Modified Duties of the Women in Physiology Committee

The charge of the WIP Committee was modified during our 2016 Strategic Planning Meeting, and approved by APS Council in December 2016. The new charge is:

1. To promote excellence in mentoring
   - Administer the Bodil M. Schmidt-Nielsen Distinguished Mentor and Scientist Award

2. To provide mentoring support/resources/guidance to trainees (female and male) in physiology
   - Administer a Mentoring Program for junior physiologists.
   - Administer the Caroline Turn Suden/ Frances Hellebrandt Professional Opportunity Awards

3. To promote and raise the visibility of female physiologists across all career stages (trainees, early-mid career, and established career)

4. To highlight and promote the success of female physiologists

5. To promote the activities of the WIP Committee
   - Submit reports of APS and FASEB activities for publication in The Physiologist

6. To coordinate activities with other committees on women within the FASEB organization and those of other scientific societies
   - Nominate women APS members for the annual FASEB Excellence in Science Award
   - Chair serves as APS representative on FASEB’s Excellence in Science Award Committee

Strategic Planning Meeting

The 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 WIP 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 extensive discussion of options for new mentoring programs within the Society. The final meeting report was approved by APS Council in December 2016. Specific items addressed by Council included:

- Addition to the WIP Committee charge activities that may address the needs of the LGBTQ community
- Delay distribution of a formal survey to APS membership to assist in developing mentoring initiatives until after the Society completes the Strategic Planning process
- Approval of an annual WIP Committee Fall Meeting to facilitate the management of current activities and new initiatives arising from our Strategic Planning Meeting

Bodil M. Schmidt-Nielsen Distinguished Mentor and Scientist Award

Seven excellent nominations were received for the 2017 Bodil M. Schmidt-Nielsen Distinguished Mentor and Scientist Award. The WIP Committee selected Dr. Kurt Albertine, Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Utah School of Medicine, as the awardee. During the Experimental Biology meeting, Dr. Albertine gave an excellent talk, providing an overview of his best tips on mentoring that he has developed over his prestigious career. The multimedia presentation (slides and audio) from Dr. Albertine’s presentation will be posted on the APS web site. The lecture was followed by an
afternoon tea reception, attended by APS presidents (current, past, incoming), WIP Committee members, APS trainee award winners, APS staff, and guests specified by the awardee. Dr. Albertine will also develop a Mentoring Forum column based on his lecture, to be published in *The Physiologist* over the next year.

**APS Professional Opportunity Awards: Caroline tum Suden/Frances Hellebrandt, Steven M. Horvath, Fleur L. Strand, and Gabor Kaley Awards**

The WIP Committee received 95 initial applications for the 2017 tum Suden Professional Opportunity Awards, which is lower than the number of applications in 2016 (117). The Committee was able to fund 50 tum Suden Awards, 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 56% (53 awards in total).

**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 lessons on resilience, and science careers in the federal government, to professional service, connecting with women in science, mentoring guidance, and teaching practice. Each article has related bulletin board discussion topics at the mentoring website and on LifeSciTRC.

**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/](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 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 developed further during the WIP Committee 2017 Fall meeting.

**WIP Committee Facebook Page**

The WIP Committee has a very active Facebook page, with 691 “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. Please visit and “Like” the WIPC Committee Facebook page at [https://www.facebook.com/APS.WIPC](https://www.facebook.com/APS.WIPC).

**Experimental Biology Mentoring Workshop**

For EB 2017, the workshop was entitled, “Choosing the right lab and personnel for your career”. The workshop was held on Sunday from 10:30am-12:30pm, and was attended by approximately 125 participants! Twenty-one attendees (~49%) completed a survey, and based upon these responses, the audience was primarily made up of trainees (high school students, undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows); however there was a wide range of audience members, including junior and established investigators, and laboratory technicians. The speaker presentations received very high ratings (average of 4.5 out of 5.0), and the subsequent 40 minute panel discussion resulted in an informative and lively dialogue between the speakers and audience members.
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 sex in their membership profile (n=7,411), women currently comprise 31% of the APS membership [28% of the regular membership (n=6,203) and 48% of the graduate/undergraduate student membership (n=1,208)]. 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 WIP Committee commends the Committee on Committees for its ongoing attention to diversity on APS appointed committee positions. The Committee is also pleased to note that in 2017, the APS Council has 4 women out of 9 elected regular members (44%) as well a woman in the Past-President position. Thus, overall, 5 (42%) of the 12 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. In 2017, the SAC also has 4 women representatives out of 13 (31%); we continue encouraging all Sections to involve women in their leadership positions, particularly as Section chairs.

In reviewing the Section Steering Committees, on average, we found the same proportion of women as last year (38%). Currently, all but three Sections (CNS, EEP, Respiration) have Steering Committees where at least 25% of the members are women, and 6 out of the 12 Sections have Steering Committees where at least 40% of the members are women. Similarly, 20 out of 22 APS Committees are comprised of at least 25% women members; this is compared to 15 out of 22 Committees last year. Women are also Chairs of 7 of these APS Committees (32%). The WIP Committee encourages the Committee on Committees and the Section Steering Committees to continue their efforts to identify and select women members for APS Committees.

Historically, there have been very few women selected for the major APS awards. At EB 2017, only 1 of the 15 (7%) Distinguished Lectures was given by a woman; this is down from 3 lectureships in 2016 and 6 lectureships in 2015. The Committee continues to strongly 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.