ACS Committee on Science

Oral Report to ACS Council

Madam President and Members of Council,

The Committee on Science, ComSci, recently completed a series of three forums on the emerging field of advanced materials. These forums focused on energy, computation and cross-sector partnerships, and featured experts from academia, industry and government. Our recent forum on advanced materials for solar energy resulted in a paper accepted for publication last month by the ACS Journal of Inorganic Chemistry. The roundtable in Boston on cross-sector partnerships with ACS division leaders, journal editors and senior industry representatives generated several valuable recommendations. This roundtable reinforced that our work on identifying emerging scientific frontiers should involve not just new science and technology but also emerging trends in the ways science is conducted.

ComSci is developing a set of key principles and success stories of strategic, chemistry-related university-industry collaborations. A document communicating the underlying principles of successful cross-sector collaborations and illustrating good examples of these partnerships is being prepared to encourage ACS members and stakeholders to establish such partnerships to accelerate innovation. This document will be used to enable forums on this issue at ACS meetings in coordination with other ACS and external groups.

ComSci is also working to inform policymakers and ACS members on strengthening forensic science. The committee voted on Saturday to recommend board approval of a policy statement on forensics that updates the original statement from 2013.

We held a symposium on forensic science here in Philadelphia that featured experts from government, industry and academia, and included a panel discussion that provided useful information for chemists interested in the field. ComSci is building linkages between our symposia and our contributions to ACS policy.

At this meeting, ComSci voted as well to recommend Board approval of a revised policy statement on chemical regulation. The committee also reviewed and submitted suggested revisions to the ACS statement on climate change and the umbrella document that sets out ACS public policy priorities. In the coming months we will begin work with other committees to revise ACS statements on visa restrictions, sustainability, a competitive U.S. business climate, and scientific integrity in public policy.

In April, the committee submitted an ACS Board approved nomination for the 2016 Presidential National Medal of Science—the nation’s highest honor for a scientist. We have also begun work on new nominations for both the 2017 National Medal of Science and the Dreyfus Award, which will be forwarded to the Board in December for submission next spring.

Finally, the ComSci Executive Committee met in July to identify ways to maximize the value of ComSci’s contributions to the ACS, as an initial step toward an updated ComSci strategic plan.

Madam President, this concludes my report.

Mark Cesa, ComSci Chair