

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 June 1, 2017 in Baltimore, Maryland. The Chair welcomed Committee members, reviewed the agenda, and highlighted reference materials in the agenda book.

Chair's Remarks: The Chair utilized his Chair's Remarks to discuss a draft statement – "Freedom to Meet Without Limitation" – developed by a special Board-appointed Public Access and Diversity Stakeholder group tasked with formulating an ACS response to state legislation that seeks to dictate use of bathroom facilities based on stated sex at birth, thus potentially imposing discriminatory limits on the rights of individuals who identify with a gender different than that stated on their birth certificates.

The Committee discussed the draft statement and VOTED to endorse the recommendation of the Public Access and Diversity Inclusion Stakeholder work group that the ACS Board of Directors approve the "Freedom to Meet without Limitation" statement for the American Chemical Society.

Approval of Minutes: There being no additions or corrections to the minutes of the March 20, 2017 virtual meeting as distributed, the minutes were APPROVED without objection.

Informational Updates: Staff provided the Committee several updates on matters that occurred since the Committee's last meeting in March:

- **Chemists Celebrate Earth Day (CCED) & March for Science:** Over 100 Local Sections were involved with CCED, many in concert with March for Science activities, in their communities. In Washington, DC, ACS hosted one of eight "teach-in" tents on the National Mall. The ACS activity was the only one focused exclusively on children, and as a result, nearly 1000 parents and children visited the ACS tent to take part in four CCED hands-on experiments.
- **ACS Legislative Summit:** As the focus of the Summit, held April 25 & 26 in Washington, DC, the Board conducted 33 visits with congressional offices to advocate on key ACS policy priorities and solicit new members for the Congressional Chemistry Caucus (CCC). Four new members subsequently joined the CCC, bringing the total between the House and Senate to 59 members.
- **Global Chemists Code of Ethics training:** ACS conducted the third of four international training workshops on May 15-19 in Nairobi, Kenya on the Global Chemists Code of Ethics. These sessions seek to educate chemists on defining and encouraging responsible conduct and on detecting and deterring questionable research. Funded by a grant from the U.S. State Department, the program has a goal of providing training to 70 chemists, who will in turn each reach out to provide training to 100 colleagues, bringing the total training outreach to 7000 chemists.
- **Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Chlorine Training Workshop:** ACS, at the request of OPCW, conducted a workshop on weaponizable chlorine on May 11 at The Hague for 40 members of its Inspectorate Division. ACS member Kabrena Rodda and ACS Past-President Nancy Jackson led the workshop. The workshop resulted from an offer of assistance made by ACS and the American Chemistry Council in a September 2016 letter to the OPCW Director in the wake of chlorine attacks in Syria.

- **National Historic Chemical Landmark Designation Ceremonies:** Two ceremonies were conducted:
 - April 18 -- designation of CFCs & Ozone, UC Irvine – ACS President Allison Campbell spoke and represented ACS;
 - May 15 – designation of Mars Mariner Infrared Spectrometer, UC Berkeley – ACS President-Elect Peter Dorhout spoke and represented ACS, along with ACS Past-President Attila Pavlath and ACS Board member Lee Latimer.

Update: Congressional Chemistry Caucus Activities & FY 18 Federal Budget: Staff presented the Committee with an update on the increased membership of the Congressional Chemistry Caucus (CCC), which has now grown to 11 U.S. Senators and 48 U.S. Representatives, as well as several CCC activities and programs being planned on Capitol Hill. Staff then presented an overview of the President’s FY18 budget, with a focused look at the impact on ACS key federal agencies. The President’s funding recommendations for all of them are significantly lower than at any other recent period, and two programs are funded only for the purpose of closing them down (CSB and ARPA-E).

External Affairs & Communications Updates – Communications & International Activities: Staff updated the Committee on the recently reorganized Communications function as well as the addition of International Activities into the recently formed External Affairs & Communications function within the Office of the Secretary and General Counsel. The update focused on each unit’s main functions as well as major activities, outcomes and achievements.

Usage of ACS Public Policy Statements & Broad Policy Discussion: The Chair requested a presentation from staff on how ACS public policy statements are utilized once adopted by the Committee under its delegated authority from the full Board of Directors. Staff illustrated usage by using real world examples of how statements were used to advance ACS STEM priorities in legislation as well as commenting on a U.S. visa limitation initiative of the White House.

After the presentation, the Chair engaged Committee members in an open discussion about whether there are any gaps in current ACS policy coverage and whether the statements are adequately packaged for various audiences. In general, the Committee agreed that current ACS policies cover a wide-range of issues that give the Society authority to become involved on a variety of issues. Areas identified as possible topics for future policy statements were the weaponization of chemicals and endocrine disruption within the context of chemical risk assessment.

The general consensus of the Committee was that since the primary audience for ACS policy statements is policymakers, they are, for the most part, packaged appropriately. As for usage and presentation to non-policy makers, staff was encouraged to modify the statements appropriate for the needs of the specific audiences, i.e. general public, media, etc., as well as to seek ways to make the policy statements more easily searchable and accessible on the ACS website.

Adjournment: There being no old or new business, the Committee adjourned at 12:28 PM (ET).

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. John Adams, Chair