

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 November 30 2017 in Washington, DC. The Chair welcomed Committee members, provided an overview of the agenda and support materials in the agenda book and highlighted several matters:

- Letters from ACS Executive Director Tom Connelly, one to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt suggesting reconsideration of his directive banning EPA grantees from serving on EPA advisory boards and the other congratulating Dr. Walter Copan on his US Senate confirmation as Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology.
- An interim ballot approved by the Committee authorizing ACS President Allison Campbell to issue a letter on behalf of chemistry professor Ismail Kul, a dual-citizen of the U.S. and Turkey, who is currently imprisoned in Turkey on charges related to the 2016 coup in that country. The letter urges that Kul receive due process under law and that his rights under Turkish law and international agreements be upheld.
- ACS sponsorship of and participation in the October 26-30, 2017 World Conference of Science Journalists in San Francisco and the tentative dates for the 2018 ACS Legislative Summit (week of April 16th).

Minutes

The minutes of the August 10, 2017 virtual meeting were approved as distributed.

ACS Public Policy Statements

The Committee discussed 11 ACS public policy documents -- five policy statements recommended for extension, five policy statements recommended for replacement, and a new statement on intellectual property. The Committee took the following actions:

On the recommendation of ACS External Affairs & Communications, with concurrence of relevant governance committees, the Committee voted to extend five existing policy statements for a period of three years: Charitable Donations, Teaching of Evolution, Importance of Hands-on Laboratory Activities, Retirement Security, and Freedom of International Scientific Exchange.

At the recommendation of the Joint Board-Council Committee on Chemistry and Public Affairs, in conjunction with the Joint Board-Council Committee on Environmental Improvement, Board Committee on Corporation Associates, Joint Board-Council Committee on Science, and the Society Committee on Education, the Committee voted to adopt the statement "Science and Technology Funding in the Budget" as an ACS public policy position of the Society. The new statement replaces the 2014-2017 statement.

At the recommendation of the Joint Board-Council Committee on Environmental Improvement, in conjunction with the Board Committee on Corporation Associates, and Joint Board-Council Committee on Science, the Committee voted to adopt the statement “Scientific Integrity in Public Policy” as an ACS public policy position of the Society. The new statement replaces the 2014-2017 statement.

At the recommendation of the Joint Board-Council Committee on Environmental Improvement, in conjunction with the Joint Board-Council Committee on Science, the Committee voted to adopt the statement “Sustainability and the Chemistry Enterprise” as an ACS public policy position of the Society. The new statement replaces the 2014-2017 statement.

At the recommendation of the Joint Board-Council Committee on Chemistry and Public Affairs, in conjunction with the Board Committee on Corporation Associates and the Joint Board-Council Committee on Science, the Committee voted to adopt the statement “A Competitive U.S. Business Climate: Innovation, Chemistry and Jobs” as an ACS public policy position of the Society. The new statement replaces the 2014-2017 statement.

At the recommendation of the Joint Board-Council Committee on International Activities, in conjunction with the Board Committee on Corporation Associates, the Joint Board-Council Committee on Science, and the Society Committee on Education, the Committee voted to adopt the statement “Fostering Scientific Progress: U.S. Visas for Academic Study and Conference Attendance” as an ACS public policy position of the Society. The new statement replaces the 2014-2017 statement.

At the recommendation of the Joint Board-Council Committee on Patents and Related Matters, the Committee voted to adopt the statement “Intellectual Property” as an ACS public policy position of the Society.

Human Rights Update & Scholars At Risk Resolution

Board Human Rights Liaison Dorothy Phillips provided an update on human rights issues of interest to the science and technology community, including the Ismael Kul case in Turkey and the upcoming U.N. Human Rights Day (December 10). She presented a resolution honoring the human rights work of the Scholars at Risk organization.

The committee voted to recommend approval by the ACS Board of Directors of a resolution recognizing Scholars at Risk, to be presented at the Board dinner in March, 2018, at the New Orleans National Meeting.

National Historic Chemical Landmark Nominations

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

- Nomination to recognize the research and development of steroid medications at Upjohn as an ACS National Historic Chemical Landmark. The nomination was made by the ACS Kalamazoo Local Section.

The Committee voted to designate the research and development of steroid medications at Upjohn as an ACS National Historic Chemical Landmark.

2017 Government Affairs & Member Engagement Wrap-Up

The Committee received an update from ACS staff on (1) how they navigated choppy political waters in 2017 to find opportunities to communicate and advance ACS public policy priorities, (2) how they helped ACS members be appointed to important federal science advisory committees, and (3) what lies ahead for 2018 and beyond. Additionally, Committee members were informed of success in training a new class of over 40 ACS members in how to conduct effective policy advocacy. Staff also described a restructuring of advocacy tools and resources to better equip ACS members to be able to engage productively with policymakers.

Adjournment

Prior to adjournment, the Chair was presented with tokens of appreciation from ACS staff and the Committee for his leadership and service and received a standing ovation in recognition of his efforts. The Chair ended the meeting by expressing his appreciation and thanks for the opportunity to serve as Committee Chair, for the involvement of Committee members, and to ACS staff for their support and guidance during his three years as Chair.

The Committee adjourned at 3:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. John Adams, Chair