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Biology and Chemistry

I attended the 46th Annual Fall Metropolitan Association of College and University Biologists conference (MACUB) at Bergen Community College on Saturday, October 26th, 2013.

The theme of the conference was “Bioethics”. Dr. Christopher Lengauer started with an overview of HeLa cells. He provided an excellent historical account of the origin of these cells and other important events connected to their origin. I was very pleased to learn that Dr. Lengauer is mentioned in Rebecca Skloot's book “The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks”. I had the pleasure of reading this book last summer and it was very interesting to listen first hand to his experiences with the Lacks family. I was a little disappointed because the key note speaker presentation was changed at last minute so he did not continue with the Bioethics topic but directed the presentation to look into the relation between science and empathy. Even though the topic was changed, it was very interesting to learn more about HeLa cells. These cells are very important to the scientific community and I will share that information with my Microbiology and Cell Biology classes.

The second key note presentation was extremely helpful. Dr. Anthony LDePass shared “The Art of Successful Grantsmanship”. One of the initiatives in the Biology and Chemistry department is to obtain funding from the National Science Foundation. The department submitted a grant recently and Dr. LDePass information will be very helpful in case the grant is not funded. Dr. LDePass showed us common mistakes grant writers do and what to do to fix them. He provided examples of grants that community colleges could apply for and delineated the process to develop them.

I also attended some short presentations by faculty and students. Unfortunately, I was not able to serve as a poster judge. It seems that they had enough judges and my services were not required.

In addition, this conference provides an excellent opportunity for faculty to meet faculty from other institutions to share ideas and experiences.

I thank the Center for Teaching Excellence the opportunity you have provided me to attend the conference.