

Advisory Board Brainstorms for Skills Training Program

The Professional Skills Training Advisory Board Meeting was held on August 22-23, 2005, at the Aspen Wye River Conference Center in Queenstown, MD. A total of 21 Advisory Board members (of the 34 total members) were in attendance. The Board includes members of the Career Opportunities in Physiology, Education, Porter Physiology Development, Trainee Advisory, and Women in Physiology Committees; Council; and underrepresented graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and established investigators.

The objectives of the meeting were to:

- Finalize topics for two professional development short courses
- Select dates and potential locations for the initial short course
- Finalize criteria for selection of participants
- Develop the content and publicity plan for the initial short course
- Finalize timeline and communication plans

The first Live Short Course will be on "Writing and Reviewing for Scientific Journals." It will be held on January 12-15, 2006 in Orlando, FL. It will be presented a second time in Fall 2006 at a different geographic location.

The Advisory Board members present divided into five groups to draft the six sessions for the short course. These are "Authorship," "Writing a powerful abstract," "Writing the manuscript," "Journal selection and submission of the manuscript," "Getting through the review process," and "Serving as a reviewer for a journal." A list of potential speakers and breakout group leaders for each session was compiled along with suggested participant activities. Issues that minority trainees specifically face in each of these areas were discussed for inclusion in the sessions.

The second live short course will be either on "Communication Skills for Oral Presentations and Posters" or "Career Planning and Management," depending on whether the topic selected can be successfully transformed into an interactive course online. It will be offered in January or February 2007 and again in fall 2007.

A total of 40 minority upper level graduate students and lower level postdoctoral fellows will be selected to participate in each course based on application to the program. Applications will be available soon and will be widely advertised to all minority programs. Minority trainees in APS programs will be given priority, although non-APS minority trainees are welcome to apply. Selection will strive for a diverse group of participants in terms of level of training, type of institution, and field of study.

Once these live short courses are finalized, they will be developed further to become interactive online courses that will be offered both as moderated versions and as self-taught versions. The Advisory Board previewed and approved the Project Wise web site (<http://wise.berkeley.edu/>) as a potential vehicle for the development of the interactive online courses.

The Professional Skills Training project is supported by a grant from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences at the NIH (Grant #GM073062-01). Over the next

three years, the project will develop two live short courses and two interactive web courses for minority trainees based on portions of the APS/ACDP Professional Skills document (<http://www.the-aps.org/education/skills.htm>).