Committee on Science

Report to the Council

New Orleans, Louisiana

Wednesday, March 21, 2018

Mr. President and Members of Council:

The Committee on Science, ComSci, held a strategic planning retreat at ACS headquarters in Washington, DC in February and devoted substantial time on its agenda on Saturday to a discussion of its new strategic plan. The committee voted to endorse and approve the plan. ComSci’s new mission is, “To identify new frontiers of chemistry, examine the scientific basis of and formulate public policies related to chemical sciences, and recognize outstanding chemical scientists.” The plan features four goals focused on public policy, emerging areas of chemistry, communication, and awards, and it emphasizes collaborations with ACS Divisions and Committees. Project teams were established to implement the strategies supporting each of the goals. A new subcommittee on communication was also created.

ComSci is collaborating with other committees to review expiring policy statements on energy and hydraulic fracturing. ComSci held a roundtable on Tuesday that engaged experts in hydraulic fracturing to inform a recommendation on the revision or renewal of the ACS policy statement, and the committee cosponsored the symposium on Tuesday afternoon here in New Orleans on “Science & Ethics: The Path Toward Global Security in Chemicals, Energy, Food and Water.” The Committee voted to approve a new statement on Preventing the Reemergence of Chemical Weapons, and the Policy Subcommittee reviewed a background report on synthetic drugs and opioid analogs, which can inform the development of a new policy statement on this issue.

Working with colleagues at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), ComSci is organizing a symposium at the fall National Meeting in Boston on the “DARPA Make-It Program: Automating Small Molecule Route Design, Optimization and Synthesis,” along with a roundtable on emerging issues in pharma. The Committee is planning a symposium on emerging technology for space exploration aligned with the Orlando National Meeting theme of “Chemistry for New Frontiers.” The subcommittee on Science and Technology brainstormed ideas for ways to identify emerging areas in science.

On behalf of ACS, ComSci is preparing nominations for the U.S. National Medal of Science and the Grand Prix Prize for 2018, and the Board of Directors has approved the nomination for the King Faisal International Prize in Science.

Mr. President, this concludes my report.

Mark Cesa, Chair