

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 1, 2016 in Washington, DC. The Chair welcomed Committee members, provided an overview of the agenda, support materials in the agenda book and highlighted several matters:

- Outcome of a recent internal audit of ACS advocacy and lobbying activities to ensure full compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.
- Appointment of working group to assess ways ACS might provide technical or other assistance to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in the area of chemical weapons eradication, especially in light of the apparent use of chlorine in the war in Syria.
- ACS joining nearly 30 science organizations on an outreach letter to the transition team of president-elect Donald Trump seeking a meeting to offer the assistance of the science community towards development of a productive path forward to ensure that the U.S. innovation infrastructure continues to grow and flourish in a Trump Administration.
- Special ACS webinar on December 2 - *Looking into the Crystal Ball: Government, Politics & the Chemistry Enterprise* - that will feature Josh Kraushaar, Political Editor for the *National Journal*, our own ACS Office of Public Affairs Director Glenn Ruskin (moderator) and the ACS presidential succession – Donna Nelson, Allison Campbell and Diane Grob Schmidt. Focus of the webinar will be how to effectively engage with a brand new Congress and new Administration.

The Chair provided an opportunity for committee member Dorothy Phillips, ACS Board of Directors human rights liaison, to give an update on the evolving political situation in Turkey and challenges posed to scientists.

Minutes

The Committee **VOTED** to adopt the minutes of the August 2, 2016 virtual meeting.

ACS Public Policy Statements

The Committee discussed 10 ACS public policy documents -- the 2017-2018 ACS biennial Public Policy Priorities document; three policy statements recommended for extension or retirement; five policy statements recommended for replacement, and a new statement on safety. The Committee took the following actions:

The Committee voted by voice to recommend that the Board of Directors adopt the 2017-18 ACS biennial Public Policy Priorities.

At the recommendation of the Office of Public Affairs and the concurrence of the Society Committee on Education, the Committee voted by voice to extend the existing policy statement on “Science Education Policy” for three additional years.

At the recommendation of the Office of Public Affairs and the concurrence of the Council Committee on Economic and Professional Affairs, the Committee voted by voice to extend the existing policy statement on “Employment Non-Discrimination” for three additional years.

At the recommendation of the Office of Public Affairs and the concurrence of the Joint Board-Council Committee on Environmental Improvement, the Committee voted by voice to retire the existing policy statement on “Biomonitoring”.

At the recommendation of the Joint Board-Council Committee on Environmental Improvement, the Committee voted by voice to adopt the statement “Climate Change” as an ACS public policy position of the Society. The new statement replaces the 2013-2016 statement.

At the recommendation of the Joint Board-Council Committee on Science, the Committee voted by voice to adopt the statement “Forensic Science” as an ACS public policy position of the Society. The new statement replaces the 2013-2016 statement.

At the recommendation of the Joint Board-Council Committee on Chemistry and Public Affairs, the Committee voted by voice to adopt the statement “Peer Review” as an ACS public policy position of the Society. The new statement replaces the 2013-2016 statement.

At the recommendation of the Office of Public Affairs and the concurrence of the ACS Publications Division, the Committee voted by voice to adopt policy statement on “Ensuring and Expanding Access to High-Quality Science” as an ACS public policy position of the Society. The new statement replaces the 2013-2016 statement.

At the recommendation of the Joint Board-Council Committee on Environmental Improvement and the Board Committee on Corporation Associates, the Committee voted by voice to adopt the statement “Chemical Risk Assessment and Regulatory Decision Making” as an ACS public policy position of the Society. The new statement replaces the 2013-2016 statement.

At the recommendation of the Office of Public Affairs and the concurrence of Joint Board-Council Committee of Chemical Safety and Executive Committee of the Division of Chemical Health and Safety, the Committee voted by voice to adopt the statement “Safety in the Chemistry Enterprise” as an ACS public policy position of the Society.

Appropriate Use of ACS Policy Statements

The Chair led the Committee through a discussion based on a councilor question raised at the end of the August ACS Council meeting in Philadelphia. The question focused on the proper role of the ACS and other scientific societies in becoming engaged when political inquiries are launched on individuals or corporations for their climate science views. The councilor specifically questioned why ACS used established policy to defend individual scientists but did not do likewise in the case of ExxonMobil.

Joining the Committee via teleconference were the chairs of the Committee on Environmental Improvement and Committee on Science because of their committees’ interest in, and involvement with, the topic of climate change and scientific integrity.

OPA staff described the decision process used where ACS intervened on behalf of individual scientists -- both climate change supporters and skeptics -- in cases of Congressional inquiries that were overly broad

and had the potential to chill scientific inquiry. Staff further described the difference between those individual situations and the controversy over ExxonMobil and calls for it to be investigated for fraud.

The Committee discussed the situation and expressed support for the process ACS staff employs, in cooperation with relevant governance committees, to determine the proper role for ACS and to maintain its non-partisan stature and credibility.

ACS Award for Public Service Nomination

The Committee received a nomination for the ACS Award for Public Service from the Committee on Chemistry and Public Affairs. CCPA nominated Dr. Willie May, Director, National Institute of Standards and Technology, to receive the award in recognition of his distinguished career and service in helping foster U.S. innovation and competitiveness. After review of the nomination, the Committee took the following action:

*The Committee **VOTED** to approve the nomination of Dr. Willie May as a 2017 recipient of the ACS Award for Public Service.*

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 the Mars Mariner 6 and 7 Infrared Spectrometer. The nomination was made by the ACS California Local Section.

*The Committee **VOTED** by voice to designate the Mars Mariner 6 and 7 Infrared Spectrometer as a National Historic Chemical Landmark.*

- Nomination to recognize the production of Pu-238 for space exploration. The nomination was made by the Savannah River Local Section and the ACS Division of Nuclear Chemistry and Technology.

*The Committee **VOTED** by voice to designate the production of Pu-238 for space exploration as a National Historic Chemical Landmark.*

2016 Legislative Wrap-up & 2017 Opportunities with a new Congress and Administration

The Committee received an update from staff on 2016 ACS legislative accomplishments as well as an overview of and opportunities for working with the new 115th Congress and the incoming Trump Administration. A key focus for ACS will be meeting relevant new members of Congress as well as creating a new network of federal agency leaders who are appointed to fill key posts at agencies of importance to ACS.

The Committee adjourned at 10:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. John Adams, Chair