

# BETA BETA BETA BIOLOGICAL HONOR SOCIETY

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## 2024 National Convention Report

Hosted by the Mu Omicron Chapter of Columbus State University  
May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024 – June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024

The 2024 National Convention was held in Columbus, Georgia on the Columbus State University, Riverpark campus. The host chapter was the Mu Omicron chapter.

The Executive Committee met on Wednesday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024, to discuss the business and financial matters of  $\beta\beta\beta$ . Registration for students and their guests was also on Wednesday, May 20<sup>th</sup> from 12pm - 8pm. The welcome Meet & Greet meeting was held in Frank Brown Hall on Wednesday evening with Dr. Julie Ballenger, TriBeta's current President, opening the convention and welcoming everyone to CSU. Dr. Christi Magrath, SE 2 District Director, lead the chapter roll call with a fun "Riff Off" activity where the last word of the person had to be the first word for the next person to open their introduction with. A dessert social was held in the lobby area of Frank Brank Hall after. Convention attendees stayed on campus in the Broadway Crossing or Clearview Hall dorms.

### Convention Attendance Totals:

Total number of chapters:	33
Total number of districts:	13
Total number of attendees:	108
Total Executive Committee:	10
Total District Directors:	5
Total Faculty Advisors:	10
Total Students:	69
Total Guests:	14

There was a total of 60 presentations, 38 poster and 22 oral. There were 5 poster presentation groupings into the following biological areas of focus: Molecular & Microbiology – Group 1 & 2, Ecology & Environment, Biomedical Science, and Organismal. There were 3 oral presentation groupings into the following biological areas of focus: Molecular & Microbiology, Ecology, Environment, & Organismal, and Biomedical Science.

All poster presentations were on Thursday morning in the exhibitor halls of the Corn Center for the Visual Arts. The first ever silent auction was also set up in the exhibitor halls for attendees to begin browsing items. Light breakfast refreshments were served. All oral presentations were on Thursday afternoon in the lecture classrooms of Frank Brown Hall.



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Dr. Katie Hughes, a professor at Mercer University School of Medicine, Columbus, a former student and colleague of Dr. Julie Ballenger, TriBeta's current President, was the keynote speaker on Thursday night. Dr. Hughes is a TriBeta member at the Psi chapter at Winthrop University from when she was an undergraduate student. Dr. Hughes talked about how we all are ambassadors of biology everywhere we go with our curiosity for learning more, understanding why things are the way they are, and encouraging that curiosity in those around us. Dr. Hughes was awarded honorary membership with the Mu Omicron chapter as a thank you for speaking, as well as a  $\beta\beta\beta$  graduation regalia and merchandise.

Field trips were on Friday and Saturday. Field trips included the following attractions.

- Whitewater rafting on the Chattahoochee River with Whitewater Express
- Coca-Cola Space Science Center
- Oxbow Meadows Environmental Learning Center

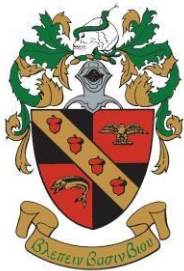
The awards banquet was held on Friday evening. Introductions were made of the existing Executive Committee and all attendees of the convention were welcomed by Dr. Julie Ballenger. Dr. Julie Ballenger was given a plaque for her service as  $\beta\beta\beta$  President from 2020-2024. Dr. Lori Kelman was also recognized for her 26 years of service to TriBeta as BIOS Editor. Dr. Kelman is retiring as Editor with the last issue being June 2024. She was given a warm send-off and recognition award by Dr. Olivia Long and Dr. Steve Ropski.

The biennial business meeting was held during the awards banquet. There were 30 chapters represented at the business meeting. The following business items were voted upon and approved by all.

Nominations for the following Executive Committee positions for the 2-year term starting in September 2024 through August 2026:

- Dr. Carmony Hartwig, President
- Dr. Debra Martin, Vice President, Northcentral
- Dr. Olivia Long, Vice President, Northeast
- Dr. Debra Hinson, Vice President, Southcentral
- Dr. Ed Lickey, Vice President, Southeast
- Dr. Tony Schountz, Vice President, West
- Dr. David Forestier, Vice President, Caribbean

There was no old business discussed.



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New business included the following:

The location and host chapter for the 2026 National Convention were announced. The 2026 National Convention will be held on the campus of Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida. The host chapter is the Tau Sigma chapter. Dates of the convention will be announced later.

The winners of the 2022-2023 Bertholf Award for Outstanding Chapter were announced during the awards banquet Saturday evening. The following are the winners:

### **Bertholf Award**

#### **2022 – 2023**

1st: Zeta Lambda, University of Puerto Rico, Aguadilla

2nd: Upsilon Rho, St. John Fisher College

Honorable Mention: Zeta Nu, Interamerican University of Puerto Rico

### **National Outstanding Chapters**

Zeta Kappa, University of Puerto Rico, Ponce

Zeta Delta, Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico, Ponce

Theta Pi, University of Pittsburgh, Greensburg

Chi Upsilon, The College of New Jersey

Zeta Alpha, University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez

Zeta Gamma, University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras

Following the business meeting, the National Convention Awards were given out. The following are the winners.

### **FRANK G BROOKS AWARD - ORAL PRESENTATIONS**

#### **Molecular & Microbiology**

1st place: Emanuel Echevarría Bonet, Zeta Lambda, University of Puerto Rico, Aguadilla

2nd place: Shannon Golden, Iota Psi, Hillsdale College

3<sup>rd</sup> place: Justin Crookston, Theta Pi, University of Pittsburgh, Greenburg

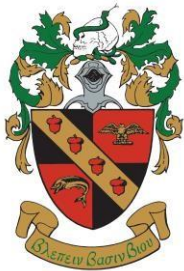
HM: Megan Drayna, Gamma Epsilon, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota

#### **Biomedical Science**

1st place: Emma Schuster, Gamma Epsilon, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota

2nd place: Mo Hijazi, Epsilon Mu, Chapman University

3<sup>rd</sup> place: William Frank, Zeta Kappa, University of Puerto Rico at Ponce



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### **Ecology, Environment, & Organismal**

1st place: Molly Ann Wingard Byers, Delta Sigma, Southwestern Oklahoma State University

2nd place: Brianna Cook, Omega Epsilon, Bradley University

3<sup>rd</sup> place: Taylor Reitz, Xi Psi, Duquesne University

### **JOHN C JOHNSON AWARD FOR POSTER PRESENTATIONS**

#### **Molecular & Microbiology – Group 1**

1st place: Sonia Jose, Kappa Kappa, Augusta University

2<sup>nd</sup> place: Paige Ladowitz, Xi Psi, Duquesne University.

3<sup>rd</sup> place: Darren Powers, Sigma Delta, Southwestern Oklahoma State University

Honorable Mention: Aiza Noyal, Tau Lambda, University of North Carolina, Charlotte

#### **Molecular & Microbiology – Group 2**

1<sup>st</sup> place: Mary-Kate Key, Tau Lambda, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

2nd place: Krishna Majithia, Tau Lambda, University of North Carolina, Charlotte

3<sup>rd</sup> place: Hunter Waltermire, Theta Pi, University of Pittsburgh, Greensburg

Hm: Priscilla Haywood and Ren Thigpen, Beta Omega, Mercer University

#### **Biomedical Science**

1<sup>st</sup> place: Dana Goodman, Eta Theta, Fairmont State University

2<sup>nd</sup> place: Madison Stonbraker, Theta Pi, University of Pittsburgh, Greensburg

3<sup>rd</sup> place: Karen Gonzalez, Tau Eta Chapter, Catawba College

#### **Ecology & Environment**

1<sup>st</sup> place: Chris Walker, Phi Omicron, University of Northern Colorado

2<sup>nd</sup> place: Nahara Yupe, Zeta Lambda, University of Puerto Rico Aguadilla

3<sup>rd</sup> place: Joel Swanberg, Iota Delta Chi, Crown College

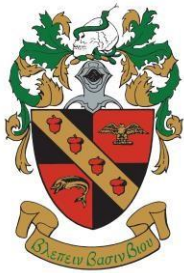
#### **Organismal**

1st place: Kelsey Murphy, Theta Pi, University of Pittsburgh, Greensburg

2<sup>nd</sup> place: Ari Degenhart, Sigma Tau, Florida State University

Other awards given out included the following:

#### **Chapter History E-Book Award:**



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- 1<sup>st</sup>: Omicron Kappa Chapter, Dallas Baptist University
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: Iota Omicron Chapter, Houston Christian University
- 3<sup>rd</sup>: Zeta Lambda Chapter, University of Puerto Rico, Aguadilla

**Largest Number of Delegates from a Chapter Award:**

Upsilon Rho Chapter, St. John Fisher University

**Travel Gavel Award for Longest Distance Traveled:**

Epsilon Mu Chapter, Chapman University

**National Convention Host Award:**

Mu Omicron Chapter, Columbus State University

Dr. Steve Ropski gave a funny Resolution speech to close out the meeting and close the National Convention.

Attendees traveled back home on Saturday or Sunday.

A special thank you to all who helped with judging presentations, planning the convention, and lending a hand whenever the need arose. Positive feedback was received from all attendees, and all expressed they felt it was a successful convention, both fun and a great learning experience for the TriBeta student members.

2024 National Convention Report prepared by:

Iris Daly, Executive Director

8/20/2024