Women Chemists Committee

Oral Report to Council

San Francisco, CA

April 5, 2017

Madam President and Members of Council:

The Women Chemists Committee (WCC) began celebrating its 90th anniversary with a symposium featuring past committee chairs. Each chair showcased programs developed during her tenure, many of which persist to this day. The presentations also highlighted stubbornly persistent issues, such as bias, harassment, and the under-representation of women in certain sectors of the workforce and in national technical awards.

In a new communications strategy aimed at engaging younger women, we have included a “Perspectives” section in the Spring 2017 WCC Newsletter. {Show SLIDE 1} The article titled, “Barbie takes on STEM,” was written by members of a high school chemistry club, and makes salient points about the portrayal of women scientists and what constitutes safe lab attire. As the article states, Barbie “comes equipped with a lab coat and safety goggles, but her hair is loose and she's wearing a mini skirt and high heels.” The authors express concern with the message sent by the kit’s science projects, as they are mostly connected to domestic work. WCC plans to continue publishing “Perspectives”.

In our executive session, WCC began the process of strategic planning, gathering initial feedback on our mission. {Show SLIDE 2} Even after 90 years, strategies are still needed for attracting, developing, promoting, retaining and advocating for women chemists. Topics for consideration include engaging younger women, providing leadership development, interacting with local section women chemists, and developing chemical safety resources. We plan to assess our advocacy work in awards and for non-tenure track faculty. Prior to the strategic planning retreat, a written survey will be distributed to WCC stakeholders, and interested individuals may also contribute ideas to the e-mail address shown on the slide, wcc@acs.org.

Partnerships play a key role in fulfilling the missions of WCC and ACS.

* WCC is beginning to work with journal editors and technical divisions to produce virtual journal issues and meeting symposia highlighting the science of women.
* Working with Divisions will also help nominees be “award ready” and expand the quality and quantity of nominations.
* Resources for local sections with women chemist committees are being compiled.
* WCC representatives will be contributing to the Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Board project to develop programming.
* WCC will be considering the outcomes of the American Geophysical Union’s recent workshop on sexual harassment in the sciences, as well as potential next steps. The workshop outcomes and resources are available at the URL shown on the slide, <https://harassment.agu.org/>.

WCC invites you to join us as we look back and ahead. Together we can fulfill our mission and embrace the ACS core value of diversity and inclusion.

Madam President and Members of Council, this concludes my report.

Laura Sremaniak, 2017 Chair, WCC