ASM President's Outreach to India

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ASM President Jeffery F. Miller traveled across the globe to represent the Society at the 53rd Annual Conference of the Association of Microbiologists of India (AMI), held at KIIT University, November 22–25 in Bhubaneswar, India.

Miller's visit was a testament to the growing collaboration between American and Indian microbiologists within ASM, as well as a call to action for both societies. The visit was highly publicized throughout the Indian scientific community in the months preceding the AMI Conference which drew over 2,400 attendees from the United States, Europe, Asia and across India. At the invitation of AMI President, Prof. L. Venkateswara Rao, Miller energized the conference during the opening ceremonies with inspiring remarks on the critical role scientific societies play in addressing today's global challenges. He also stressed the need for international collaboration among individuals and institutions such as ASM and AMI. Miller then delivered the keynote lecture titled "Diversity-Generating Retroelements in Phage, Pathogens, and the Human Microbiome."

Prior to the meeting's opening ceremonies, Miller joined ASM Ambassador to India, Rup Lal, University of Delhi, ASM Committee on Global Engagement (CGE) member, Sunil Lal, ICGEB, and over 100 participants in the ASM Workshop on Scientific Writing and Publishing. The 4-h workshop combined virtual lectures on best practices in developing strong scientific manuscripts with onsite activities and discussion led by Sunil Lal and Miller. As a benefit of membership, ASM members participated in the workshop for free and 88 new members joined the Society as a result of their attendance. Feedback from participants

has been exceedingly positive and representatives from several Indian universities requested that the workshop be repeated at their institutions in 2013.

Miller also chaired the ASM–AMI Joint Symposium on *Genomics and Proteomics* which included lectures by Rup Lal, "Genetics, Genomics and Metagenomics in the Aid of Developing a Bioremediation Technology for Hexachlorocyclohexane"; Jack Gilbert, Argonne National Labs on "The Earth Microbiome Project: A New Paradigm in Geospatial and Temporal Studies of Microbial Ecology," and Rakesh Sharma, IGIB on "Functional Metagenomics Reveals Novel Genes Involved in Arsenic Resistance."

Finally, as the AMI President-elect, Rup Lal invited Miller and Sunil Lal to a formal dinner with leadership from throughout the Indian microbiology community to discuss ways ASM and AMI can continue to foster the collaborative scientific partnership. In 2012, ASM membership in India increased 149 % to 833 members. Follow-up discussions are already underway to ensure that the momentum gained during the President's visit translates into positive symbiotic cooperation.

"There is a palpable sense of excitement and optimism in the Indian microbiology community, due in part to a clear commitment at the national level to support research and education. ASM, in partnership with the AMI, has much to offer. The science at the meeting was excellent and the students, in particular, were an inspiration", said Miller.

ASM is grateful to AMI and KIIT University for the opportunity to share in this important scientific event, their enthusiasm in strengthening the ASM–AMI partnership, and the generous hospitality shown to the ASM President during his visit. ASM would also like to recognize the significant efforts of the Rup Lal, Sunil Lal and the AMI Conference Organizing Secretary, Mrutyunjay Suar, KIIT University, in coordinating ASM's participation in the conference.

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