Annual Report of the Committee on Committees
2002-2003

Members

Kim Barrett, Chair                              Virginia Miller
Michael Brands                                Gerald Meininger
Stephen DiCarlo                                Timothy Musch
Greg Fink                                      Roger O’Neil
Alicia McDonough                              Mrinalini Rao
Owen McGuiness                                Michele Wheatly
Ivan McMurtry                                  William Yates

Report

The Committee on Committees is composed of representatives elected by the Steering Committees of each of the 12 APS sections as well as two Councilors. Its primary duty is to nominate individuals to serve on other APS standing committees, as well as to outside bodies where the APS is represented.

This year, the Committee on Committees undertook a major overhaul of the way in which nominations are solicited and processed. Concerns had arisen that the process had become cumbersome and unfair. Moreover, because there was the widely-held impression that individuals needed to secure multiple nomination forms to have any hope of selection, some sections appeared to be disadvantaged in the nomination process, and at the very least, talented and well-qualified individuals were often unwilling to make the extraordinary effort needed to solicit large numbers of forms. Similarly, although the process generated reams of paper, which had to be duplicated and circulated to all committee members before the committee meeting held at Experimental Biology, often the additional nomination forms did not add significant additional insights into the candidate’s qualifications for and commitment to the charge of the appointment sought. Likewise, the process appeared to reward numbers and candidates were not always the beneficiaries of an informed discussion due to the brevity of the actual face-to-face meeting at EB. Overall, it was the impression of the Committee on Committees that it was hampered in its charge to identify and nominate the best among our members for committee service.

To address these concerns, the Committee on Committees held a one-day retreat in July 2002 that was led by outgoing chair, Hannah Carey. At this meeting, the sectional representatives to the Committee on Committees made a commitment to the idea that their role was twofold – to identify and promote members of their section who might serve on committees, but then to set aside section affiliations to work with the committee as a whole to nominate the best-qualified individuals to serve the society, keeping in mind the desire to promote diversity and the involvement of younger members in the committee structure. To discharge this second role in a more informed way, the
Committee on Committees designed two new forms to solicit nominations. The two-page Candidate Information form now includes information about prior activities relevant to the committee on which the individual wishes to serve, a statement of interest, information about prior APS service, and citations to two recent publications as well as a statement of academic interests. The one-page Endorsement Form, on the other hand, is used by someone who knows the candidate, to comment on the ability of that individual to carry out committee responsibilities. In a major procedural shift, the Committee on Committees agreed that only one Endorsement form would be accepted per nominee. Candidate Information forms would also be accepted without an endorsement, and then forwarded to the self-nominee’s section to solicit endorsement from the section steering committee. All of the materials involved were made available electronically via the APS website, allowing electronic dissemination of the nominations to committee members. No nominations were removed from consideration ahead of the EB meeting, and the meeting of the Committee on Committees at EB was doubled in length to allow full discussion of all candidates. Finally, nominations received for a specific committee were forwarded to the chair of that committee prior to EB, for input as to each individual’s suitability for service.

After this first year’s experience with the new process, the Committee on Committees is very gratified with its apparent success. It was obvious at the meeting held at EB that members could provide a more informed perspective on candidates under consideration, and also that the information available allowed section representatives to support individuals from outside their section if they appeared to be a more-qualified candidate for a given committee opening. Committee members also commented how helpful it was to have input from committee chairs as to the characteristics that would make for an effective new member. Other than suggesting minor modifications to the Candidate Information form, and requesting that the nomination web page contain links to the charges for each of the committees with vacancies, the Committee on Committees recommended that the process continue essentially unchanged in 2004. There was, however, a substantial decline (185 to 76) in the absolute number of candidates brought forward for consideration. However, inspection has revealed that a large portion of this decline derived from the fact that the Committee on Committees will no longer hold over nominations from one year to the next, believing that those interested in service on committees should be required to indicate a continuing interest and to provide updated information about qualifications. Overall, the process as currently constituted is “self-driven”, and the section representatives agreed to stress this message when communicating with their constituencies. The Committee on Committees is eager to consider the qualifications of all APS members with an interest in serving the Society, and hopes that many will consider applying in the coming year.

Based on the process described and the committee’s lively deliberations at Experimental Biology, the Committee on Committees recommended individuals to fill vacancies on a range of APS standing committees, as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Number of Positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Animal Care and Experimentation</td>
<td>2 plus chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Opportunities in Physiology</td>
<td>3 plus chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ray G. Daggs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>2 plus chair recommendation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FASEB Publications &amp; Communications</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Physiology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-Range Planning</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perkins Memorial Fellowship</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porter Physiology Development</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Affairs</td>
<td>2 plus co-chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Physiologist</td>
<td>2 plus chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women in Physiology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Committee on Committees also recommended an individual to represent the APS on the AAMC Council of Academic Societies.

The Committee on Committees restated charge is to identify the best individuals to fill committee vacancies, regardless of sectional affiliation. However, all other things being equal, the committee seeks to instill diversity in the committee structure on the basis of section of membership, geography, gender and seniority. Thus, the APS members nominated to fill vacancies had the following sectional affiliations:

- Cardiovascular Section: 7
- Cell & Molecular Physiology Section: 7
- Central Nervous System Section: 2
- Comparative Physiology Section: 0
- Endocrinology & Metabolism Section: 1
- Environmental & Exercise Physiology Section: 6
- Gastrointestinal & Liver Physiology Section: 0
- Neural Control & Autonomic Regulation Section: 1
- Renal Section: 2
- Respiration Section: 1
- Teaching of Physiology Section: 3
- Water & Electrolyte Homeostasis Section: 3
There were eight members less than 45 years of age nominated for committee vacancies and 12 women nominated.

The membership is urged to consider serving the society as a member of one of its standing committees. Applications can be submitted via the APS website, and are due (with or without an accompanying endorsement form) by January 15, 2004, although earlier submissions are welcome. Applications received without an endorsement will be forwarded to the section of primary affiliation for support. Nominations are then reviewed by chairs of committees on which there are vacancies, and by the Committee on Committees as a whole. At their meeting at Experimental Biology, the Committee on Committees develops their recommendation for each committee vacancy, along with alternates, and submits this for approval by Council at their July meeting. Approved nominees begin their term of appointment the following January. Those who are unsuccessful at securing a committee appointment initially are encouraged to re-submit their credentials for consideration for the same or another committee in the next cycle.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the committee,

Kim E. Barrett, Ph.D.
Chair
Committee on Committees  
Items requiring Council Action, July 2003

1. Approval of the slate of committee nominees (see attached).

2. Consideration of expansion of the Animal Care and Experimentation Committee by one additional member.

3. Consideration of COC’s endorsement of the appointment of George Ordway, UT Southwestern, as incoming chair of the Education Committee (Chair to be selected by Council).

4. Consider adding Philip Clifford (Medical College of Wisconsin) to the Trainee Advisory Committee as an ad hoc member or advisor.

5. Consideration of the expansion of the Finance Committee by one additional member.

6. Consideration of the formal creation of the position of either Past-Chair or Co-Chair to the Public Affairs Committee, and staggering the terms of the Chairs of this committee and the Animal Care and Experimentation Committee.

Background information on above items

1. Self-evident.

2. COC typically receives nominations of many more qualified individuals than can be accommodated within the current size of the committee. Moreover, it is desirable to appoint a broad variety of members to this committee (e.g., D.V.M.’s, researchers, members from industry, members with public speaking experience, members with significant IACUC backgrounds, etc.) and it is often difficult to accomplish this within the confines of the committee’s present structure. Finally, and most importantly, this is a very busy committee dealing with issues of pivotal importance to the APS. Given the wealth of talented individuals who wish to offer their service, the COC believes that a modest expansion in the size of the committee is warranted.

3. The COC recognizes that it is the Council’s prerogative to select the chair of the Education Committee. However, the committee wishes to go on record as strongly endorsing the candidacy of Dr. Ordway, who is also supported by the outgoing chair.

4. Dr. Clifford sought appointment to the Education Committee. However, he holds a decanal position and has placed special emphasis on issues related to
postdoctoral fellows. The committee believes that his expertise could be of great
service to the fledgling Trainee Advisory Committee.

5. The COC recommends expansion of the Finance Committee given its expanded
charge of development activities and managing the endowment, and in light of the
availability of highly qualified nominees.

6. The COC recommends institutionalizing a structure that will provide continuity of
leadership for the Public Affairs Committee, a committee for which there is a
steep learning curve. Moreover, because the Public Affairs and ACE committees
often work closely together, and the chair of each serves as an ex officio member
of the other, steps should be taken to ensure that the terms of the two chairs are
staggered.