

AAAS NEWS AND NOTES

edited by Coimbra Sirica

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AAAS Restates Mission To Address New Realities

Over the past several months, the AAAS Board of Directors has been seeking to position AAAS to reflect the global context of the 21st century and to expand the Association's leadership role on behalf of science, nationally and internationally.

As a first step, the Board has rephrased the historic AAAS mission, which now reads, "To Advance Science and Innovation Throughout the World for the Benefit of All People."

A look into the future of our evolving world indicates that science and technology will become increasingly central to modern life, making AAAS's leadership role ever more important. The public and policy-makers will need improved access to crucial scientific information. They will demand that it be produced expeditiously, and in ways that can help them make informed decisions about such issues as terrorism, health care, energy, and the environment. They will also want to know how best to maintain the health of the science and technology enterprise itself. As problems of poverty, environmental degradation, and health become increasingly complex, AAAS should continue to reach out beyond its U.S. origins to explore ways that science can be of service to all people.

As the world moves to utilize new frontiers of knowledge, the Association must anticipate, as well as adjust to, change. This is crucial to AAAS's continued, judicious support of the science and engineering enterprise, and to ensure that the work of scientists and innovators will continue to serve society. To fulfill its mission, the AAAS Board has set broad goals for the Association:

- Foster Communication Among Scientists, Engineers, and the Public;
- Enhance International Cooperation in Science and Its Applications;
- Promote the Responsible Conduct and Use of Science and Technology;
- Foster Education in Science and Technology for Everyone;
- Enhance the Science and Technology Workforce and Infrastructure;
- Increase Public Understanding and

Appreciation of Science and Technology; and

- Strengthen Support for the Science and Technology Enterprise.

As both gradual changes and unanticipated crises occur, the Association will revisit these goals as appropriate. In the current context, these will provide the framework that guides AAAS's programmatic activities.



U.S. researcher Lyn Gualtieri and her Russian counterpart, Oxana Savoskul, took shelter one night in this shack in the forest of Kamchatka.

INTERNATIONAL

Collaboration Abroad For Women Scientists

By day, the tank drove Lyn Gualtieri and her Russian research partner through the Siberian forest, as they looked for rocks left behind by ancient glaciers. By night, it provided refuge from bears. Doing research from an armored vehicle was "pretty surreal," recalled Gualtieri, a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Washington, whose trip was made possible by a grant from WISC—AAAS's Women's International Science Collaboration program.

Launched in 2001, the WISC program aims to increase the participation of women in international scientific research. The program is administered by AAAS and funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF). It provides women scientists in the United States with funds for planning research projects with a collaborator from

a partner country.

"We're constantly brainstorming for new ideas, to address needs that we see are unfulfilled," said Cassandra Dudka, program manager for Central and Eastern Europe Programs at NSF. "We came up with a way of getting primarily junior women involved in our international programs, since most of the awardees are male."

In the spirit of international collaboration, the program encourages research that also benefits the foreign partners. Oxana Savoskul, of the Institute of Geography, Russian Academy of Sciences, was Gualtieri's partner in the effort to reconstruct former glaciations in the forests of Far Eastern Russia. Cynthia Woodburn, a mathematician at Pittsburgh State University, worked with a colleague in Moscow on a project that may help improve how computers process digital information.

Gualtieri and Woodburn were among the 34 scientists, many of them graduate students or recent Ph.D.'s, who received grants from WISC in its first year. The program initially focused on Central and Eastern Europe, but has recently expanded to most other regions of the world. The expanded program completed its first round of grant-making in April.

The awardees' research projects will cover an extraordinary range of topics. For example, Felicity Arengo, assistant director of the Latin America Program at the Wildlife Conservation Society, will be starting a project to track rare Andean flamingos in Argentina. Olanike Ola Orie, an assistant professor at Tulane University, will be designing a study of how children learn the Yoruba language in Nigeria. A key requirement is that the applicants do not already have NSF funding for their proposed projects. Their preparatory projects should then lead to full research proposals, to be submitted to the NSF or other funders.

That sounds fine to California Academy of Sciences Research Scientist Sarah Spaulding, who will be traveling to an ancient Macedonian lake in search of new algae species that live nowhere else in the world. She and her collaborators had been hoping to find a way to fund their research.

The WISC program "just seemed like the ideal opportunity to work together and to stimulate a larger project," Spaulding said. "This feels like a really big thing."

—KATHY WREN

MEETINGS

Report of the 2002 Council Meeting

Held on 17 February 2002 at the Sheraton Boston in Boston, MA

Report on Board Actions—Peter Raven, AAAS President, reported on the AAAS Board's activities over the past year and noted that one of their most significant charges had been to select a new chief executive officer for the association.

Raven reported that at its 15 February 2001 meeting, the Board had approved a letter to President Bush supporting continued federal funding for stem cell research and that this letter had also been shared with members of Congress. He also noted that at its 14 February 2002 meeting, the Board had approved a statement supporting stem cell research, including the use of nuclear transplantation techniques (also known as research or therapeutic cloning), and recommending a legally enforceable ban on human reproductive cloning. Copies of this statement were provided to each council member. (For the text of the AAAS Board's Statement on Human Cloning, see www.aaas.org/news/releases/Cloning.shtml.)

He also noted that in June, the Board had held a special brainstorming session with *Science* staff in order to explore issues surrounding the future of scholarly publishing in the electronic age, and to consider new opportunities. Raven said that this would be a continuing dialogue for the Board and the staff.

Raven said that the Board had agreed to pursue participation in a project called eIFL (Electronic Information for Libraries) that is being funded by the Soros Foundation. The project aims to provide free online access to scientific literature for scientists in 41 of the world's poorest countries.

He noted that the Board had held its

ACTIONS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE COMMITTEE ON COUNCIL AFFAIRS (CCA)

The Council approved the Society for In Vitro Biology for affiliation with AAAS.

The Council approved the proposed resolution on freedom of speech (see box).

The Council approved the proposed Council statement regarding the Smithsonian (see box).

December 2001 meeting in Little Rock, Arkansas, and that it had been the first board meeting with Alan Leshner, AAAS's newly appointed chief executive officer. He said that much of the meeting was taken up with a discussion of Leshner's vision for the organization. Raven then introduced the new chief executive officer to the council members.

Chief Executive Officer's Report. Alan Leshner noted that he had inherited a strong, healthy organization with a broad array of important programs. He said that one of his goals was to raise awareness of these programs. He said he was also focusing on efforts to position AAAS for the future and was working closely with the Board to develop goals and strategies.

Report on Science and Related Activities. Don Kennedy, editor-in-chief of *Science*, briefed the council members on current journal activities. He discussed the continuing increase in the number of submissions (80,000 last year) received by the journal. Kennedy noted that the new "Brevia" section had been created to present brief findings in a manner that was understandable to those outside a specialty. Monica Bradford, managing editor of *Science*, took the group through the process used to create special issues of the journal and explained the cooperative efforts of the editorial, news, and advertising staffs.

Discussion of Process for Session/Symposia Selection for Meeting. Michael Strauss, program director for the Annual Meeting, ran through the strategy for developing the program for the annual meeting and discussed some recent innovations. He encouraged members to submit proposals for the 2003 Denver meeting, and asked the sections to continue to play an active role in the review process.

Briefing on Research Competitiveness Program. Scott Hauger of the Science and Policy Programs Directorate briefed the council members on the Research Competitiveness Program. He noted that the program had begun with a grant from the National Science Foundation's Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR). He pointed out that only 25 of the 50 states conduct the majority of the research in the United States, and that the EPSCoR program was aimed at trying to help the other states become more competitive in qualifying for federal research dollars. Hauger noted that the AAAS program has become a popular self-supporting service that provides experts and reviews on program activities of nonprofit institutions on a fee basis. He encouraged members to serve as experts for the program and to help make the service known outside of the EPSCoR states.

STATEMENT ON SCIENCE AT THE SMITHSONIAN

The Council of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the world's largest general scientific organization, expresses its concern about some recent proposals regarding the directions and activities at the Smithsonian Institution that seem to depart from its traditional commitment to maintain properly its extraordinary scientific and historical collections and resources and the research associated with them.

We, therefore, urge the Board of Regents to continue the longstanding leadership of the Smithsonian Institution in these areas.

RESOLUTION ON FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Whereas the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) continues to believe that the strength of U.S. science and engineering and the productivity of academic scholarship requires free inquiry, and

Whereas the AAAS continues to recognize the crucial role of higher education in providing an environment in which democracy and inquiry can flourish,

Therefore, in support of the position of our affiliate, the Society for Social Studies of Science, the AAAS;

Recognizes that freedom of speech is central to the functioning of a democratic society;

Underscores that higher education should play a crucial role in promoting these democratic values and contributing to an educated citizenry;

Affirms the central role that critical debate and free inquiry play in enabling higher education to deliver this democratic function; and

Therefore, concludes that all members of society should be free to reflect critically upon, and constructively contribute to public debates on issues of technology, science, democracy, and war.

Approved by the Council on 17 February 2002

COMMUNICATIONS

Lure of Journalism Attracts Scientists

On Monday, 8 June, Emily Singer, a neuroscientist, will start a 10-week internship at the *Los Angeles Times* that she hopes will launch her career as a science writer. As a AAAS Mass Media Fellow, the 25-year-old has a shot, according to the experiences of former fellows who shared her dream.

"We get a lot of support, and I think a lot of us go on to careers in science journalism," said Jeremy Manier, science and medical writer for the *Chicago Tribune*, where he was a Mass Media Fellow in 1996.

Like the more than 400 alumni of the fellowship program, Singer and 23 other young scientists and engineers will be sent to work for newspapers and magazines and for radio and television programs across the country, following a 3-day workshop at the AAAS headquarters in Washington, DC.

The purpose of the 28-year-old program is to further public understanding and appreciation of science and technology. About 50% of the fellows have gone on to careers as journalists; the rest have returned to their work as scientists.



Ann Celi at her desk at the *Milwaukee Journal*.

Ann Celi is a medicine/pediatrics physician and researcher at Harvard Medical School in Boston, Massachusetts. She is in practice at Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates in Boston, where she is conducting a study on the factors that influence women to breastfeed their babies. Her stint at Wisconsin's *Milwaukee Journal* in 1992 taught her to explain scientific concepts carefully to journalists, a lesson she draws on when talking publicly about breastfeeding.

"To get substance into a (newspaper) article, you have to make information clear and succinct," Celi said. "If you don't, that will be the first thing the copyeditor

takes out."

At the *Milwaukee Journal*, Celi wrote about electric cars, astronomy, and the science of pitching in baseball; she met Tommy Thompson, who was governor of Wisconsin at the time, and she rode in a garbage truck for a story on recycling.

"So I drove around with two guys, Jose and Luis, on the garbage truck, and I got to meet the governor," Celi says. "It was just a great experience."

After his fellowship, Manier, 32, went back for one more year of graduate school in psychology at Washington University in St. Louis. But then he returned to the *Chicago Tribune* for an internship sponsored by the newspaper, and was eventually offered a job.

He will be ready in June to welcome Mass Media Fellow Kathy Paur, a Ph.D. candidate in mathematics from Harvard University. Manier said he would warn Paur and her colleagues at media outlets around the country that they may never look back. "Be careful," he said. "You can get sucked into this."

SCIENCE POLICY

AAAS Program Flies Solo; Grant Over, But Demand Up

AAAS's Research Competitiveness Program was started in 1996, with a grant from the National Science Foundation's Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR). Under the grant, AAAS worked to boost the competitive standing of universities in states that had had a hard time vying for federal research funds.

Five years later, the grant is finished, but research institutions across the country have found it worthwhile to pay out-of-pocket for AAAS's services. And states traditionally considered research powerhouses have signed on as clients.

"We developed our skills while working to meet the needs of institutions in the EPSCoR states, and then we found out there was a broader market for those skills," said Edward G. Derrick, project director of what is now called the Research Competitiveness Service (RCS).

Most RCS projects involve peer review of programs, taking teams of scientists on site to provide guidance or evaluation of a research center, a department, or a program. But RCS also assists state agencies in strategic planning and in conducting peer review of proposals.

Peer-Review Assistance for Michigan

This summer, scientists across the state of

Michigan will find out which of their projects will receive part of a pot of \$45 million for biomedical research that the state plans to invest in 2002. AAAS has brought together about 100 scientists from around the nation to serve as peer reviewers for the state.

The Michigan project is scheduled to be completed by early June, when AAAS will deliver its recommendations for which of the 104 final proposals should be considered for funding. These had been chosen from an initial 297 candidates to submit "full proposals," according to Todd Zahn, program manager Michigan Economic Development Corporation, which administers the Michigan Life Science Corridor Fund.

Michigan's state legislature has committed to spending \$1 billion of its tobacco settlement funds on biomedical research over a 20-year period, beginning with \$100 million in grants distributed in 2001. For its second year of funding, the state asked AAAS to help in the winnowing process by providing for peer review of the proposals.

"AAAS is an organization with a tremendous reputation. That helps us to maintain the integrity of the program," said Zahn, a medicinal chemist. "They had experience too, and understood the climate we were operating in."

The peer reviewers, who earn a consulting fee for their participation, were chosen for their abilities to evaluate basic research (40% of the funding); applied research (50% of the funding); and commercialization of biomedical products (10% of the funding). Each panel of reviewers is hand-picked, said J. Scott Hauger, who oversees the RCS program as director of the AAAS Science and Engineering Policy and Practice Group.

"We see our program as scientists helping scientists—with AAAS as the medium," Hauger said.

Finding Experts to Serve

The program has a database of scientists from institutions nationwide, with expertise in various disciplines. However, to tailor a team appropriate to each project, Derrick and his staff will often have to go beyond the database. They once had to search, for example, for three experts in poultry science. But they found the experts they needed, and all agreed to participate.

"As a rule, all we need to do is say we're calling from AAAS, and the science community is glad to participate," Hauger said. "The Association is really well known and well respected."

"We include a Ph.D. staff person on every panel, who has experience with making sure that the panel reaches conclusions and does a formal report," Hauger said. "And we do it all for cost, on a not-for-profit basis."