

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 29 2018 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:

- Update on the National Historic Chemical Landmark designation ceremony and symposium that took place in conjunction with the Southeast Regional Meeting (SERMACS), recognizing the Savannah River National Laboratory for its work around production of plutonium-238 for space exploration. Also shared were dates for 2019 NHCL designation ceremonies.
- Overview of ACS involvement with several science community partners around an unbranded Campaign for Science that seeks to more productively communicate and engage with the general public to explain the critical federal government role in driving US innovation and job creation through investment in research and development and encourage them to support that investment with elected officials.
- Planned PAPER and Board outreach to Capitol Hill on top ACS policy priorities in 2019 that involve a potential February visit of a small group of PAPER members to gather intelligence on the agenda for the incoming 116th Congress and the annual ACS Legislative Summit that involves PAPER, the Board and other ACS governance members.
- Coordinated staff effort across ACS being led by ACS External Affairs & Communications (EAC) focused on ensuring that all ACS materials and products exemplify accuracy, diversity and safety in all of their various aspects.
- Opportunity to put forth names of qualified ACS members for consideration as a new Chair of the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board.

Minutes - The minutes of the August 9, 2018 virtual meeting were approved as distributed.

ACS Public Policy Statements

The Committee discussed the biennial ACS Public Policy Priorities document and 9 ACS public policy documents -- four policy statements recommended for extension, four policy statements recommended for replacement, and one statement will be allowed to expire at the end of the year. The Committee took the following actions:

The Committee voted to recommend that the Board of Directors adopt the 2019-20 ACS biennial Public Policy Priorities.

On the recommendation of ACS External Affairs & Communications, with concurrence of relevant governance committees, the Committee voted to extend four existing policy statements for a period of three years: “Water Treatment and Conservation,” “Inherently Safer Technologies,” “Healthcare Policy” and “Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities.”

At the recommendation of the Joint Board-Council Committees on Chemistry and Public Affairs, Environmental Improvement and Science, and the Board Committee on Corporation Associates, the Committee voted to adopt the statement “The Science and Technology of Hydraulic Fracturing” as an ACS public policy position of the Society. The new statement replaces the 2015-2018 statement.

At the recommendation of the Joint Board-Council Committee on Chemistry and Public Affairs, the Committee voted to adopt the statement “U.S. Innovation and Entrepreneurship” as an ACS public policy position of the Society. The new statement replaces the 2015-2018 statement.

At the recommendation of the Joint Board-Council Committee on Chemical Safety, the Committee voted to adopt the statement “Regulation of Laboratory Waste” as an ACS public policy position of the Society. The new statement replaces the 2015-2018 statement.

At the recommendation of the Joint Board-Council Committees on Environmental Improvement, Chemistry and Public Affairs and Science, and the Board Committee on Corporation Associates, the Committee voted to adopt the statement “Energy Policy” as an ACS public policy position of the Society. The new statement replaces the 2015-2018 statement.

The Committee agreed with the recommendation of the Joint Board-Council Committee on Environmental Improvement to let the “Endocrine Disruptors” statement expire at the end of 2018.

Minor grammatical changes were noted by various Committee members in several of the aforementioned statements and the Chair asked that these be conveyed to EAC staff for correction after the meeting.

The Chair led a brief discussion regarding a draft “Workforce Immigration” statement from a writing team comprised of representatives from several ACS governance committees. Committee members shared their initial reaction to the draft. The Chair asked that if Committee members have additional thoughts that they submit them to her as soon as possible so she can share those with the writing team. At the request of the Board chair, the draft statement will be shared with all Board members. It is expected that the Committee will have a final draft for consideration at its June 2019 meeting. Given the complexity of the topic, the Board Chair has requested the full Board take action on the final statement.

National Science Board Science and Engineering Indicators 2018 - EAC staff presented key data from the National Science Board’s 2018 Science and Engineering Indicators report. The report describes international and domestic S&E dynamics in light of the worldwide trend toward more knowledge-intensive economies and both increasing global collaboration and competition in S&E. Committee members found these data particularly informative and useful for the role they play in the ACS public policy process they oversee.

Year End Topical Wrap-ups - The Committee received year-end wrap-ups updates from EAC staff on Government Affairs, Communications and Human Rights. The Human Rights update included comments from Board member Dorothy Phillips who is responsible for the Board’s human rights portfolio.

Adjournment - Prior to adjournment, the Chair expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to serve as Committee Chair for 2018 and received a standing ovation in recognition of her service. EAC staff presented the Chair with tokens of appreciation for her leadership and service. The Committee adjourned at 11:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Laura Pence, Chair