NIEHS T32 Training Directors' Meeting

October 28, 2026 | Sentinel Hotel, Portland, Oregon

Linked names jump to the corresponding biosketch and/or training program description in the appendix.

Agenda

Time	Session Topic
1:00 PM	**Welcome:** Robyn Tanguay, PhD, Jamie DeWitt, PhD, & Siva Kolluri, PhD., Oregon State University
1:05 PM	**Opening Remarks & Introduction to NIEHS:** Trevor Archer, Deputy Director, NIEHS
1:15 PM	**NIEHS Extramural Updates:** David Balshaw, Director, Division of Extramural Research and Training
1:35 PM	**NIEHS Training Updates & Introduction to New T32 Programs:** Carol Shreffler, NIEHS Training Program Director
2:00 PM	**Training in Environmental Neuroscience:** Roberto Lucchini, MD, PhD, Florida International University
2:15 PM	**Rural Environmental Health Training Program:** Julia Gohlke, PhD, Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University
2:30 PM	**Toxicology Training in Bidirectional Translation across Biological Scale:** Jason Cannon, PhD, Purdue University
2:45 PM	**PIGE: The Program Integrating Genomics and the Environment:** Douglas Ruden, PhD, Wayne State University
3:00 PM	Break
3:30 PM	**Update on Fiscal & Administrative Training Policies:** Jenny Greer, Chief Grants Management Officer, NIEHS
4:30 PM	**Panel Discussion** **Panelists:** Lauren Aleksunes, PhD, Rutgers University; John LaPres, PhD, Michigan State University; Joel Meyer, PhD, Duke University; Sally Thurston, PhD, University of Rochester **Moderator:** Carol Shreffler, PhD Submitted Discussion Topics: • How programs build community with students and faculty mentors, especially when students and faculty come from many different degree-granting programs or departments. • How programs gain and use institutional support to improve and sustain their programs. • Defining and assessing successful trainee outcomes for predoctoral and postdoctoral trainees, including how trainee success over the last five years of funding is presented in renewal grants. • Collaborative and training opportunities across NIEHS T32 programs, including Donnely Programs for student externships, remote transmission for seminars, and how this can be organized.
5:45 PM	**Closing Remarks:** Sri Nadadur, PhD, Chief, Exposure, Response, and Technology Branch, NIEHS
6:00 PM	**Adjourn**

Appendix: Biosketches & Training Program Descriptions

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New Programs – Biosketches for Training Directors:

Jason Cannon, PhD | Purdue University Back to agenda

Jason Cannon is Head of the School of Health Sciences and Professor of Toxicology at Purdue University. He received a B.S. in Physiology from Michigan State University, a Ph.D. in Toxicology from the University of Michigan and received postdoctoral training at the University of Pittsburgh. His research group has a longstanding interest in the discovery of mechanisms of neurotoxic action, where they have developed, implemented, and advanced novel animal models and mechanistic approaches to study how environmental exposures influence the risk of neurodegenerative diseases. Jason is a standing member of the NIH study section Neuronal Stress, Death, and Survival. He also serves as Associate Editor for NeuroToxicology and Toxicological Sciences. Jason has also devoted extensive effort to excellence in training. In addition to this T32, he has led his School's graduate programs (including longstanding leadership of the toxicology program), led a large interdisciplinary graduate program (>150 Ph.D. students), and led the Office of Postdoctoral Scholars (~600 postdocs).

Julia Gohlke, PhD | Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University Back to agenda

Julia M. Gohlke, PhD is a Professor in the Department of Population Health Sciences at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA, where she serves as Co-Director of the NIEHS-funded Rural Environmental Health T32 PhD Training Program. She received her BS in Biology from University of Michigan, PhD from the University of Washington School of Public Health, and completed postdoctoral training at NIEHS. She served as an AAAS Science and Technology Policy Fellow in the U.S. Department of State. Throughout her career, she has integrated computational modeling, toxicology, epidemiology, and policy evaluation to better understand how environmental exposures affect human health across the lifespan. She has authored over 100 peer reviewed publications and book chapters/technical reports. She has served on the Board of Scientific Counselors for the National Center for Environmental Health, on a National Academies of Science panel evaluating the use of dispersants during oil spills, and as an external reviewer for NIH, EPA, NASA and NSF, among others. She teaches graduate and undergraduate level courses in rural environmental health and Appalachian community research. Her research group is currently employing spatial epidemiology methods to examine health outcomes associated with heat and flood events across urban and rural landscapes. She collaborates with earth scientists, environmental engineers, geographers, computer scientists, and statisticians. Her research to date has advanced understanding of environmental drivers of adverse birth outcomes, disaster-related health impacts, and community-based approaches to extreme weather adaptation.

Roberto Lucchini, MD, PhD | Florida International University Back to agenda

Roberto G. Lucchini, MD, PhD, is Professor in the Department of Environmental Health Sciences at the Florida International University Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work, where he directs the NIH/NIEHS-funded T32 Training Program in Environmental Neurosciences (https://tens.fiu.edu/) and is a member of the Brain, Behavior and Environment Center and the Global Health Consortium. He received his medical degree from the University of Brescia, Italy, in 1987 and his board certification in Occupational Medicine from the University of Parma in 1991. Prior to joining FIU in 2020, he served as Professor of Occupational Medicine at the University of Brescia and, from 2012 to 2020, as Director of the Division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine at the

Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, where he also directed the World Trade Center Health Program Data Center and the T42 CDC-NIOSH-funded Education and Research Center for New York and New Jersey.

Dr. Lucchini's research focuses on the health effects of neurotoxic chemicals and the biological mechanisms by which they injure the nervous system across the human life course, from neurodevelopment to neurodegeneration. His work integrates exposomics, multi-omics, and biomarker approaches with occupational and environmental epidemiology, and includes long-standing research on World Trade Center responders and survivors, encompassing cancer, respiratory, mental health, and neurological outcomes. He also studies the health impacts of climate change on workers and communities and maintains an active program in global occupational and environmental health with a focus on the Amazon region, where he recently founded an academic consortium targeting the impact of mercury and co-exposures on the Indigenous people. He serves as Editor or Associate Editor for several journals, including Neurotoxicology, Annals of Global Health.

Douglas Ruden, PhD | Wayne State University Back to agenda

Douglas M. Ruden, Ph.D., is Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Director of Epigenomics at Wayne State University School of Medicine, with appointments in the C.S. Mott Center for Human Growth and Development and the Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. His research focuses on environmental epigenomics, gene–environment interactions, developmental origins of disease, and the molecular mechanisms by which environmental exposures influence health across the life course and potentially across generations. Dr. Ruden is a Multiple Principal Investigator of the NIH Environmental influences on Child Health Outcomes (ECHO) program and the Michigan ECHO Biorepository and is a leader in the CLEAR environmental health research program. He is also Lead PI of the NIH/NIEHS-funded Program Integrating Genomics and Exposures (PIGE) T32 Predoctoral Training Program (T32ES036169), a joint Wayne State University–Case Western Reserve University initiative that trains the next generation of scientists at the interface of genomics, exposure science, data analytics, and public health. His broader research program integrates genomics, epigenomics, toxicology, bioinformatics, and exposure science to understand how environmental factors interact with the genome to shape human development and disease risk.

Panelists – Training Program Descriptions:

Lauren Aleksunes, PhD | Rutgers University Back to agenda

Training in Environmental Toxicology (T32ES007148)

The Joint Graduate Program in Toxicology (T32ES007148) is an interdepartmental training program in mechanistic toxicology at Rutgers University. The central mission is to provide talented and motivated predocs and postdocs with rigorous didactic and laboratory training in mechanistic toxicology and in-depth expertise in their individual field of research. Training is supported by an exceptional research environment centered at the Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute. Trainees benefit from an outstanding seminar series and strong participation by leading scientists from the local pharmaceutical, chemical, and personal care products industry. A NIEHS R25-funded summer internship called Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship serves as a major feeder of predoc students to the Toxicology program.

John LaPres, PhD | Michigan State University Back to agenda

Multidisciplinary Training in Environmental Toxicology (T32ES007255)

Training faculty primarily comes from seven basic science Ph.D. programs (Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Cell and Molecular Biology, Genetics and Genome Sciences Program, Microbiology and Molecular Genetics, Pharmacology and Toxicology, Molecular, Cellular, and Integrative Physiology and Neuroscience). Predoctoral trainees must fulfill the Ph.D. requirements of their basic biomedical doctoral program as well as coursework, research and interactive requirements of this Training Program. These include a mixture of courses focused on didactic, toxicology-oriented material, training in the handling and processing of big data, and introduction to emerging environmental health issues. This coursework, career development opportunities and multidisciplinary activities provided by the Institute for Integrative Toxicology, Center for Research on Ingredient Safety and the Superfund Research Program Center impart a wide scope of knowledge and experiences.

Joel Meyer, PhD | Duke University Back to agenda

Duke University Program in Environmental Health (T32ES021432)

Interdisciplinary expertise is required to rigorously quantify exposure and health effects to assess and manage risk, and to develop novel tools for exposure reduction, remediation of polluted sites, and treatment of disease. The Duke University Program in Environmental Health (UPEH) prepares students for the complexity of research careers in environmental health by leveraging and integrating the highly complementary disciplinary strengths of Duke's Schools of Medicine, Environment, and Engineering, and Departments of Biology and Statistics. The training program is a critical, keystone element of Environmental Health research and training at Duke. It also makes possible a larger, interdepartmental, transdisciplinary program called the Integrated Toxicology and Environmental Health Program.

Sally Thurston, University of Rochester | Back to agenda

Training in Environmental Health Biostatistics (T32ES007271)

The overall goal of this program is to prepare trainees for a research career in biostatistics with application to environmental health or related fields by providing them with strong statistical skills, while deeply embedding them in environmental health science (EHS) research in a supportive and interactive environment. This goal is achieved by the following aims. Aim 1 (Formal training): Provide rigorous training in advanced statistics, with additional training in epidemiology and environmental health, through graduate-level course offerings. Aim 2 (T32-specific training) has two sub-aims. Aim 2a: Deeply involve all trainees in collaborative EHS research under co-mentorship of a Biostatistics and an EHS trainer, while providing additional training in reproducible research and improved communication skills; and Aim 2b: Augment EHS training with specialized T32 informal seminars and lab tours in a supportive environment that promotes trainee interactions.