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Dear Fellow SSR Trainee Members,

My name is Andrew Kelleher, I am a post-doc at UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, Texas, working in the Lab of Dr. W. Lee Kraus. I am writing to express just how much I would love to represent the interests of my fellow trainees as the trainee representative to the Board of Directors. Of all the qualities required to serve as a successful trainee representative, I believe that enthusiasm for reproductive biology and the desire to facilitate the success of the future leaders in the field are absolute requirements.

My interest in reproductive biology began with my undergraduate research project at Cornell, which focused on the effects of various unilamellar liposomes compositions during the cryopreservation process. In pursuit of additional research opportunities, I was awarded a research fellowship in the Reproductive Physiology Division at the San Diego Zoo Institute for Conservation Research. These experiences led me to pursue my graduate education in the lab of Dr. Thomas E. Spencer. The evolution of my interests in and exposure to reproductive biology led me to the focus of my Ph.D. research on endometrial gland development as well as the impact of endometrial glands and their secretions on uterine receptivity, stromal cell decidualization, and placental development. Now, as a postdoctoral researcher in the Kraus Lab at UT Southwestern Medical Center, my long-standing interest in reproductive biology is focused on the molecular mechanisms of term and preterm labor.

Throughout my training, I have attended the SSR meeting five times. I was continually impressed by the breadth of topics covered within the meeting, which allowed me to stay current on a wide variety of topics in the field of reproduction. Importantly, SSR is committed to providing trainees opportunities to present data, receive constructive feedback from leaders in the field, and is unmatched in networking opportunities. It was at SSR that I learned about the Frontiers in Reproduction course, and I was honored to be awarded the Anita Payne Scholarship to attend in the summer of 2017. The Society has been a cornerstone of my training as a reproductive biologist, and it is clear that participation in SSR has benefitted my career immensely, which has led to my desire to give back to the Society. Through the years, I have begun to actively pursue a greater involvement within the Society through volunteering during sessions at the annual meeting and serving on the program committee for the 2019 conference in San Jose.

With the recent Golden Anniversary fundraising campaign, I believe the Society has a unique opportunity to focus on enhancing trainee experiences and promoting the

development of young scientists. If I am honored to be elected as your trainee representative, I will work with the SSR leadership to enhance the trainee experience. Specifically, I will focus on improving trainee networking and career stage mentorship.

SSR does a great job providing career guidance for trainees, but I would like to see more stage-specific career mentorship and increased career guidance for trainees interested in pursuing careers outside academia. SSR trainees are at many different career stages (undergraduate, masters, Ph.D., Post-Doc) with a plethora of different career goals, demanding a wide variety of mentorship and guidance. Within the scientific community, mentors are often established investigators, but these mentors are far removed from challenges faced by trainees looking for guidance in moving to the next stage of their career. In my experience, some of the best advice comes from individuals who have recently made the transition from one career stage to the next. I believe that providing mentorship opportunities for all career levels and goals will significantly benefit all SSR trainees. To accomplish this goal, I will make it a priority to increase the opportunities for trainees to meet and interact, both in professional and relaxed settings.

Most importantly, I look forward to working on any issue that my fellow trainees would like to see addressed. Thank you for considering me as your trainee representative!

Best,

Andrew Kelleher