International Physiology Committee

APS members hail from 88 countries over 6 continents and over a quarter of the Society’s membership is international. International members represent a large and important constituency within The Society and one that is growing—over 30% of new members are internationals. The International Physiology Committee (IPC) seeks to assist APS by identifying and implementing ways in which APS can best serve its international members, achieve globally its goals of fostering education, scientific research and dissemination of information in the physiological sciences, and raise its global stature.

The IPC assists APS in the review of international awards programs. The International Early-Career Physiologist (IECP) travel awards program provides support for students, trainees and junior faculty working outside the USA to attend Experimental Biology (EB). The IPC reviewed 42 applications and APS made 12 awards of $1,000 each for EB2013 (awardees are named on the APS website).

The IPC also reviewed applications for APS travel awards to support individual attendance at the XXXVII IUPS Congress in Birmingham, UK, 21–26 July 2013. APS committed $50,000 to the travel program and received grants of $15,000 from NSF and $5,000 from NIH. APS reviewed a total of 155 applications over two rounds, and 80 travel awards were made in the amount of $750 or $1,000. (The Physiological Society also administered a travel awards program on behalf of IUPS.)

The APS Latin-American Initiative (LAI) provides financial support for symposia, conferences, courses/workshops and other events held in Latin America, with the aim of strengthening ties between APS and sister societies in Latin America, and fostering interactions between APS members and physiologists working in Latin America. APS received five applications for the 2013 program and made three awards each in the amount of $5,000 for the following events: (1) “Workshop on Exercise and Autonomic Regulation”, 28–29 May, 2013, Belo Horizonte, Brazil (Applicant: Dr. Tania Zenteno-Savin, Centro De Investigaciones Biológicas Noroeste S.C., Baja California Sur, México); (2) APS “Workshop on Writing and Editing Scientific Manuscripts”, May 2013, at the University of São Paulo, Ribeirão Preto, Brazil (Applicant: Dr. Wamberto Varanda, University of São Paulo); and (3) “Redox Regulation in Physiology” at the VIII Meeting of the Society for Free Radical Biology and Medicine, South American Group, 14–17 October 2013, Buenos Aires, Argentina (Applicant: Dr. Tamara Zaobornyj, University of Buenos Aires).

In 2012–13, the IPC conducted a review of the merits, benefits and successes of the Latin-American Initiative. The committee found that the LAI has, since its inception in 2000, supported excellent workshops and conferences in Latin America, that it has benefitted physiologists at various career stages from graduate student to established researcher, and that the program is an important part of APS’ international mission. Nevertheless, and despite efforts by the IPC to help improve the visibility of the program, APS has consistently received a relatively small number of meritorious applications for the LAI. The IPC also found the geographic restriction of the LAI to be outdated. With these considerations in mind, the IPC has recommended that Council replace the LAI with a global program that would perpetuate the goals of the LAI but also serve other underrepresented regions including Africa and India. It is
expected that the new program, the APS International Opportunity Program, would provide 6 grants annually of up to $7,500 each.

Bryan Mackenzie
Chair, APS International Physiology Committee

How can APS better serve its international members? How can APS serve in outreach to the international physiology community? If you have suggestions, ideas, or concerns, please contact Bryan Mackenzie, PhD, Chair of the APS International Physiology Committee, at bryan.mackenzie@uc.edu