



## From the President

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NABT PRESIDENT-2009

August has arrived and for many of us, the new school year begins. We have only a few days or weeks until we will be back in the classroom with a new group of students or some returning ones. Over the summer I have had the opportunity to grade AP Biology exams along with 500 other biologists and educators in Kansas City. We had the opportunity to hear Sean Carroll speak (he will be one of NABT's keynote speakers in Denver in November) on our Professional Development Night. However, the best part of AP grading was the interaction between the university and secondary biology educators. Discussions on new developments and discoveries in the biological sciences and the innovative ways to teach biology made this time such a valuable experience. Stories of so many students succeeding in biology at the secondary and post-secondary levels were shared and were very inspiring. As an educator of the biological sciences, who taught for 20 years at the secondary level, and now 17 years at the university level, I can only say that I am energized to begin the next year.

Biology educators, we do significant work with these students. Yes, many of the students we teach do not have a passion for biology as we do and do not give as much effort as we know it deserves. Yet, it is many of those same disengaged students who have come back, long after my time with them, and thanked me for striving to teach them and caring for them as students. Other students worked hard for us in class and succeeded academically. Often I hear how they were influenced by the teaching we give. And for some, we as educators were the ones who inspired them to go into the biological sciences as an area of study, a profession, and (for some) even a passion.

As our new year begins, let's remember that we play an important role in the lives of so many young people. We have such a vital responsibility: to provide them with the best education we can. There is essential content to be learned this year. There are critical processing skills in which to be trained. There will be many social issues in which biology plays an

important role that will be addressed by us in the classroom. In the midst of these daily activities, let's remember that we are about teaching students – individual minds that need our best. We have such a constructive role to play in their lives and our influence will go beyond just an appreciation of biology. Let's do it with the highest integrity we can.

NABT is here to help. NABT is a membership society, which desires to prepare teachers to be the best educators they can be in the secondary and university classrooms. Thousands of teachers around the U.S., Canada, and the world belong to NABT. I have been a member of NABT about 25 years and have learned so much from my interactions with these professionals. This November, the annual Professional Development Conference will be in Denver. Come this year and interact with more than 1,000 secondary and university educators. There are great sessions on the teaching of biology where old and new pedagogy will be demonstrated and materials provided to participants. There will be key speakers on the biological sciences who help to bring us the new biology discoveries and understandings. Among them will be Nobel Laureates Dr. Mario Capecchi (Distinguished Professor of Human Genetics and Biology at the University of Utah) and Dr. Tom Cech (Past President of HHMI and Distinguished Professor, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, at the University of Colorado at Boulder, and Director, Colorado Institute for Molecular Biotechnology). Several major emphases will be presented this year as the education of biological sciences is being examined nationally. Two such examples are the Summit on Stem Cell Education and a major focus on Undergraduate Biology Education for the Two- and Four-Year University and College Educators.

NABT hopes that this year is a good year for all of you and we look forward to seeing you in Denver in November.

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