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Editorial

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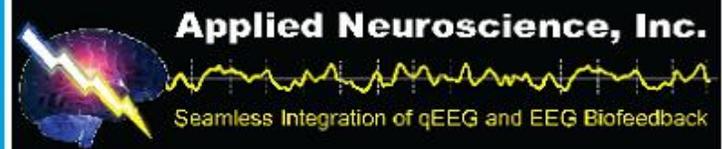
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EDITORIAL

Several years ago I met up with a colleague of mine who worked in a European university that had mandatory retirement at age 65, and he himself was 2 years from retirement. His biggest concern was who would continue working in the field in which he specialized, as globally most of the “big names” in that area were due to retire within a 5-year period. To that end he was traveling the world, helping more junior academics set up in an attempt to keep his area of research interest alive and strong. This is a problem in so many areas, as the driving force behind a research program can be a single individual, and with that person’s retirement, the area loses focus and interest.

However, last week I attended the 22nd annual conference of The Australasian Society for Psychophysiology (ASP) in Sydney, Australia. This conference is very dear to my heart, as it was at a past meeting that I presented my first-ever conference paper as a PhD student. Since the society’s inception, a fundamental tenant has been to encourage student involvement and provide a nurturing and constructive environment for students to present and get feedback on their work. The society actively encourages both undergraduate and postgraduate students to present, and there are prizes for the best presentation in both of these categories. It is of particular note that one of the student prizes at this year’s conference went to a 3rd-year undergraduate student, a very impressive effort indeed. It is therefore not surprising that many members of the current board of directors were past students who started their academic career attending meetings of this society and are now attending with their own students in tow. At this year’s meeting there were 35 oral presentations, with 21 presented by students, but the thing that stood out the most for me was the quality of the work they were undertaking.

Even those students working at an undergraduate level were conducting research that would be worthy of presentation at any forum globally. The studies were sound and well designed, with a good basis in the scientific literature; answered questions worthy of investigation; were meticulously conducted; and in all cases were articulated beautifully.

Similarly, it is good to see the high degree to which the International Society for Neurofeedback and Research (ISNR) supports students through a number of awards. The Student Advocacy Awards have the aim of fostering student interest in neurofeedback. This award consists of a \$100 travel grant, and there are up to five offered every year. The second award system is the Student Travel Awards of \$250. These are offered to up to four students to help support attendance at the conference and present a paper. Finally, the Student Paper Award is presented to up to two students. This is given to the student or students who were deemed to have presented a paper that was superior to typical student efforts. This generous award consists of \$250 toward attendance at the conference, reimbursement of two nights’ accommodation, conference registration, an annual membership to ISNR, and a subscription to the journal. In addition to these awards, the Student Advocacy Committee hosts a student reception one evening during the conference. This is by invitation only and is typically limited to students and invited speakers. The objective of this function is to allow students to speak to researchers whom they would not typically get the chance to talk to, and to this end, the function is highly successful. From personal experience, they are eager to learn, ask questions and listen to discussions on the various aspects of research, and in many instances ask questions that require considerable care in answering.

For the future of neurofeedback it is important to nurture student interest in our field and make their early experiences of academic life, such as conference attendance, as supportive and rewarding as possible. Attendance at multiple meetings of societies

such as ASP and ISNR has left me in no doubt that research in our field is thriving and will continue for a long time to come.

Adam R. Clarke
Senior Editor