

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) conducted a virtual meeting on August 9. The Chair welcomed members, reviewed the agenda, and highlighted several items:

- **Tony Noce Joins ACS** – as Assistant Director, Member Programs, Membership & Society Services division effective August 13, 2018 and relinquishing his role as Chair, Committee on Environmental Improvement.
- **Recent Legislative Success** – reauthorization and enactment of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act; Senate passage of the DOE Research and innovation Act and Senate introduction of the Sustainable Chemistry Research & Development Act.
- **Nomination of Dr. Kelvin Droegemeier** – to be the Director, Office of Science & Technology Policy. ACS is leading the effort to secure science community support for the nomination in a letter to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation.
- **Update on Proposed Federal Rules** – EPA extended its comment period to 90 days (deadline 8/16/18) and held a public hearing (7/17/18) on its proposed Data Transparency Rule. ACS and other science organizations requested these changes as well as seeking assurance that public health data can be used in rulemaking while preserving its confidentiality. The State Department comment period on its Proposal to Increase Immigrant and Non-Immigrant Visa Information Requirements closed on 5/29/18. ACS sent in its own comments as well as joined a science community letter with over 50 other organizations. ACS submitted comments to NIST in response to a Request For Information on how a greater return on investment might be realized from the annual \$150 billion federal R&D investment.
- **National Historic Chemical Landmark** – designation ceremony for Plutonium-238 to be held on November 1, 2018 at the Savannah River Heritage Museum in Aiken, SC. A symposium will be held earlier in the day at SERMACS.

Approval of Minutes – A correction was made to the June 1, 2018 minutes adding Committee member Teri Quinn Gray to the list of Committee members in attendance. There being no further additions or corrections, the minutes were APPROVED without objection.

Member Advocacy Engagement Update – the Committee received an update from ACS staff on ACS member advocacy activity and outcomes/results, face-to-face advocacy training recently conducted as well as upcoming training at the Boston national meeting; a widely attended July 12, 2018 Advocacy Training Webinar hosted by ACS past president Allison Campbell and PAPR Chair Laura Pence and a University of California at San Diego advocacy training workshop, arranged by Committee member Barbara Sawrey, conducted by ACS staff for chemistry faculty as well as those from physics, biology and mathematics.

Overview of ACS External Affairs & Communications Activities – ACS staff provided an overview of the support External Affairs & Communications will be providing to various governance committees, symposia and programming at the August national meeting in Boston, MA, in addition to operating the ACS Press Center. At the Chair's request a comprehensive list of all activities, times and locations will be sent to Committee members with activities highlighted of particular value to Committee members.

Human Rights & International Engagement Update: - The Committee received an update from ACS staff on several matters, including the July 11, 2018 Central Nervous System Disruptors workshop arranged by ACS and the U.S. State Department at the 88th Session of the OPCW Executive Council; a June 7, 2018 webinar on “Refugees As Displaced Scientists” arranged for by ACS EAC staff; the human rights case of Professor Ismail Kul under house arrest in Turkey; an upcoming book: Responsible Conduct in Chemistry Research and Practice: Global Perspectives featuring chapters on the history of ACS involvement in science and human rights, the OPCW, and the AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition, and the July 12 – 13, 2018 AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition Meeting that was focused on Higher Education and Human Rights.

2019 International Year of the Periodic Table – ACS staff presented a comprehensive overview of IYPT; description of the creation of a special ACS enterprise-wide staff team and its IYPT activities; ACS interaction and collaboration with the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC); the creation and launch of a special ACS IYPT website and an overview of major IYPT ACS activities for 2018-2019. The Committee offered additional suggestions for consideration to celebrate IYPT and engage with other organizations globally.

Topical Discussion – Plastics in the Ocean - the Chair welcomed Dr. Kara Lavender Law as a special guest to the PAPER meeting. Dr. Law is a Research Professor at the Sea Education Association, Woods Hole, MA and a recognized expert in the study of plastic waste in the world’s oceans. Dr. Law presented a comprehensive presentation outlining the scope of the ocean plastics problem and the impact it is having on the environment and marine life. After thanking Dr. Law for her presentation, the Chair engaged Committee members in discussion on whether ACS might consider a policy statement to address this issue. The Committee suggested the Chair raise this topic informally with the Chair, Committee on Environmental Improvement for their assessment as to the need and viability of a policy statement.

Adjournment

There being no old or new additional business, the Committee adjourned at 3:05 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Laura Pence, Chair