Committee on Chemistry and Public Affairs

Report to Council

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Mister President, and Members of the Council,

The Committee on Chemistry and Public Affairs (CCPA) is responsible for providing ACS with advice and recommendations for action on public policy matters that impact the chemical sciences and technology. In addition, CCPA acts as the catalyst for ACS member participation in government affairs programs at both the federal and state levels, encouraging ACS members to visit state and federal policymakers in Washington and their home districts, and to contact their legislators through the Act4Chemistry Legislative Action Network.

This year marks 40 years of the ACS Public Policy fellowships. In 1974, the American Chemical Society embarked on a bold experiment to provide technical expertise to the public policy arena and to educate chemists on the inner workings of policy and politics. Seeking to address the widely recog­nized disconnect between scientists and policymakers, the ACS Board of Directors established the ground­breaking Congressional Fellowship Program to place Ph.D.-level scientists and engineers directly on Capitol Hill. Since then, more than 60 ACS members have served Congress as fellows.

In 1986, to further broaden the opportunities for chemists to gain experience and insights about the policy arena, ACS created the Science Policy Fellowship Program. ACS Science Policy Fellows join the ACS Office of Public Affairs (OPA) for one to two years. There, fellows work side by side with experienced OPA staff to provide information to policymakers on the role of science in public policy, to advance specific recommendations on issues affecting the chemical enterprise, and to inform ACS members and involve them in the policy process.

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To celebrate four decades of ACS public policy fellowships, more than 20 former fellows gathered in San Francisco, six of whom spoke about their experiences and the program at a symposium sponsored by the Division on Professional Relations and CCPA. Speakers included senior administrators from NIH and the National Academies, Senate staff, chemistry professors, and industry executives.

The need for the program has grown considerably over the years. Science and technology are increasingly pervasive in our daily lives, and science plays a larger role in a wider range of policy issues faced by law­makers. Science literacy is no longer a pur­suit of the specialized few but an essential requirement of our body politic. Congress needs scientists working with it.

[Slide 2] [www.acs.org/policyfellow](http://www.acs.org/policyfellow).

I encourage ACS members with an interest in taking a deep dive into the world of public policy to consider applying for the ACS Public Policy fellowships. The deadline to apply for the 2015-2016 fellowships is December 31, 2014. Recent graduates as well as seasoned chemical professionals are encouraged to apply. More information can be found on the ACS website.

Mister President, this ends my report.