with regard to crude oil import bill/Kyoto Protocol.
- A comprehensive approach is needed, involving plant breeders, agronomists, bioprocess engineers, biotechnologists and microbiologists.
- New varieties of energy crops/trees/shrubs have to be developed with higher productivity, greater bulk density and less lignin content with low inputs of water and fertilizers.
- Pre-treatment and enzymes are the most costly components of ethanol production. Many groups are working on these aspects, but effort should be intensified to reduce ethanol cost so that it can compete with fossil fuels.

¹The *Student Voice* concept is described on page 213.

²Ms. Perez and Mr. Karunanithy reported briefly on the *Student Voice* discussions at the conclusion of NABC 19.

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