Chapter Advisory Committee

Over the last year, APS members in five different US States or local regional areas met and enthusiastically discussed the steps necessary to initiate local APS Chapters and defined goals and missions for their potential new APS Chapters. Such goals include promotion of translational and/or integrative physiological research, assistance of trainees in their career development, or supporting minorities and women at all levels of their training as physiologists. The outcomes of these discussions have been three Petitions for Chapter Status brought before APS Council by APS members in Michigan, Kentucky, and the Greater Washington D.C. regional area. APS members in Missouri and Minnesota are likely to file Petitions in the near future. The continuous rise in the number of local APS Chapters started five years ago, when Dr. Peter Lauf, the first Chair of the Chapter Advisory Committee and current Sage, started a nationwide campaign to promote the formation of new APS Chapters, and demonstrates that the APS Chapter program is moving in the right direction.

While APS members in Michigan, Kentucky, the Greater Washington D.C. regional area, Missouri, and Minnesota discussed the formation of new Chapters, Physiologists organized in existing APS Chapters have been highly creative in designing new and innovative local outreach programs through the new Chapter Activity Grant program that APS Council approved last year. APS awarded a total of $6,000 to the Nebraska ($2,000), Puerto Rico ($1,000), Gulf Coast ($1,000), Iowa ($1,000), and Arizona ($1,000) Chapters. These funds will be used to acquire Physiology Outreach Resource Kits used in outreach activities and otherwise fund lectures, demonstrations, and other activities at K-12-institutions; to host undergraduate students at Physiology laboratories and introduce them to cutting edge physiology research; to organize career fairs, bringing together students, trainees, and representatives from the industry and from academia; and to organize a seminar series where APS Chapter members travel to K-12-institutions, Community Colleges, and other Institutions to present lectures on their research activities or on general aspects related to physiology and/or science policy advocacy.

Last year, 636 Physiologists met at annual meetings organized by nine different APS Chapters. For their outstanding research presented at the annual Chapter meetings, 37 trainees (undergraduates, graduate students, and post-doctoral fellows) received trainee awards. Specifically, some undergraduate awards consisted of travel stipends provided by individual APS Chapters to attend and present research data at the Experimental Biology meeting. Some of these undergraduate students received the David S. Bruce Excellence in Undergraduate Research Award, which is awarded by APS based on oral presentation of the poster
to the David Bruce Award Selection Committee at the Experimental Biology meeting.

Starting this year, all Chapters have named a “Science Policy Advocacy Liaison Representative” who will receive the monthly APS Science Policy News Update and will relay pertinent information contained in this document to Chapter officers and the general Chapter membership. This will ensure that Chapters receive relevant information regarding science policy issues and advocacy opportunities. The liaison will also serve as the conduit through which Chapters communicate with Science Policy and Animal Care and Experimentation Committees. We anticipate enhanced communication with these committees that may potentially foster local activities related to science policy issues and advocacy, possibly funded through the Chapter Activity Grant program.

In conclusion, APS Chapters promote - at the local state-wide level - the various missions of The American Physiological Society through annual scientific meetings, participation in APS PhUn (Physiology Understanding) week activities (http://www.phunweek.org), sponsoring science fair projects, outreach activities to the general public, and other activities. Every other Chapter utilized the new Chapter Activity Grant Program to secure funding to realize such activities. If you are interested in joining existing Chapters or fostering a new Chapter please contact me at harald-stauss@uiowa.edu. In closing I would like to thank all APS Chapter members who - at the local grass root level - enthusiastically volunteer their time and effort to promote our discipline that captivated some of us throughout a lifelong career.

Harald M. Stauss, MD

Chair, Chapter Advisory Committee