

**Diane Grob Schmidt**  
**ACS Immediate Past President**  
**Oral Report to Council**  
**Wednesday, August 24, 2016**

Good morning fellow Councilors and members of governance.

It continues to be an honor to serve my professional society as ACS Immediate Past President; and I have enjoyed every moment of my service in the Presidential Succession.

In October of last year, I travelled with an ACS Delegation to Cuba to participate in QuimiCuba and meet with counterparts from the Cuban Chemical Society. In our conversations we discussed many ways that our two Societies could work together now that there is a thaw in the geopolitical relationships with our two nations.

I am delighted to report that we have fulfilled several key agreements stemming from that meeting last year. On June 28 and 29 of this year, ACS hosted Luis Montero, Dionisio Silva and Carlos Rodriguez - members of governance from the Cuban Chemical Society in Washington, DC for a high profile panel discussion at the National Press Club on U.S. – Cuba scientific collaborations. In addition to our three Cuban guests, panelists included Dr. Vaughn Turekian Science and Technology Advisor to the US Secretary of State, Dr. Luis Echegoyen from the University of Texas – El Paso, and Ms. Kathleen Larmett of the National Council of University Academic Researchers. Our own C&EN editor in chief Bibiana Campos-Seijo moderated the vibrant and well attended panel discussion.

Throughout their visit, the Cuban scientists were able to meet with senior leaders from the American Physical Society, Materials Research Society, American Society for Microbiology, American Association for the Advancement of Science, National Science Foundation, the House Science, Space and Technology Committee and science attachés from dozens of foreign embassies.

I am happy to report that another outcome of this great collaboration has been the successful symposium here in Philadelphia honoring the legacy of Dr. Ernest Eliel. Professor Eliel having studied in Cuba and taught in the United States represents a bridge between our two countries, and is still highly esteemed by our two Societies.

Another symposium that received great success here in Philadelphia was the Kavli Symposium on Chemical Neurotransmissions. This session co-organized by Drs. Anne Andrews and Paul Weiss focused on the grand challenge put forth by the White House through the BRAIN Initiative – a comprehensive effort to accelerate technologies for studying the brain at the overlap between neuroscience, nanoscience and big data. This continued my focus on grand challenges and issues of global importance.

This is my last report to Council as part of the Presidential Succession. It is with heartfelt gratitude that I thank all of you, and the Society as a whole. Serving this Society has been the most rewarding highlight of my career. There is still so much more to explore and discover. I know that the field of chemistry is strong. With your dedication to our science and our Society I know deep down that we are improving people's lives every day through our efforts. Thank you so much. This concludes my report.