

## COUNCILOR REPORT

### 235th ACS NATIONAL MEETING

NEW ORLEANS, LA, 4-9 APRIL 2008

Portions of this report are taken directly from "COUNCILOR TALKING POINTS. SUMMARY OF GOVERNANCE ACTIONS/REPORTS" received from Flint H.Lewis, Secretary of the Society. These sections will be in quotations marks, followed by (FHL)

**Divisional Activities Committee-** The Committee met on the mornings of Saturday and Sunday, 5 and 6 of April. Kevin Edgar was Chair. Among the items on the Agenda were:

1. Three valid petitions to amend the ACS Constitution and/or Bylaws up FOR ACTION. These will be discussed in detail in the account of the Council Meeting. Only one of these, the Petition on Membership Categories and Requirements, was seen as impacting the Divisions, and the impact is expected to be minor.
2. One petition, on Society Affiliate Dues, was up FOR CONSIDERATION
3. Consideration of a request from the Division of Chemical Technicians for input regarding a name change for the Division, has been deferred until such time as the Division settles its leadership crisis.
4. Subcommittee Reports: Meetings, Divisional Enhancement, Constitution and Bylaws, Annual Reports, and Multidisciplinary Program Planning Group (MPPG).
5. Reports from Liaisons to other committees: Constitution and Bylaws, Local Section Activities, Membership Affairs, and Meetings and Expositions.
6. Progress of the Multidisciplinary Program Planning Group.

I represented Kevin Edgar at a breakfast meeting of the Board Standing Committee on Public Affairs and Public Relations (PA&PR) on Monday, 7 April. The meeting dealt with the making of public policy on behalf of the Society as well as implementation of the Society's strategic communications plan.

**Town Hall Meeting-** Sunday, 4:45 pm. The four candidates for 2009 President-Elect (see below) appeared, made brief statements and answered questions.

**District IV Councilors Caucus-** Sunday, 6:00 pm. Mainly concerned with items 1,2, and 3 above.

**Division of Professional Relations (PROF)-** On the evening of Tuesday, 8 April, PROF Presented the 2008 Henry H. Hill Award to Sr. Mary Virginia Orna. The award was richly deserved; the choice a most popular one.

Nominations and Elections (N&E)-

Candidates For President-Elect. "The Committee on Nominations and Elections presented to the Council the following nominees for selection" of "candidates for President-Elect, 2009: Thomas J. Barton, R. Stephen Berry, Joseph S. Francisco, and Josef Michl. By written ballot, the Council selected Joseph S. Francisco and Josef Michl as candidates for 2009 President-Elect. These two candidates will stand for election in the Fall National Election."(FHL)  
Candidates for Board Directors from Districts III and VI for the term 2009-2011. Nominees

for District III were: Pat N. Confalone, Alan B. Cooper, Catherine C. Fenselau, and Judith Summers-Gates. Nominees for District VI were: Bonnie A. Charpentier, Gary D. Christian, David M. Dooley, and Dennis L. Lichtenberger. By mail ballot, the Councilors from these Districts selected as candidates from District III Pat N. Confalone and Alan B. Cooper, and from District VI, Bonnie A. Charpentier and Dennis L. Lichtenberger. Ballots will be mailed on or before 10 October to all members of each of the two districts, one Director to be elected from each.

Candidates for Directors-at-Large. N&E announced the following candidates for Director-at-Large for a 2009-2011 term: William F. Carroll, Jr., Richard L. Deming, Thomas R. Gilbert, and Marinda Li Wu. The election of two Directors-at-Large will be conducted in the fall. Ballots will be mailed to the Council on or before 10 October.

## **ACTIONS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Committee Actions-** “The Board received reports from the Committees on Grants and Awards, Public Affairs and Public Relations, Professional and Member Relations, and Budget and Finance. On the recommendation of these committees, the Board took the following actions:

As presented by the Committee on Grants and Awards, the Board received a report on the screened list of candidates for the 2009 Priestley Medal, Volunteer Service Award, and Parsons Award. The Board agreed to announce the winners of these three awards after its June meeting.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Public Affairs and Public Relations, the Board VOTED to approve the tagline, “Chemistry For Life”, as the central theme of the Communications Strategic Plan and for use on appropriate Society materials.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Professional and Member Relations, the Board VOTED to adopt the ACS Diversity Partners Program – a three-year pilot program designed to broaden participation in the chemical sciences among diverse and traditionally underrepresented groups.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Budget and Finance, the Board VOTED to support having the Committee on Education (SOCED) pursue the US hosting of the International Chemistry Olympiad in 2012.

### **Activities of the Board’s Task Forces-**

The board of Directors received status reports from two of its task forces: the International Strategy Implementation Task Force (ISITF), and the New Ventures Task Force (NVTF). ISITF is charged with implementing the recently approved Society International Strategy; the NVTF reviews new mission-related business opportunities.

The Board also received updates from two Society initiatives: the Web presence Initiative and the ACS Leadership Development System (LDS). The newly re-invented ACS website launched 30 September 2007, and features a unifying global navigation and dramatically improved user experience. The LDS offers a comprehensive leadership curriculum that provides practical courses for managing one’s career and tools to more effectively lead ACS volunteer initiatives.

### **Strategic Mega Challenges-**

The Board of Directors recently agreed to devote a significant portion of its meeting to deliberation of strategic mega challenges of importance to chemistry and the American Chemical Society. At this meeting, the Board reviewed its committee infrastructure and Voted to amend its Regulations to reclassify all Board Committees as either Standing or Special Committees. As a follow-up, the Board of Directors met with the Committee on Committees to engage in further discussions on the overall enhancement of ACS committees.

The Board also spent considerable time deliberating the strategic mega issue – Global Scientific Challenges. In general, global scientific challenges are these areas of concern where chemistry can make a substantial contribution in improving people's lives. The Board plans to complete its discussions on this topic at the June meeting.

### **Compensation of Society Staff-**

On the recommendation of the Committee on Executive Compensation, the Board VOTED to approve several actions relative to compensation for the Society's Executive staff. The compensation of the Society's executive staff receives regular review from the Board.

### **The Executive Director/CEO Report-**

The Executive Director/CEO, along with several of her direct reports, updated the Board on the following items: Policy issues for a newly revised IRS Form 990 and the activities of Chemical Abstracts Service, the Publications Division, and the Society's General Counsel.

### **Joint Board/ N&E Luncheon-**

Following its regular meeting, the Board of Directors, at the invitation of N&E, met to enhance their mutual understanding of each other's needs and processes." (FHL)

## **REPORTS OF ELECTED COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL**

**Council Policy Committee-** Named Tom Gilbert as Vice-Chair.

**Committee on Committees-** Named Peter K. Dorhout as 2008 Chair.

**Committee on Nominations and Elections-** Approved requirements for electronic signatures on petitions.

Petition on Election Procedures for President-Elect and District Director- This petition seeks to provide for a preferential (ranked) ballot and "instant runoff" for the two offices specified where there are four or more candidates for a single position. This will avoid the expense and delay involved with a second, separate run-off election. The motion passed by a voice vote.

Petition on Election Procedures 2006, Part 2- This petition purports to standardize the petition and election processes for President-Elect and all Director positions based on percentages of voting members. According to the existing procedures, one needs 300 petition signatures for President-Elect, 300 for Director-At-Large, and 1% of the District membership for District Director. According to the proposed revision, one would need about 750 (0.5% of the total membership) for President-Elect, and about 300 (0.25% of the total membership) for Director-At-Large. This begs the question: why, in trying to align three categories, do we insist in changing two of the three, where it would be much easier to change the one?

The major impact of the proposed changes will be on those who seek to become candidates for President-Elect by petition. They will need to collect more than twice as many signatures as they do now. Is it any wonder that the more suspicious among us see this as an attempt to inhibit, and ultimately to eliminate, petition candidacy. The leadership of N&E argue that this is not so. If one accepts that, then N&E has a major public relations problem for there is a serious disconnect between their words and their actions.

There are two additional problems with the Explanation that accompanies the Petition in the Council Agenda. First, the electorate for President-Elect is the entire membership of the Society; the electorate for the District Directors is the members of the Council; and the electorate for District Directors is the membership of the individual District. Thus we have three different electorates for the three different offices. For the processes to be standardized, as claimed, the number of signatures required for Director-At-Large should be a percentage of the number of Councilors.

The second problem with the Explanation is the argument that it is reasonable to use the total member count when determining signature requirements for President-Elect and Director-At-Large because “the position represents all ACS members”. This implies that the district Directors do not represent all ACS members. I suggest that you will not find a single District Director who would take that position on the record.

This explanation is a disingenuous piece of work that should never have been included with the Petition. Fortunately for the author(s), once the Petition has been voted up or down, the Explanation entirely disappears from the records.

As expected, the Petition generated much discussion. A motion from the floor to recommit the Petition failed by a voice vote. A motion for a recorded vote also failed by voice vote. Finally the substance of the Petition was put to the vote, and, by a show of hands, it passed 276-120.

## **REPORTS OF SOCIETY COMMITTEES AND COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE**

**Committee on Budget and Finance-** The Society ended 2007 with a net from operations of \$9.6 million, which was \$2.2 million favorable to the approved budget. This was based on total revenues of \$444.2 million and total expenses of \$434.6 million. The Society ended the year in full compliance with the Board established financial guidelines.

The 2008 dues for ACS are \$136. Compared with other membership scientific societies, this puts us near the lower end of the middle third of the societies. The 2009 Fully Escalated Dues Calculation calls for an increase of \$4. for a total of \$140. B&F so recommended and Council passed the motion by voice vote.

## **REPORTS OF COUNCIL STANDING COMMITTEES**

**Committee on Divisional Activities-** A revised formula for division funding was presented. After considerable discussion, it was recommitted until the fall meeting in Philadelphia by voice vote.

**Committee on Economic and Professional Affairs-** By voice vote, the Council approved the Academic Professional Guidelines. These guidelines apply to those members of the academic community whose job function impacts directly or indirectly on scientists practicing the profession of Chemistry.

The ACS Career Fair at this meeting featured 936 candidates, 807 positions available, and 104 employers.

**Committee on Local Section Activities-** By voice vote, the Council approved the name change for the University of Kansas Local Section to the Wakarusa Valley Local Section.

**Committee on Meetings and Expositions-** “At the close of 2007, Society membership totaled 160,052, despite a net loss of 439 members at the end of the year. Also, 2007 recorded the second highest number of new applications- 16,533.

As of 9 April 2008, the ACS spring national meeting had attracted 13,302 registrants as follows: Regular attendees 6,681; Students 4,659; Exhibitors 1,156; Exposition only 374; and Guests 432. In the Exposition, 319 Companies used 482 booths. There were 15 workshops.” (FHL)

#### **Committee on Membership Affairs-**

Petition on Membership Categories and Requirements- This petition is a very complex piece of work. To summarize, I can do no better than to quote the first part of the Explanation that, in this case, is clear and honest.

“This petition represents a comprehensive revision of the qualifications required for membership and for affiliate status in the SOCIETY. In response to a developing consensus that the current qualifications for membership in the Society are unduly narrow and too restrictive, the amendments, while indicating the SOCIETY’s focus on Chemistry, would make anyone with a bachelor’s or higher degree in Chemistry or in a related field of natural science, engineering, technology, or science education eligible for membership. In addition, an individual with an associate degree in chemical science or a related field of technology would also be eligible, as would any qualified pre-college chemistry teacher not able to meet the primary requirement. These latter provisions would eliminate the current requirement for a number of years of work experience to be eligible. The proposal would retain a provision allowing the Admission Committee to approve for membership those whose chemical knowledge is attained in the course of appropriate work experience. These changes would allow all those who currently qualify as ASSOCIATE MEMBERS to become MEMBERS, making retention of the former membership category unnecessary. These amendments make no changes in the various dues categories for MEMBERS or affiliates of the Society. The Committee on Membership Affairs will undertake a complete review of all dues categories and discounts as a follow-on task to this membership categories and requirements petition.

An amendment to the current Bylaw establishing the requirements for Society Affiliate status would open this membership category to anyone interested in Chemistry.”

The discussion on this petition was wide-ranging. There were those who wondered if the real intention of the petition was to boost the total membership figure so that we could now brag that we were a Society of 180,000., rather than the present 160,000. Some were concerned that we were broadening the definition of Chemistry to the point that it was meaningless. Still others were reminded of the fate of other elite organizations that, when faced with declining numbers, lowered their standards, and fell into a self-propagating spiral toward mediocrity.

On the other hand, all present student affiliates would become full MEMBERS at no increase in dues so long as they remain undergraduates. This would provide a new talent pool for Local Sections. Minor changes in Local Section Bylaws would make them eligible to hold office (except Councilor and Alternate Councilor) on the local level. This could well be the salvation of many local sections. It would be helpful for each of the Local Sections to send one of its members to meet with the various student affiliate groups and to explain the coming changes.

There was a request for a recorded vote and this passed by a show of hands. By recorded vote, the Council approved this petition. The Board of Directors will vote within 90 days on whether to ratify the approved petitions. In addition to the Bylaw changes, this petition contains changes to the ACS Constitution. Constitutional changes must be ratified by the ACS membership in the fall. Thus it will be very late in 2008 before the final fate of this petition is known.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. James A. Walsh, Councilor  
Tampa Bay Local Section  
29 April 2008