Strategic Planning Meeting
The Women in Physiology (WIP) Committee and invited guests met at APS headquarters from May 2-3, 2016 for a Strategic Planning Meeting. In accordance with our request for funding to Council in July 2015, the primary objective of this meeting was to develop a 5-year strategic plan for the WIPC committee to:
- Increase gender equality among APS membership;
- Increase recruitment and retention of female students in physiology; and
- Promote the success of women physiologists across career stages.

Nine WIP committee members, 2 invited guests, and 4 APS staff were in attendance. We had an exceptionally productive meeting where we were able to thoroughly review our current charge and committee activities, and explore potential new initiatives for the advancement of women within the Society and the wider scientific community, including development of options for new mentoring programs within the Society. The final report from this meeting will be submitted to Council for discussion at their fall meeting.

Bodil Schmidt-Nielsen Distinguished Mentor and Scientist Award
Four excellent nominations were received for the 2016 Bodil Schmidt-Nielsen Distinguished Mentor and Scientist Award. The WIP Committee selected Ormand MacDougald (University of Michigan), as the awardee. Dr. MacDougald gave an excellent talk, providing an overview of his best tips on mentoring that he has developed over his prestigious career. Dr. MacDougald will develop a Mentoring Forum column based on his lecture, to be published in The Physiologist over the next year; the multimedia presentation (slides and audio) will also be posted on the APS web site. The lecture was followed by an afternoon tea reception, attended by APS Council members, former Schmidt-Nielsen Awardees, Dr. MacDougald’s nominators, colleagues, and mentees, awardees of the various APS award programs (tum Suden, Minority Travel Fellows, Porter Fellows, etc.), other trainees, and guests specified by the awardee.

APS Professional Opportunity Awards: Caroline tum Suden/Frances Hellebrandt, Steven M. Horvath, Fleur L. Strand, and Gabor Kaley Awards
The WIPC received 117 initial applications for the 2016 tum Suden Professional Opportunity Awards, which is slightly lower than the number of applications in 2015 (125). The Committee was able to fund 50 tum Suden Awards (up from 46 previously), 2 Horvath Awards (awarded to the top two URM applicants), and 1 Strand Award (awarded to the top overall applicant) for an overall funding rate of 45% (53 awards in total).

In an effort to promote the namesakes of each of these awards (tum Suden, Hellebrandt, Horvath, Kaley, and Strand), short biosketches were developed by the WIP Committee providing background on the origin of the awards, and their funding sources. These biosketches have been published on the APS website, and were printed on cards that were distributed to the awardees with their award certificates at the APS Business Meeting.

Mentoring Programs

Mentoring Forum
Over the past 12 months, the WIP Committee has coordinated the development of 6 new Mentoring Forum columns published in The Physiologist. These columns cover a wide range of topics, from how to respond to inappropriate behavior, to mentoring for collaborations, making the transition
from teaching in the lab to the classroom, switching from applied to basic research, and time management. Each article has related bulletin board discussion topics at the mentoring website (http://www.the-aps.org/mentoringforum).

**Online Mentoring Programs**

The WIP Committee continues to provide information about MentorNet on the APS website, and the APS is also a Scientific & Professional Society partner with the National Research Mentoring Network (NRMN) (https://nrmnet.net/), which provides comprehensive mentoring services for APS members, including a “Virtual Mentoring Program”, similar to the MentorNet approach. A variety of mentoring resources are also available on the APS website under the “Career Development & Mentoring” link. During the recent Strategic Planning Meeting, the WIP Committee explored a number of innovative options that would provide much needed mentoring experiences across career stages, without incurring the logistical and fiscal expenses of establishing and maintaining a formal mentoring program, such as MentorNet, or a similar APS-specific program. These program ideas will be detailed in the final strategic planning meeting report.

**WIPC Facebook Page**

The WIP Committee has a very active Facebook page, with 633 “likes”, and many posts reaching more than 300 views. The specific goals of this page are to share information that is relevant to the mission of the WIP Committee with both men and women, including content on gender issues in science, promotion of physiology to early career scientists, and mentoring. The page can be found at https://www.facebook.com/APS.WIPC.

**Experimental Biology Mentoring Workshop**

For EB 2016, the workshop was entitled, “Negotiating for Success”. The workshop was held on Monday from 3:15-5:15pm, and was attended by approximately 150 participants! Twenty-five attendees (~17%) completed a survey, and based upon these responses, the audience was primarily made up of trainees (undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows); however there was a wide range of audience members, including junior and established investigators. The speaker presentations were rated highly, and there were several questions and issues raised during the discussion period (30 minutes after the presentations) as well as for several minutes following the end of the symposium.

**Representation of Women in APS and Scientific Community Leadership**

One of the charges of the WIP Committee is to support advancement of women in APS and in the scientific community at large. The WIP Committee annually reviews the number of women serving on APS Committees and Section Steering Committees. Of the members who include gender in their membership profile (n=9,106), women currently comprise 29% of the APS membership [27% of the regular membership (n=6,822) and 49% of the graduate/undergraduate student membership (n=1,406)]. Most of these numbers either remain the same, or have increased slightly from last year.

In reviewing the membership of the APS Section Advisory Committee (SAC) and other Society committees, we found that the representation of women on the general Society committees continues to be very good. The WIPC commends the Committee on Committees for its ongoing attention to gender diversity on APS appointed committee positions. The Committee is also pleased to note that in 2016-2017, the APS Council has 4 women out of 9 elected members (44%) as well as women in both the President and Past-President positions. Thus, overall, 6 of the 12 (50%) elected members of Council are women. The Committee contends that this continues to reflect the increasing role of women in the Society as a whole and especially in Committee leadership positions, which provide important visibility and service opportunities. The SAC, however, has only 2 women representatives out of 13 (15%), down from 3 in 2015, and 6 in 2014; this underscores the
importance of encouraging all Sections to involve women in their leadership positions, particularly as Section chairs.

In reviewing the Section Steering Committees, on average, we found about the same proportion of women as last year (38% vs. 37%). Currently, all but three Sections (CNS, EEP, Respiration) have Steering Committees where at least 25% of the members are women, and 7 out of the 12 Sections have Steering Committees where at least 40% of the members are women. Similarly, 15 out of 22 APS Committees are comprised of at least 25% women members; these numbers are similar to 2015. The Committee encourages the Committee on Committees and the Section Steering Committees to continue their efforts to identify and select women members for APS Committees.

While historically, there have been very few women selected for the major APS awards, the WIPC is pleased to report that 3 of the 14 (21%) Distinguished Lectures at EB 2016 were given by women. While this is down from 6 out of 14 Lectureships in 2015, these numbers do closely represent the proportion of eligible women members in the APS (27% of regular membership). The Committee continues to encourage Sections to include women on their slate of candidates for their Distinguished Lectureships in the future.

Concluding Remarks
The WIP Committee continues to work to promote women within the Society and the scientific community and to provide mentoring for early career investigators and trainees. We look forward to additional involvement in new APS programs and activities, and we will strive to remain instrumental in the implementation of the New Strategic Plan developed by Council.