

BPS Summer Course Year Three Begins

The 2010 *BPS Summer Course: Case Studies in the Physics of Life* began on May 18 at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (UNC) with an orientation session led by Course Director and UNC's Director of Biophysics & Biochemistry Program, *Barry R. Lentz*, followed by a welcome dinner.

Eleven undergraduate students (pictured below) from all over the United States were selected for the intense Summer Course program, set up to mimic graduate school demands. The course program includes rigorous lectures provided by UNC faculty members, seminars by biophysicists from various academic institutions, industry, and government agencies, professional development workshops, and independent lab research experience.



Current UNC students *Kellie Beicker* from the Department of Chemistry, *Vinal Lakhani* from the Department of Biological & Biomedical Sciences, and *Jun Zhang* from the Department of Biophysics & Biochemistry will be the teaching assistants for the course.

The Summer Course is funded by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences, National Institutes of Health. The students participating in this year's course are: *Shayna Atkins*, Spelman College; *Gregory Benjamin*, Howard University; *Jennifer Camia*, George Mason University; *Jacquelyn Freeman*, New York Institute of Technology; *Anna-May Joseph*, Oakwood University; *Branden King*, University of Dayton; *Joshua Laskin*, University of Maryland Baltimore County; *Patrick McCarter*, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University; *Jennifer Nagamine*, University of Hawaii at Manoa; *Najah Salleh*, North Carolina Central University and *Natalie Stenzoski*, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis.

Upcoming Deadlines

New Horizons in Calcium Signaling
Beijing, China

Early Registration
July 12

Actin, the Cytoskeleton & the Nucleus
Singapore

Abstract Submission
August 6

Early Registration
September 1

Contents

Biophysicist in Profile	2
Careers.....	4
Members in the News	6
Public Affairs	8
Science Fair Winners.....	10
Grants & Opportunities	11
Upcoming Events.....	12

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Biophysicist in Profile

Hans Reiner Polder

“The secrets of life can be solved by measurements, modeling, and formulas,” Hans Reiner Polder maintains. The founder and CEO of npi electronic GmbH, a manufacturing company that builds electrophysiology instruments designed for use in physiological and pharmacological basic research in the life sciences, was born in Sighisoara, a multiethnic Romanian village initially settled by the Saxons of Transylvania, a people known for their craftsmanship. Polder spent the first decade of his life under a Communist regime. To escape such suppression, Polder, his parents, and his younger brother immigrated to Tamm, Germany, where the family still lives today.

Polder’s father, an engineer and later an electronics and physics teacher, encouraged Polder’s interest in electronics. “I built radio sets,” Polder says. “This was something special, because one had access to foreign radio stations as a source of information.” A teenager in Romania, he won the MINITECHNICUS Award at a nationwide competition for designing an electronic keyboard instrument to be used as a music-teaching tool. Later, his talent with electronics met his innate teaching ability, which nicely complemented his desire to share his knowledge with anyone who wanted to learn. This combination of traits set the tone for his future career.

After graduating from high school in Ludwigsburg, Germany, Polder began his degree in electrical engineering and then medical electronics and cybernetics at Technical University Munich. “We had a lecture by *Wolf Singer*, ‘Neurophysiology for electrical engineers,’” Polder recalls, “and this led my attention to electrophysiology and biophysics.” Meanwhile, he interned at the Max Planck Institute of Psychiatry in the Department of Neurophysiology. “*Hans Dieter Lux* and his team were very interested to promote new developments in the field of electrophysiological instrumentation,” Polder says. “*Uwe Heinemann*, *Arthur Konnerth*, and *Dieter Swandulla* were experimenting with single electrode and voltage clamp techniques, so I got the chance to complete my degree with a masters thesis about the single electrode voltage clamp technique.” This experience had a profound impact on his later career: Immediately after graduation, Polder started npi electronic. His wife, Hannelore, is now the CEO/CFO.

Polder’s biggest career challenge, he says, is “to make npi electronic not only a supplier but a scientific partner involved in solving the problems scientists have in their daily research.” It’s an ambitious goal, but one that keeps him motivated. Fortunately, the Biophysical Society can help. “Very important is the *Biophysical Journal* and the Annual Meeting as a source of state-of-the-art scientific information and a chance to meet other biophysicists and get new ideas,” says Polder. He

brings these ideas to his company, truly joining the hands of hard science and industry. “For me it is the link between two worlds, life science phenomena and electronics. This is very fascinating and always challenging.”

“Reiner is not just a manufacturer but has a deep understanding of the underlying science,” says *Andreas Draguhn*, Director of the Department of General Physiology at Heidelberg University, and Polder’s collaborator and friend. “He has more knowledge about methods in cellular electrophysiology than anybody else I know.... He is willing and able to share this knowledge with everybody, including young researchers.”

Exhibiting this philosophy, Polder began working with *Michael Hoerner* of the University of Goettingen to create a summer course in Kota Bharu, Malaysia, to teach students about electrophysiology. To accomplish this goal, they teamed up with the German Academic Exchange Service and the Universiti Sains Malaysia, School of Medical Sciences. “He is disciplined and persistent, and a positive thinker,” *Jafri Malin Abdullah*, Chair of the Department of Neurosciences at the Universiti Sains Malaysia, School of Medical Sciences, and co-developer of the Summer School, says of Polder. “He is always adaptable and a supporter of our objectives to establish a world-class lab even though he knew in his heart that it would take a few years to establish this and make it sustainable.”

Even after establishing the Summer School Fundamentals of Electrophysiology in 2005, Polder continues to passionately recruit guest instructors each year—which, given that the school cannot pay visiting faculty European rates to teach the course, can be a challenge. Polder, however, is always up to it. “I love the way his eyes roll when trouble is brewing,” Abdullah says. “When or after we get these problems settled, his great German smile that follows his moustache enlightens our spirits.”

Polder himself also guest instructs the Summer School students. To educate the next generation of scientists and industry professionals,

he draws on his own understanding that there is a context to which everything belongs. “Go back to the roots,” he advises. “Many problems can be solved by adequate modeling and often bioelectric phenomena can be understood by using simplified equivalent circuits.” His lectures are moving, Draguhn asserts; he experienced Polder’s “charismatic” teaching style when he himself was a student. “He gave me the most profound lecture in electrophysiological techniques that I had ever heard...I actually felt dizzy afterwards.”

Bernd Sutor, another of Polder’s collaborators and a student at the Max Planck Institute of Psychiatry back when Polder was interning there, lauds Polder’s calm diligence in conveying his knowledge to others. “He tried to explain to me the theoretical background of the time-share-principle of his amplifier,” Sutor says. “Certainly, he got the feeling that it was not worth the time, but with great patience, he answered all my questions.”

As Draguhn puts it, Polder taught him “to believe in solid measurements, based on precise knowledge of the recording instruments, and to be intellectually independent from short-lived fashions in science.” Polder plans to continue teaching these fundamentals to generations of scientists to come by organizing more courses, symposia, and workshops. As to his plans for

npi electronic?

“The trend [in biophysics] is going toward high resolution imaging techniques,” he says. “I hope to be able, together with my excellent team at npi, to design microelectrode-based instruments that can

cope with these new challenges.” Based on his track record, he’ll do that, and more.



Polder with the 2009 Summer School Class in Malaysia where he teaches electrophysiology.

Careers

10 Ways to Help You Score Funding

The following article summarizes one of the topic discussions held during the Committee for Professional Opportunities for Women (CPOW)-sponsored Career Roundtable Luncheon at the 54th Annual Meeting in San Francisco. During these sessions, graduate students, postdocs and early career attendees lunch with seasoned faculty and pick their brains about negotiating the tricky business of establishing a research career.

A popular topic was grant writing: how to get started, what to include in the proposal, who to ask for help with writing a first grant. Moderators offered some helpful advice, including ten things you can do to get that grant money.

1. **Have a good idea.** The first step to getting funding to do what you want to do is to know what you want to do. Convincing someone to give you money to do something you're passionate about is easier than asking for money because you have to. Your excitement and passion for your pet project will shine through in your proposal. You will also be more persistent about getting funding because you're anxious to get started on a project you can sink your teeth into.
2. **Do your research.** Generate plenty of preliminary data. Give your audience enough cold, hard facts to convince them that your project needs funding. Don't bog them down with science—the idea is to get funding, not to present a scientific treatise like the one you published in *Biophysical Jour-*

nal last month. If reviewers do ask for more data, provide it. No matter how innovative your work is, it won't gain funding if there isn't enough data to support it.

3. **Read up.** Read all sorts of grant proposals—the good, the bad, and the ugly. Note what elements about the proposals that got funding made them successful, and use the same tactics in your own proposal. Likewise, critique the failures to find out what specifically about them turned off their readers. Check your own proposal to make sure you've avoided all such methods. Ask your mentor to help you gain access to grants that were officially funded or not, or check some out on your own—NIH or any university are great places to start looking.
4. **Know your audience.** Know what resources are available to you before you even start writing. Sending proposals to places likely to fund is more efficient than sending proposals out everywhere under the sun. The only way to know which places are looking to fund your type of proposal is to investigate. A targeted approach can only help your case. You may just find the perfect match.
5. **Clarity is key.** Express your idea straightforwardly. Don't make your readers untangle the science to figure out what your project is. Grant proposals are designed to get you money, not to list every nuance of the science. Explain the science sufficiently to portray the general idea and why you believe the project should be funded, but err on the side of simplicity. The people reading your grant proposal read dozens of proposals a day, so make sure yours is clear and to the point.

6. **Write piece by piece.** Tackle a page a day, and the grant proposal will magically become more manageable. Spend time proofreading. Tighten the writing for clarity and readability. Tailor the layout so it becomes not only aesthetically pleasing but also structured for navigational ease.
7. **Avoid stupid mistakes.** Grant readers don't want to read proposals littered with misspellings and badly composed sentences. Mistakes like these can make the difference between a good grant and a funded grant. To make sure yours is the latter, ask your proofreaders to comb your work for these small but powerful errors.
8. **Enlist proofreaders.** Get both your labmates and your advisors to read your proposal; the diverse perspectives will give you more meaty feedback to approach revisions on multiple levels. Comments from your peers will be different than comments from your mentors, but no less valuable. Your proofreaders should be people you trust, since the goal is to get honest, constructive criticism. Friends in other departments make perfect proofreaders.
9. **Do a good job.** Grant proposals aren't something you can dash off in a few minutes and expect money to appear on your doorstep. Each section of your proposal should be clearly thought through, clearly outlined, and clearly communicated. The best way to do this is to spend the time doing it.
10. **Practice makes perfect.** Write grant proposals at every level of your career, and write a lot of them. With each round of grant proposals you write, it will get easier. Reviewers are less strin-

gent with applicants earlier in their careers, so get started writing grants as a grad student. By the time you reach a faculty-level research career, you'll be a wiz at it, and you'll have funding under your belt to prove it. The more prolific you are with your grant proposals, the greater your chances of getting funding. The sooner you get going, the sooner you get the money to do what you want to do!

India Opportunities



The Early Careers Committee hosted a panel called *Biosciences in India: Directions, Challenges and Opportunities* at the 54th Annual Meeting to help shed light on common questions posed by postdocs from the US and Europe as they look at In-

dia as a possible destination for academic or industry careers, and to further illustrate collaborative research opportunities with India. Panelists *Jyotsna Dhawan* of the Institute for Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine, *Sudipta Maiti* of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, and *Mrinalini Puranik* of the National Centre for Biological Sciences emphasized India's burgeoning resources in the way of funding, facilities, and initiatives for young scientists.

For scientists at all stages of considering a career in India—from those thinking about it as a remote possibility to those weighing the pros and cons to those packing their bags for Mumbai—panelists recommended building relationships with faculty in India and keeping this communication open every step of the way. The faculty is approachable and very willing to answer questions. For more information, visit www.indiabio-science.org.

Members in the News

Daniel Herschlag (picture not available), Stanford University and Society member since 2003, received the William C. Rose Award from the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology.



Robin M. Hochstrasser of the University of Pennsylvania and Society member since 1999 received the 2010 Pittsburgh Spectroscopy Award from the Spectroscopy Society of Pittsburgh.



Sarah Keller, University of Washington and Society member since 1995, received the Avanti Young Investigator Award in Lipid Research from the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology.

2010 National Academy of Sciences Fellows

A total of 72 new members and 18 foreign associates were elected to the National Academy of Sciences. Four of those elected are Biophysical Society Members. They are:

Michael D. Cahalan of the University of California, Irvine, and Society member since 2004; *J. Eric Gouaux* of Oregon Health Science University, Vollum Institute, and Society member since 2000; *Attila Szabo* (picture not available) of the National Institutes of Health, NIDDK, and Society member since 1998; and *David A. Weitz* of Harvard University, and Society member since 2002.



Michael D. Cahalan



J. Eric Gouaux

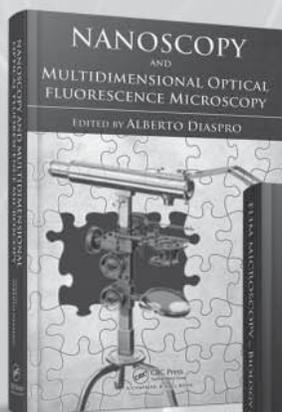


David A. Weitz

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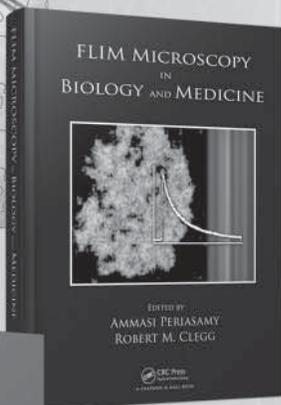
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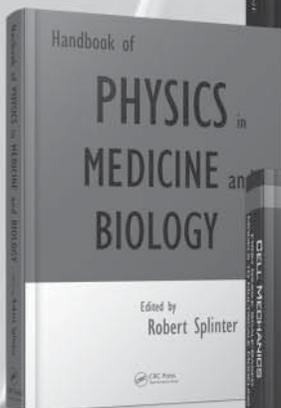
Catalog no. C7886, April 2010, 448 pp.
ISBN: 978-1-4200-7886-2, \$129.95 / £82.00



FLIM Microscopy in Biology and Medicine

Edited by
Ammasai Periasamy and Robert M. Clegg

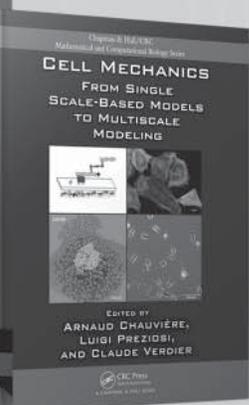
Catalog no. C7890, January 2010, 472 pp.
ISBN: 978-1-4200-7890-9, \$99.95 / £63.99



Handbook of Physics in Medicine and Biology

Edited by
Robert Splinter

Catalog no. 75241, April 2010, 548 pp.
ISBN: 978-1-4200-7524-3, \$149.95 / £95.00

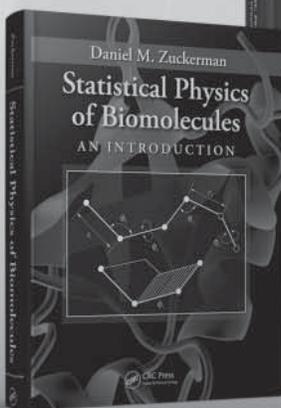


Cell Mechanics

From Single Scale-Based Models to Multiscale Modeling

Edited by
Arnaud Chauvière, Luigi Preziosi, and Claude Verdier

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Public Affairs

President Obama Names Bioethics Commission Members

In April, President *Obama* announced his appointments to the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues. The 10 new members will join the current Chair, *Amy Gutmann*, and Vice-Chair, *James Wagner*, as Members on the Commission when the Commission has its first meeting this month. In order to keep the Commission's work practical, a few federal employees were included in the 10 new members. Other members have backgrounds in ethics, philosophy, law, science, and medicine.

The Commission will advise the President on bioethical issues that may emerge from advances in biomedicine and related areas of science and technology. The Commission will also work to identify and promote policies and practices that ensure scientific research, health-care delivery, and technological innovation are conducted in an ethically responsible manner. The Commission replaces the President's Council on Bioethics that President Obama disbanded last summer.

To see the new members or learn more about the Commission, go to <http://www.bioethics.gov>.

Key Stem Cell Lines Approved for Federal Funding

In April, the National Institutes of Health announced that 13 additional lines of human embryonic stem cells are eligible for federal funding, including the most widely used line that was one of the only 21 acceptable to federal funding by President *George W. Bush*.

The federal approval includes nine lines that are eligible for federal funding for the first time and four that have been used for many years, known as H7, H9, H13 and H14. H9 is the line most widely used by researchers.

The announcement lifted concerns of some in the research community that the new stem cell policy meant to improve human embryonic stem cell research was actually hindering it. The lines originally approved by President Bush for federal funding had to be vetted to ensure that they met the new ethic requirements, including making sure couples who donated embryos were fully informed of their options.

America Competes Act Passes House

While the original passage of the America Competes Act received wide bipartisan support in 2007, the reauthorization of the legislation turned into a political battle. The House finally passed the Reauthorization bill, H.R. 5116, on its third trip to the floor by a vote of 262 to 150.

After failing earlier in the month, Chairman *Bart Gordon* (D-TN) stated in a press release, "I'm disappointed, but not deterred. As I've said before, this bill is too important to let fall by the way-side. More than half of our economic growth since World War II can be directly attributed to development and adoption of new technologies. The path is simple: research leads to innovation; innovation leads to economic development and good paying jobs. Creating good jobs is the goal of this bill, and it is what our country needs right now."

Republican House members, led by Representative *Ralph Hall* (R-TX), contended that the bill was too expensive and included unnecessary programs.

Over 750 organizations endorsed reauthorization of COMPETES, including the Biophysical Society.

The bill has yet to be considered by the Senate. It was unclear at press time when that might take place. Gordon is retiring at the end of this term and one of his major goals is to pass this reauthorization before he steps down.

NIH Champions Obey and Specter to Leave Congress

Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, *David Obey* (D-WI) announced that he plans to retire at the end of this Congress in January. Senator *Arlene Specter* (D-PA), after switching parties last year, lost the Democratic primary to Congressman *Joe Sestak* (D-PA) in May, and will not be on the ballot in November. Both Obey and Specter have been champions of the National Institutes of Health and biomedical research over the past 42 and 30 years, respectively. The biomedical community will be hard pressed to find new champions within Congress as passionate about biomedical research as Obey and Specter have been.



2011 Call for Papers

All Society members were mailed the 2011 Annual Meeting Call for Papers. For more information about the meeting visit www.biophysics.org

BPS Members Participate in Capitol Hill Day

BPS members *Omoz Aisiku*, Stony Brook University, and *Diana Wong*, University of Michigan, visited Capitol Hill on April 28 and 29 along with 270 other scientists, engineers, and educators for the 15th Annual Science-Engineering-Technology Congressional Visits Day (CVD).

CVD participants come from across the country to Washington, DC, each year to emphasize the importance of consistent research and development (R&D) investments in science and technology (S&T), urge further investments in R&D and science education, and to thank Members of Congress for their past support and landmark legislation like the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010.



On the first day, CVD participants were given a lesson in Government 101—learning how the appropriations cycle works, how to speak with Members of Congress and their staff, and how to stay involved in the policy process when they return home.

The second day of CVD began with a breakfast reception at which retiring Representative *Vern Ehlers* (R-MI) thanked CVD participants for educating his colleagues about the importance of investments in S&T and R&D. Afterwards, CVD volunteers dispersed to their respective Representatives' and Senators' offices to represent their professional community. Wong and Aisiku visited the offices of Senator *Charles Schumer* (D-NY), Senator *Carl Levin* (D-MI), Senator *Debbie Stabenow* (D-MI), Congressman *John Dingell* (D-MI), and Congressman *Tim Bishop* (D-NY).

Science Fair Winners

The Biophysical Society gave Biophysics Awards at seven regional science fairs in Massachusetts and three regional science fairs in the San Francisco area, as well as at both the Massachusetts and California state fairs. Outstanding projects in biophysics were recognized with a certificate and monetary award from the Society. Congratulations to the middle- and high-school students who came up with some excellent biophysics-related projects. The winners, many of whom are pictured on the facing page are listed below.

From northeastern Massachusetts, Somerville High School seniors *Mahima Karki* and *Arogya Khadka* won the biophysics award for their project, *The Combined Treatment of Herceptin and Chemotherapy on SKOv-3 and SKBr-3 Cells*.

In the Boston area, senior *Stephany Foster* from Boston Latin Academy received the biophysics award for her project, *Differentially Regulated Genes Offer Insight into How Species Evolve*.

Two southeastern Massachusetts sophomores received the biophysics award. Braintree High School's *Nicole Kolaci* and Falmouth Academy's *Katherine Bianchi* created projects entitled, *Determining the Primary Photosynthetic Pigment of Hypoestes through Spectrophotometry*, and *The Effects of Sound on the Behavior of Larval Homarus americanus*, respectively.

Karl Chung and *Ryan Saliga* represented Marlborough High School in central Massachusetts with their project *Neurological Degeneration: Working Toward a Cure*, while *Andrew Ellis'* project, *ANN: Artificial Neural Networks*, took the biophysics prize for Westfield High School in western Massachusetts.

At the Massachusetts State Science and Engineering Fair, *Chad Benoit*, a sophomore at Bishop Feehan High School in Attleboro, received the Biophysics Award for his project *The Amount of Ultraviolet Light Transmitted through Different Fabrics*.

On the west coast, eighth grader *Jake Forrester* of Contra Costa County's Holy Rosary School received the award for his project *From Garbage to Energy*.

Maria Carrillo High School student *Cameron Crook* did Sonoma County proud with his project, *How Do Different Light Intensities Affect Phytoplankton?*, which also won the Biophysics Award.

At the California State Science and Engineering Fair, *Tiffany Chien*, a junior at The Harker School in San Jose, received the Biophysics Award for her project, *Modifying TZD Drug to Improve Function in Body*. Special thanks to Society members *Merritt Maduke* and *Subrud Rajguru* for judging at this fair!

To other Society members who lent their expertise volunteering as judges at these science fairs, thank you! If you wanted to volunteer but didn't have the opportunity, please consider signing up to help judge at a 2011 fair. The Society will again sponsor awards at the Massachusetts and San Francisco regional fairs, as well as fairs in the Baltimore area, in tandem with our 2011 Annual Meeting. Your participation in these students' science education shows your commitment to the future of biophysics.

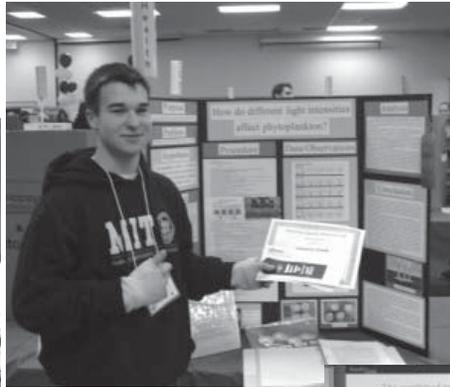
Andrew Ellis



Jake Forrester



Katherine Bianchi



Cameron Crook



Tiffany Chien



Stephany Foster (fourth from right)



Mahima Karki and Arogya Khadka

Grants & Opportunities

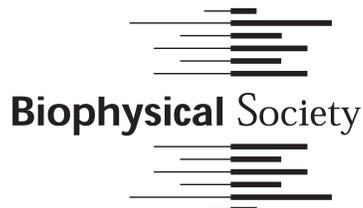
Name: The GE Prize for Young Scientists

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Upcoming Events

August 30–September 1, 2010

2010 Workshop for Young Researchers in Mathematical Biology
Columbus, Ohio

<http://www.mbi.osu.edu/wyrm/wyrm2010.html>

October 10–12, 2010

High Resolution Neuropharmacology
San Diego, California

<http://www.neuropharmacology-conference.elsevier.com>

October 16–18, 2010

*The 3rd International Conference on BioMedical
Engineering and Informatics*

Yantai, China

<http://cisp-bmei2010.ytu.edu.cn/>

October 25–27, 2010

BIT's 1st Annual World Congress of Nanomedicine 2010
Shanghai, China

www.bitlifesciences.com

November 28–December 1, 2010

*Joint Meeting of Australian Physiological Society and
Australian Society for Biophysics*

National Wine Centre, Adelaide, Australia

<http://www.apps.org.au/Meetings/201011/>

Please visit <http://www.biophysics.org> for a complete list of upcoming events.