

MUVE Newsletter

February 2021

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From the President, Michael H. Reiskind: A Look at MUVE Demographics

When I assumed the presidency of our section, my first realization was that I did not know much about the section membership. As a regular attendee of our annual meetings, I certainly knew many of the faces of our section (looking at you, Nancy Hinkle!), but understanding the makeup of our memberships requires a more quantitative approach. As increasing our diversity is a goal of our section, the first step is to understand where we are now. So, I asked the ESA administration to send me whatever demographic information they have about our section.

First, some basics. MUVE has over 1600 members (roughly a quarter of the ESA), with 60% identifying as male, 33% identified as female, 6.2% left it blank, and less than 1% answered none, declined to answer, or other. A bit more than a quarter were students and student transition members, and 7.3% were early career identified. Most of the remaining members were “regular” members (65%), with just a few emeriti, family members, or honorary members. MUVE is primarily composed of Caucasian members (63%), but the next most common response regarding ethnic group affiliation was to leave this factor blank (13%, Fig. 1). Given this large number of blanks, I would encourage all members to fill out these fields in their ESA account information fully in the future.



Asians make up 9%, Hispanics 7%, Other 3.3%, African Americans 1.7%, Africans 1.4%, Native Americans 1%, those that put NONE less than one percent, and there were single Asian/Hispanic and Native American/Caucasian responses (these last two not presented in the pie chart). Of interest to me, 36% of us listed academia as our career focus, but 31% did not put a career focus. The private sector is the next most represented career focus, at nearly 15% of MUVE members. Government careers account for 9%, the military for 2.3%, and a smattering of museum, other, non-profit, and retired MUVE members.

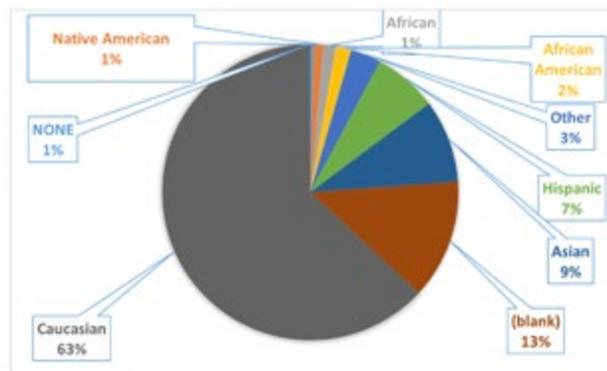


Figure 1. Breakdown of ethnicities self-reported to ESA for MUVE members.

Relative to the wider ESA membership, MUVE is similar in nearly all categories. We do have far less emeriti (5.5% in general membership vs. 0.4% in MUVE) and student transition members (4.4% general membership vs. 0.4% MUVE), and, perhaps not surprisingly, we have more military representation (slightly difficult to parse, but nearly all individuals reporting a military career were in MUVE). We also have more private industry membership relative to the wider ESA membership (14.1% MUVE vs. 9% general membership). Otherwise, our ethnic, career stage, career focus, and gender breakdowns are almost identical.

Now comes the tricky part. How do we interpret these data? If our goal is to have a diverse MUVE section relative to the wider ESA, we are no better or worse. If our goal is to represent the ethnic and racial diversity of the United States, we are far below representation levels for African-Americans (13.4% of the U.S. population) and Hispanic/Latinos of any race (18.5% of the U.S. population). Asians make up about 6% of the US population, and White people about 60%, so we are overrepresented in those categories. Native Americans make up 1.3% of the US population comparable to our 1% of MUVE membership. Note that the U.S. Census uses racial and ethnic categories that are not identical to ours and the U.S. data are estimates for 2019 from the 2010 Census. Other elements of diversity have not been captured by ESA at this point (e.g., sexual orientation, beliefs, etc.), but should be included in future demographic data.

There are no simple answers for improving diversity in MUVE, and the general demographic similarity with ESA in total suggests that solutions are needed not just for MUVE, but for ESA as a whole. Indeed, given the preponderance of academia and Ph.D.s in ESA, diversity in MUVE and ESA reflect challenges in improving diversity in higher education. Recently, there has been some excellent scholarship and poignant personal anecdotes about the challenges of diversity in academia, and entomology specifically, which I encourage all to read ([Tseng et al. 2020](#), [Evangelista et al. 2020](#)). However, I would put forward that the sections, including MUVE, can provide some tangible ways to remedy the lack of diversity. First and foremost, we can advocate for hiring and retaining diverse faculty members and research leaders in government and industry at our institutions *right now*. This has the immediate effect of promoting diverse entomology role models. Just as US Vice-President Kamala Harris provides inspiration to young women everywhere by being the first women, Black and Asian VP, diverse and successful entomologists can inspire budding entomologists from underrepresented groups. Likewise, I think if each of us examines our own origin story as entomologists, most of us either had a love of insects or a desire to alleviate suffering in our fellow humans and animals or both. We can encourage this same fascination with insects and appreciation of their role in human and animal health in children from diverse backgrounds. Finally, we can establish a culture in MUVE that embraces all forms of diversity now, so when improvements are

made, MUVE and ESA does not lose out by being unwelcoming.

MUVE Member Spotlight: MUVers

Help us highlight MUVE members and bring their work into the spotlight! Please send any MUVers news to be included in future newsletters and tweets to Michael Reiskind (mhreiski@ncsu.edu) or Bethany McGregor (bmcgreg1@gmail.com).

February 2021 MUVers:

Dr. George Opit is a professor of stored product/post-harvest pest management in the Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology at Oklahoma State University. His broad research interests are integrated pest management and biological control of arthropod pests. Dr. Opit is the team leader for the USAID-funded Innovation Lab for the Reduction of Post-Harvest Loss ([PHLIL](#)) - Ghana component. Eleven research publications from this work have provided valuable baseline information on insect infestation, moisture content, and mycotoxin data in Ghana. Recently, Dr. Opit tapped Mr. Isaac Sesi, a research engineer at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), to start locally assembling GrainMate moisture devices in Kumasi, Ghana. Isaac went on to create [Sesi Technologies](#) which is now assembling and marketing GrainMate moisture meters throughout sub-Saharan Africa. [Check out this cool video describing the process!](#)



Dr. Chelsea Smartt is an associate professor of molecular biology and biochemistry at the University of Florida-Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory. Dr. Smartt's program focuses on understanding the molecular and biochemical processes underlying vector competence of mosquitoes for arboviral pathogens, with the ultimate goal of developing mosquito-specific vaccines to prevent diverse arboviruses. Dr. Smartt, along with Ph.D. candidate Tse-Yu Chen and co-advisor Dongyoung Shin, recently published the article, "[Permethrin resistance in *Aedes aegypti* affects aspects of vectorial capacity](#)" showing that permethrin resistance in *Aedes aegypti* may lead to increased survival of infected mosquitoes and increased dissemination of dengue virus.



Dr. Abdulsalam Adegoke (DVM, Nigeria) is a veterinarian from Nigeria currently pursuing his Ph.D. in the department of biological sciences at the University of Southern Mississippi. His doctoral research focuses on deciphering the complex interaction between blood-feeding arthropods, their innate immune system and associated microbial communities, as a means to understand the vector competence of these arthropods. Last year, Dr. Adegoke produced two publications on these findings, "[Laboratory colonization by *Dirofilaria immitis* alters the microbiome of female *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes](#)," published in *Parasites & Vectors*, and "[Tick-borne](#)



[pathogens shape the native microbiome within tick vectors](#),” published in *Microorganisms*.

MUVE News Briefs

ESA MUVE Networking Events

Did you enjoy the ESA MUVE virtual networking event at the virtual annual meeting in November? ESA MUVE wants to continue promoting networking opportunities for its membership and plans to host additional networking events throughout the year. Keep an eye out for further emails about a networking event being planned for late March!

Blog Post Highlights from *Entomology Today*

- [New Species of Recluse Spider Named for Leonard Cohen](#)
- [Mapping Lyme: CDC Reveals Distribution of Lyme Disease-Causing Bacteria by County](#)
- [Bed Bug Repellent Tests Should Reflect Type of Bug Behavior, Researchers Find](#)



Remember: For the latest breaking news items related to MUVE, please follow us on Twitter at [@MUVE_ESA](#).

Recognizing and Honoring Black Entomologists

Black History Month first began in 1926, when historian Carter G. Woodson created a Black history week sponsored by what is known today as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH). Originally chosen as the 2nd week of February due to the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, it has now grown into Black History Month, encompassing the month of February.

Black History Month invites us to learn more about important Black people and events throughout history, and reflect on their legacies. We encourage our members to learn about Black history generally—as it is the history of all of us—but especially to engage with the contributions of past and current Black scientists to entomology. Make this a consistent effort by continuing to learn about Black history and support Black entomologists year-round! Some great resources to begin this journey include:

- [Black in Entomology Week](#), **happening now through Friday**. This weeklong event is taking place virtually on Twitter and Zoom, and features topics such as historical entomologist spotlights, student community building, colonialism in entomology, “roll calls” highlighting current Black entomologists, and much more. View the [full schedule](#), and follow along on Twitter through [@blackinento](#) and [#BlackInEnto](#).

- ESA and Oxford University Press are highlighting the research being done by Black entomologists in a [special collection of papers](#) published in ESA journals in the last 3 years and led by Black authors. The collection is freely available to read and download through **June 23, 2021**.
- ESA has made freely available the book [Memoirs of Black Entomologists: Reflections on Childhood, University, and Career Experiences](#). The book brings together 20 Black entomologists from the US and internationally to share their stories and advice for Black and other underrepresented students in entomology.
- While not exclusively focused on Black entomologists, [EntoPOC](#) is another great resource. They offer scientists of the month highlights; reading lists on diversity, equity, and inclusion within the natural sciences; and steps that departments can take to improve inclusivity. They also offer recruitment and mentoring resources for people of color in entomology.

NEW Student Section: Clary Fly Corner

Dear Clary Fly,

Welcome to the MUVE Newsletter! Why don't you introduce yourself, as well as "clarify" why you've been added to the newsletter?

*Sincerely,
MUVE Communications Committee*

I'm Clary Fly, here to answer any questions about being a student in entomology. I was asked to help by Victoria Pickens, your MUVE Section Student Affairs Committee (SAC) Representative and Ph.D. student at Kansas State University.

As an SAC member, Victoria works with a group of students from other ESA sections and branches to identify student needs, increase student participation, and act as liaisons between students and the Society's governance. This committee is responsible for organizing student activities at the national ESA conference like the student debates and student symposium, as well as the "Student Life" section of *American Entomologist* and student-focused webinars.

Why am I here? Well, I promise I didn't just get this job because Victoria likes flies. She thought I might know all the buzz about student activities since I'm such a fly on the wall! Just like the "Dear Sally" letters, students and other MUVers are encouraged to submit questions to me anonymously to help them find answers about things such as student activities, applying to student awards, navigating the ESA website for student related content, etc. I'll also be giving other notes of advice now and then for student opportunities in relation to SAC, MUVE, or ESA.

For example, it's that time of year when the branch meetings are taking place. Did you know there are student awards for the branch meetings as well? If you or a student you know are planning to attend, be sure to check out the awards for your branch. While some branch travel awards are not being offered due to the online format, if you're looking for an award to just take off the registration fee, try

applying to travel awards with your university (especially the graduate college). Many universities are still offering to pay for registration fees despite conferences going virtual.

That's it for now, I hope that I can be of service to all of you! If you have any student-related questions or topics you would like for me to clarify on, please send them to vpicken@ksu.edu and I will answer them in the next MUVE newsletter.

Cheers,
Clary Fly

NEW Humor Section: Jest Management

Hey, do you know any good jokes about mosquitoes?
Nope, they all suck.

Okay, that joke was pretty louse-y (sorry). Do you have a joke that will get everyone *buzzing* (so sorry)? Let us know and we *mite* (okay, we're done) include it in a future newsletter! Send any humorous or lighthearted jokes, unusual pictures (keep it classy, San Diego), etc., to Michael Reiskind (mhreiski@ncsu.edu) or Bethany McGregor (bmcgreg1@gmail.com). (Special thanks to Brian Byrd for inspiration).

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Entomological Society of America (ESA), 3 Park Place, Suite 307, Annapolis, MD 21401-3722 USA
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