

Committee on Public Affairs and Public Relations

Report to the ACS Board of Directors

The Board Standing Committee on Public Affairs and Public Relations (PA&PR) met virtually on March 2, 2015. The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming new and returning Committee members, provided an overview of the agenda and highlighted several items for the Committee:

- PA&PR Committee Information Sheet
- Message points for communicating with policymakers on ACS top-tier policy priorities
- Snapshot of Key ACS Governance Advocacy activities
- Chart of major ACS coalitions and partnerships associated with policy statements
- 2014 Key Achievements report from OPA
- Chart tracking major legislation ACS is following
- Key upcoming advocacy events:
 - March 17 & 18 – Congressional Visits Day
 - April 22 & 23 – ACS Legislative Summit & Capitol Hill reception with the Council for Undergraduate Research
- National Historic Chemical Landmark designation ceremonies:
 - The Keeling Curve ceremony – two ceremonies:
 - April 30, 2015 - NOAA's Mauna Loa Observatory in Hilo, Hawaii
 - June 12, 2015 - Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego
 - The Kelly Pneumatic Iron Process ceremony - May 11, 2015 - morning event at the Lyon County Public Library in Eddyville, Kentucky, and an afternoon ceremony and reception at Murray State University

Approval of Minutes - The Committee **VOTED** to adopt the minutes of the December 4, 2014 meeting.

FY 16 Budget and 114th Congress Outlook

The Chair welcomed two guests to the meeting – Kei Koizumi, Assistant Director for Federal Research and Development, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, and Andrew Mooney, Legislative Assistant to Congressman Randy Hultgren (R-IL), a member of the House Science, Space and Technology Committee. Mr. Koizumi presented the President's FY16 budget request and focused on key federal agencies of interest to ACS. Mr. Mooney also reviewed key aspects of the President's FY16 request and likely Congressional action on the budget, as well as the outlook for several pieces of legislation that may be addressed by the House Science, Space & Technology Committee. Following the presentation, Committee members engaged in a question and answer session with the two presenters. The Chair wrapped up the discussion by thanking each presenter for taking the time to join the Committee and providing their helpful insights into the FY16 budget process.

2015 Prioritization of ACS Public Policy Statements

The Chair introduced the annual exercise to prioritize individual ACS public policy statements and thanked committee members for submitting their input via a survey instrument.

OPA staff presented the background for the prioritization process and explained how the committee's input helps set the ACS advocacy agenda. Based on survey input received from both PA&PR members and OPA staff, policy statements were put into four tiers. The committee reviewed each tier and discussed the statements proposed for inclusion in each tier.

After discussion, the committee **VOTED** to approve the advocacy priorities for 2015.

The Chair reminded Committee members that they still had the opportunity to submit comments on a draft Water Policy Statement that was first presented and discussed at the December 2014 meeting. The Chair indicated that input must be provided to OPA staff within one week so as to provide adequate time to have it reflected in a draft that the Committee on Environmental Improvement will discuss at their upcoming meeting in Denver.

Committee Advocacy Outreach

To foster effective engagement with members of Congress, each Committee member received a customized match-up with their members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. OPA staff explained that this effort was an outgrowth of similar outreach to four governance committees¹ that occurred at the San Francisco national meeting last August on behalf of ACS President Diane Grob Schmidt. Committee members were asked to establish communications with their federal officials on ACS public policy statements developed by their committees.

OPA staff then presented updates on two pieces of legislation that match ACS policy priorities and appear to have a chance of bipartisan passage in 2105 – The Sustainable Chemistry Research and Development Act and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Staff explained the major elements of each bill and areas where they are seeking inclusion of language to incorporate ACS policy priorities.

The Chair thanked OPA staff and closed the discussion with an observation that the presentations will serve as good preparation for the upcoming Congressional Visits Day and the ACS Legislative Summit.

New Business

An ACS member has requested that the Society react to recent letters sent by a member of Congress to the presidents of seven universities employing faculty who have expressed skepticism on the state of widely accepted climate research. U.S. Representative Raul Grijalva, ranking member on the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources, is requesting various documents and financial records associated with research conducted by the faculty members to determine if any of that research was funded by companies having an economic interest in the research results. Specifically, Representative Grijalva is seeking to determine if these faculty members, all of whom have testified before Congress, made the appropriate required disclosures prior to offering their testimony. The Chair asked OPA to investigate the facts on the matter and present its recommendation on how to address the inquiry.

Adjournment

The Committee adjourned at 3:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. John Adams, Chair

¹ Committee on Environmental Improvement, Society Committee on Education, Committee on Chemistry and Public Affairs and Corporation Associates.