

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 on December 12, 2015. The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming Committee members and highlighted several items behind Tab 1 of the agenda book:

- PA&PR Committee Information Sheet
- Message points for communicating with policymakers on ACS top-tier policy priorities
- Chart of major ACS coalitions and partnerships associated with policy statements
- Federal legislation tracking chart
- Snapshot of Governance Advocacy

The Chair provided updates on:

- **2015 Nobel Prize in Chemistry Media Coverage** - ACS President Diane Grob Schmidt conducted 12 interviews with top print and electronic news outlets. These interviews, along with a global distribution of an ACS news release, resulted in 100 published news stories mentioning the Society. These stories had a potential audience of 3.7 billion.
- **Woodson High School Laboratory Accident** – The ACS Office of Public Affairs (OPA) and the ACS Education Division aptly handled media inquiries in the wake of the October 30th accident at this Northern Virginia high school and publicized the ACS lab safety guidance and warning against the Rainbow demonstration. ACS staff also produced and posted a videotape demonstrating a safer alternative to the Rainbow demonstration and arranged for a local TV station to also film the safer alternative.
- **National Chemistry Week** – ACS successfully secured a letter from President Obama honoring National Chemistry Week as well as a U.S. Senate resolution. Both documents highlighted the value and importance that chemistry plays in our daily lives.
- **Math & Science Partnership Infographic** – OPA advocacy staff working with the ACS Productions team produced a very useful infographic to promote strengthened Math & Science Partnerships. OPA promoted this infographic via social media as part of its advocacy efforts to support passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act. The infographic was also shared with Congressional staffers as well as the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and other Administration representatives.
- **Public Perception of Chemistry** – Staff provided a requested update on costs associated with the conduct of a US public opinion survey to gauge attitudes toward chemistry similar to one recently conducted by the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC). OPA worked with its research colleagues in Membership & Scientific Advancement and estimate that a public survey along the lines of the RSC survey would run about \$100,000. The Chair requested OPA to develop a public opinion survey framework for the Committee to discuss at its March 2016 that also includes potential collaborators that might be able to share the cost of a survey. The last public survey ACS conducted was in 2000.

Approval of Minutes - The Committee **VOTED** to adopt the minutes of the August 4, 2015 meeting.

ACS Public Policy Statements

The Committee discussed 7 ACS public policy statements, two recommended for extension, four recommended for updating and replacement and a revised statement on hydraulic fracturing. The Committee took the following actions:

At the recommendation of the Office of Public Affairs, and with concurrence from the Committee on Environmental Improvement, the Committee voted by voice to extend the existing policy statement on “Inherently Safer Technology” (ACS 2012-06) for three additional years.

At the recommendation of the Office of Public Affairs, and with concurrence from the Committee on Chemical Safety, the Committee voted by voice to extend the existing policy statement on “Laboratory Waste” (ACS 2012-07) for three additional years.

At the recommendation of the Committee on Chemistry and Public Affairs, in conjunction with the Committee on Environmental Improvement, Corporation Associates and the Committee on Science, the Committee voted by voice to adopt the statement “Energy” as an ACS public policy position of the Society. The new statement replaces ACS 2012-02.

At the recommendation of the Committee on Chemistry and Public Affairs, the Committee voted by voice to adopt the statement “Innovation” as an ACS public policy position of the Society. The new statement replaces ACS 2012-03.

At the recommendation of the Committee on Environmental Improvement, in conjunction with the Committee on Corporation Associates, the Committee voted by voice to adopt the statement “Endocrine Disruption” as an ACS public policy position of the Society. The new statement replaces ACS 2012-05.

At the recommendation of the Committee on Economic and Professional Affairs, the Committee voted by voice to adopt the statement “Healthcare” as an ACS public policy position of the Society. The new statement replaces ACS 2012-04.

At the recommendation of the Chairs of Committees on Science; Environmental Improvement, Chemistry and Public Affairs; and Corporation Associates, the statement “Hydraulic Fracturing” was approved by the Committee (7 to 1) as a public policy position of the Society. The new statement replaces ACS 2015-02. The sense of the Committee was that unless major new developments warranted further revision that this revised statement would run its full three year course.

The Committee also discussed two potential additions to future ACS policy statements - the appropriateness of attributing ACS statements to originating ACS governance committees and for including citations in ACS statements where appropriate. After discussion, the sense of the Committee was that attributing policy statements to originating governance committees was not advisable but that including citations did make sense in limited cases when and where appropriate.

ACS Public Policy Fellowship Program

The Committee received a presentation about the ACS Public Policy Fellowship that covered its 40 year history, structure of the program, short and long-term value to the chemistry enterprise and how ACS continues to engage with Fellows once they complete their fellowship, including recruiting them to become active in ACS governance. The Committee expressed continued support for the continued success of the program.

2015 Legislative Wrap-up and 2016 Outlook

The Committee received a presentation that reported on progress made in advancing the ACS public policy priorities on Capitol Hill in 2015 and the outlook for 2016. Despite continued political battles that often choked out meaningful dialogue on important legislation, ACS (governance, staff and members) managed to advance several ACS top priorities in the Every Student Succeeds Act; the Federal Access to Science and Technology Research Act; the Frank Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act; the Research and Development Tax credit. In addition, OPA was able to help create the Congressional Chemistry Caucus, secure a Senate resolution and a letter from President Obama honoring National Chemistry Week.

National Historic Chemical Landmark Nominations

The Committee discussed and took action on two National Historic Chemical Landmark nominations received from the PA&PR subcommittee on National Historic Chemical Landmarks as noted below.

- Nomination to recognize Willard Libby and Radiocarbon Dating at the University of Chicago. The nomination is supported by the ACS Chicago local section.

The Committee on Public Affairs and Public Relations **VOTED** by voice to designate Willard Libby and Radiocarbon Dating at the University of Chicago as a National Historic Chemical Landmark.

- Nomination to recognize the First Coupling of Gas Chromatography with Mass Spectrometry at Dow Chemical. The nomination is supported by the ACS Midland local section.

The Committee on Public Affairs and Public Relations **VOTED** by voice to designate the First Coupling of Gas Chromatography with Mass Spectrometry at Dow Chemical as a National Historic Chemical Landmark.

Adjournment

There being no old or new business, the Committee adjourned at 5:30 PM (HAST).

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. John Adams, Chair