

FORMATION OF NEW SOCIETIES WITHIN APS MEMBERSHIP*

Some years ago (circa 1952) I had the privilege of reading a number of old letters preserved in the Archives of the American Physiological Society dealing with the dissatisfaction of various specialty groups in the physiology of that day with their status in Society activities.

The referenced sources of dissatisfaction were practically identical in every case and involved rejection of nominees for membership, programming in the meetings, and consideration in Society publications. The remedies proposed were also similar involving special consideration for the needs of a new subdiscipline to achieve "critical mass" as an intra-communicating system.

In each case the Society after extended or peremptory debate, conducted either by Council or by the Society business meeting, decided to reject the request for special handling made by the specialty group. Repetition of this process in a variety of forms has resulted in the formation through the years of a number of new societies, the disaffected APS members playing a large role in the formation of the new societies.

As a means of identifying societies which have arisen by this process I have examined the origins of a number of societies I found mentioned in APS Council minutes. The accompanying table shows the results of this study giving the date of formation of each society, the number of people involved in the founding group, and the number and percent of those founders who were members of APS at the time.

Clearly, societies whose founding members included a majority of APS members can be considered as having arisen in large part from APS specialty groups.

Without trying to be pejorative in my attitude about such developments I would like to quote from my own editorial comments in The Physiologist concerning the most recent move by Council to prevent further splintering.

"One of the greatest strengths of physiology as a science is its role of integrator of other fields - e.g., physics, chemistry, mathematics, and engineering - into biology. Paradoxically, this has produced one of the Society's perennial problems. Physiologists are continuously forming new bonds of communication with scientists in other fields.

"Thus a perennial problem of the American Physiological Society arises from one of the greatest virtues of the science of physiology. When a group of this type (the major fraction being physiologists) reaches the size of a few hundred or more, they usually want to formalize their communication system - at scientific meetings in the form of symposia, conferences, sessions of contributed papers, and social

* Presented at the Meeting of the Association of Chairmen of Departments of Physiology, Washington, D.C., November 1, 1975.

gatherings, and through the publication of special journals or sections of journals. The APS has given birth to many such groups, a sizable number of which have eventually budded off as new societies. The American Society of Biological Chemists and the Society for Neuroscience represent early and recent examples of this process.

"A review of the history of the Society reveals a common pattern. In most, if not all, cases the members of APS who were a major fraction of the new group made an effort to achieve their aspirations within the structure and activities of APS. The result has invariably been the same. APS has been unwilling to make the concessions necessary to keep the new group in the fold.

"Certainly the formation of a new society is not inherently bad, but one effect of it is antithetical to the APS aspiration of maintaining broad representation in functional biology. As the new society gains strength the APS tends to lose representation from the younger, active contributors in the field comprising the new society.

"One of the principal factors militating against the incorporation of emerging new cross-disciplines has been the reluctance of APS to admit scientists of other disciplines to membership and therefore to participation in the governance of the Society."

**PROPORTION OF APS MEMBERS
AS FOUNDERS OF NEW SOCIETIES**

Date	Society	# Founding Members	#APS Members	%	
1906	Am. Soc. Biological Chemists	29	22	76%	
1908	Am. Soc. Pharmacology & Exptl. Therapeutics	18	16	89%	
1913	Am. Soc. for Exptl. Pathology	9	6	66%	
1924	Am. Soc. of Plant Physiology	Records not available			
1928	Am. Inst. of Nutrition	10	8	80%	
1946	Soc. of General Physiologists Incorporators	4	4	100%	
		Original Members	104	79	76%
1955	Microcirculatory Society	Available records not suitable for this purpose			
1957	Biophysics Society	Society Officers	20	12	60%
		Conference Organizers	15	9	60%
1967	Biomedical Engineering Society	171	48(?)	28(?)	
1970	Soc. for Neuroscience (Steering Committee)	21	17	81%	

REFERENCES

1. History American Physiological Society, 1887-1937, Baltimore, Maryland, 1938.
2. Fenn, W. O. History of the American Physiological Society, The Third Quarter Century, 1937-1962. Am. Physiol. Soc., Washington, D. C., 1963.
3. Chittenden, R. H. The First Twenty-Five Years of the American Society of Biological Chemists, New Haven, Connecticut, 1945.
4. Chen, K. K. The American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics, The First Sixty Years, 1908-1969. Am. Soc. Pharmacol. & Exptl. Therap., Washington, D. C., 1969.
5. Long, E. R. History of the American Society for Experimental Pathology. Am. Soc. Exptl. Pathol., 1972.
6. First Microcirculatory Conference Proceedings. Anat. Rec. 120: 241-361, 1954.
7. Second Microcirculatory Conference Proceedings. Angiology 6: 281-413, 1925.
8. Factors Regulating Blood Flow. Am. Physiol. Soc., Washington, D. C., 1958.
9. Minutes, Organization of Brain Scientists. NAS/NRC, Div. of Med. Sci. No.1, 25 Aug., 1968.
10. Science 125: p. 753, 19 April 1957.
11. Council Minutes, American Physiological Society: Spring, 1948, Fall 1948, Fall 1949, Spring, 1955, 1956, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1970.
12. Business Meeting Minutes. American Physiological Society: Spring 1956, Fall 1965, Spring, 1966.
13. President's News Letter. American Physiological Society, Fall 1956.

NOTE: In discussion of the above paper, a question was raised concerning rate of growth of the American Physiological Society especially in reference to any recent trends of decrease in growth. The material given in the attached table and smoothed curve were taken from council and business meetings of the Society and the histories listed in the references of the paper.

Some inherent inaccuracy is involved because of different times of year for which a number of members is available and some discrepancies due to times of death and resignation of individual members. Thus some of the numbers listed in the table may not precisely match previously published membership numbers in earlier years, especially during war years when society activities were curtailed. However, the data clearly supports an exponential rate of growth with little variation for any extended period.

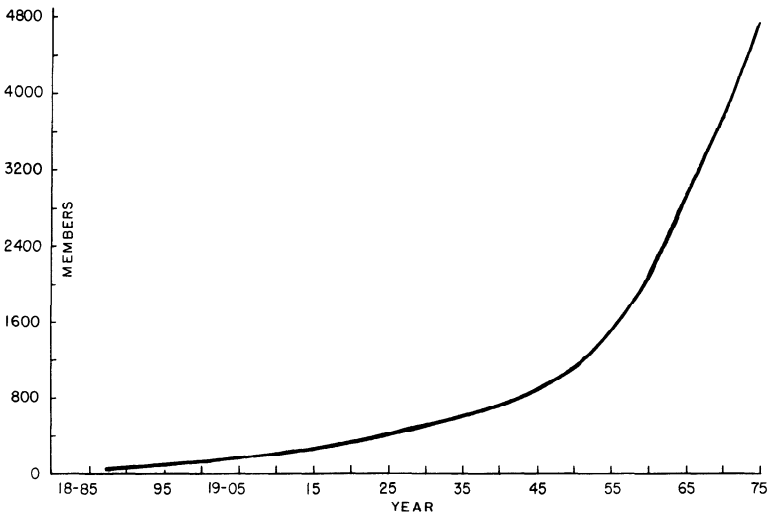
Orr E. Reynolds

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP IN THE APS

Year	Members	Year	Members	Year	Members	Year	Members
1887	28	1910	188	1932	587	1954	1376
1888	34	1911	204	1933	591	1955	1424
1889	38	1912	215	1934	614	1956	1535
1890	42	1913	230	1935	634	1957	1586
1891	44	1914	245	1936	637	1958	1759
1892	46	1915	265	1937	649	1959	1923
1893	51	1916	270	1938	661	1960	2139
1894	55	1917	282	1939	673	1961	2265
1895	63	1918	295	1940	689	1962	2454
1896	65	1919	305	1941	710	1963	2498
1897	65	1920	323	1942	731	1964	2650
1898	76	1921	327	1943	781	1965	2819
1899	76	1922	352	1944	819	1966	2936
1900	91	1923	372	1945	868	1967	3273
1901	102	1924	393	1946	911	1968	3545
1902	110	1925	410	1947	948	1969	3758
1903	118	1926	431	1948	1034	1970	3792
1904	127	1927	453	1949	1102	1971	3986
1905	141	1928	476	1950	1150	1972	4166
1906	151	1929	487	1951	1232	1973	4342
1907	166	1930	522	1952	1306	1974	4500
1908	176	1931	558	1953	1362	1975	4759
1909	176						

Growth of the American Physiological Society

1887-1975



 ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN MEDICAL COLLEGES (AAMC)

1975-76 Officers of the Association and Councils

Robert M. Berne, M.D., one of two APS representatives, has once again been selected to serve as a member of the AAMC Council of Academic Societies. William G. Van der Kloot, Ph.D., is the other APS representative to AAMC.

AAMC has also selected other APS members for various positions. These include Carmine D. Clemente, Ph.D., to membership on the Council of Academic Societies representing the American Association of Anatomists; A. J. Bollet, M.D., selected to membership on the Executive Council; and Robert L. Van Citters named to once again represent the Council of Deans on the AAMC Executive Council.

APS member David D. Thompson, M.D., is the 1975-76 Chairman-Elect of the Council of Teaching Hospitals of the AAMC and a member of the Association's Executive Council.