

AAAS Council Acts on Population Growth, RU 486, and More at 1991 Meeting

Executive Officer's Report

At their annual meeting this year, members of the Council for the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) heard from executive officer Rich Nicholson as he described organizational changes at AAAS and its financial health (net worth: \$21 million). Nicholson also said he has formed a New Ventures Committee to pursue such possibilities as the creation of an electronic journal and ideas for new meetings.

Several Council members requested statistics that would compare the disciplinary distribution of articles in *Science* to the number of members in each AAAS section. Suggested solutions to the perceived inequities included a set page allocation or even an editor for each disciplinary area, and an emphasis in the book review section on multidisciplinary balance.

Elections and Appointments

AAAS president Donald Langenberg introduced F. Sherwood Rowland, the new president-elect, as well as Warren Washington and Jean'ne Shreeve, the newest members of the Board of Directors. Langenberg also announced the following recently elected members of the Committee on Council Affairs: Rosemary Chalk, Arno G. Motulsky, Mary Budd Rowe, and Dael Wolffe.

The section secretary appointments were Thomas Dirksen (Dentistry); Betty-ann Hoener (Pharmaceutical Sciences); R. Clifton Bailey (Statistics); William H. Beasley (Atmospheric and Hydrospheric Sciences); Rachelle D. Hollander (Societal

Impacts of Science and Engineering); and James M. McCullough (General Interest in Science and Engineering).

Membership Report

Michael Spinella, director of Membership and Circulation, told the Council that membership has grown about 10.5% in the last 10 years—not encouraging when compared with other similar societies. One problem, he said, may be the competition AAAS faces from increasing numbers of specialized journals and societies.

Spinella also mentioned his concern with the low number of members who join AAAS sections. The sections, he said, represent the "grassroots membership" of AAAS, and he asked Council members for their ideas on how to best combat the decline and urged them to more actively recruit new members themselves.

Spinella also discussed plans to attract more international members, the possibility of creating a new membership category for high school teachers, and the potential for new products that would appeal to minorities or those in underrepresented fields, such as computer science.

Report: Education and Human Resources Directorate

Shirley Malcom, director of the Education and Human Resources Directorate, provided the Council with an overview of her group's activities in education, science for underrep-

resented groups, and the public understanding of science.

Report: Governance Committee

Emilio Daddario, former AAAS president and current chair of the Governance Committee, acknowledged the hard work of his committee members (Phil Abelson, Mary Clutter, Dan Drucker, Judith Grasse, and Dael Wolffe) as well as of the AAAS staff who supported their work (Walt Gillespie, Bill Engelman, and Pat Curlin).

The committee recommended that communication with members should be improved and that new mechanisms should be developed to better involve members in AAAS activities, suggestions that the Board has endorsed and asked Nicholson to implement.

The Lederman Survey Report

Leon Lederman, AAAS president-elect, discussed his report on America's crisis in research funding (prepared for the AAAS Board of Directors earlier this year and distributed to all AAAS members). He read the statement on funding passed by the Board at its 14 February 1991 meeting, which calls for, among other things:

- *Science* to emphasize the analysis of research funding and related issues in its regular news coverage; and

- the AAAS staff to help broaden the dialogue on this issue by involving organizations from all sectors of society and possibly organizing a 1991 national symposium on research and its impact on society.

Also, the Board established a

special Committee on the Health of the Scientific Enterprise to coordinate efforts with AAAS and organize external collaboration.

Report: Committee on Council Affairs Meeting

The Council approved resolutions concerning world population growth; RU 486 and freedom of medical research; the support of institutional mechanisms to enhance coordination and support for environmental research and training, and their incorporation into public policy; and the support of a national center for biodiversity (see next page for text).

In addition, the Council:

- unanimously approved an amendment to the Caribbean Division charter changing the title of the vice president to president-elect;

- tabled for further discussion a bylaw amendment that would allow revocation of fellowship status after a finding of professional misconduct;

- and approved the American Psychological Society and the Society of College Science Teachers for affiliation with AAAS.

Election of Fellows

AAAS members nominated for fellowship status this year were unanimously elected by the Council. (For the complete list, see *Science*, 22 March 1991.)

Resolution of Appreciation

The Council noted Arthur Herschman's plans to retire after the annual meeting from his position as head of the AAAS Meetings office and approved a resolution in appreciation of his many years of outstanding service. ♦



Be It Resolved...

Resolution: RU 486

Whereas RU 486, a major new drug, is both an anti-glucocorticoid and anti-progesterone steroid that has many potential benefits for society; and

Whereas RU 486 is an effective treatment for Cushing's syndrome; it has shown effective activity in the treatment of some types of breast cancer; it has been used in France as a safe, effective method for the termination of early pregnancy; and there is suggestive activity for its value in the treatment of endometriosis and difficult deliveries; and

Whereas a hostile political climate has discouraged Roussel Uclaf, the French manufacturer of RU 486, from seeking a license to market the compound in the United States; and

Whereas the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has imposed an import alert on RU 486; and

Whereas AAAS is committed to freedom of scientific inquiry and the advancement of modern technology;

Be it resolved that AAAS encourages pharmaceutical companies and the FDA to make RU 486 and related agents available for further research and use as medically indicated. ❖

Resolution: Population Growth

Whereas AAAS, being the principal organization of scientists in the United States, is composed of members concerned with broad issues of human welfare, scientific research, and public policy; and

Whereas in 1960 the AAAS Board supported a statement on overpopulation, signed by Nobel laureates and distinguished scientists, for submission to the United Nations; and

Whereas in 1972 the Council of AAAS adopted a resolution calling for substantial increases in support of scientific research on the problems associated with human reproduction; and

Whereas AAAS is concerned that continued rapid growth of the human population contributes directly to human suffering throughout the planet, impedes sustainable economic development, increases international tensions, and exacerbates environmental degradation that endangers the survival of the human and many other species; and

Whereas the 1990 Institute of Medicine report on *Developing New Contraceptives: Obstacles and Opportunities* indicates that research in the field continues to require significant support; and

Whereas the AAAS recognizes that some U.S. government policies concerning population problems and fertility control are contrary to the positions previously taken by AAAS, in lacking support for voluntary fertility control programs, in general, and for the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF), in particular; and

Whereas since voluntary contraceptive options cannot be achieved for all couples who wish them without committing the resources of American science and technology to the common goals of improving reproductive technology, encouraging and protecting contraceptive development, and avoiding unwanted pregnancy by safe and legal means;

Be it resolved that continuing in its historic role, AAAS calls upon the Executive and Legislative branches of the U.S. government to provide additional population/family planning funding for domestic and international contraceptive research efforts, specifically those of the National Institutes of Health, of the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the World Health Organization. ❖

Resolution: Biodiversity

Whereas biological information is critically important for the understanding and protection of our nation's diversity; and

Whereas governmental agencies and citizens have need for biological and especially systematic and ecological information to meet their obligations to protect biological diversity; and

Whereas biological survey activities in the United States are piecemeal and there is little incentive for scientists and their institutions to perform such activities despite their importance to environmental policy; and

Whereas a National Center for Biological Diversity would provide critical biological data to enhance larger databases about the environment, and should be developed in coordination with them; and

Whereas federal legislation has been introduced that would create a National Center for Biological Diversity that will draw together sources of information on biological diversity, support research to fill gaps in that information, commission and publish guides, keys, and faunal/floral and microbial surveys for public uses, and communicate information to policymakers and conservation organizations;

Be it resolved that AAAS supports the concept of a national center for biological diversity as a data coordination and information center, urges that it be developed in coordination with other environmental databases, and encourages other scientists to support such initiatives that more fully incorporate biological information into the public policy process. ❖

Resolution: Environmental Research and Training

Whereas support for environmental research and training and their incorporation into public policy must be regarded as seriously as corresponding activities in the field of human health; and

Whereas a solid scientific basis is essential for effective programs to protect the environment; and

Whereas there is a need in the United States for a coordinated national program to support fundamental and applied environmental research encompassing a wide variety of disciplines aimed at understanding, preventing, and solving environmental problems; and

Whereas such research is presently uncoordinated and largely underfunded;

Be it resolved that AAAS calls for the development and funding of institutional mechanisms to support the full range of research, training, and education needed to understand and address our environmental problems; to increase coordination among the various sciences and appropriate government and other institutions in addressing environmental problems; and to ensure more effective incorporation of scientific information into the public policy process. ❖