

help was needed at many levels—to provide factual and theoretical support for elementary and secondary school science teachers, to provide opportunities for continuing education of these teachers in the various scientific disciplines, to help the teachers in showing their students that science is an exciting area with good career opportunities, to conduct research on the development of conceptual understanding, and to participate in policy making and curriculum development at all levels from the national level down through the level of local school districts.

Individuals interested in learning more about “hands-on” science teaching can contact the National Science Resources Center, Smithsonian Institution, Arts and Industries Building, Room 1201, Washington, DC 20560. The North Carolina Museum of Life and Science provides an informative booklet for scientists who desire some tips on how to approach children in the science classroom. The booklet is entitled “Sharing Science with Children: A Survival Guide for Scientists and Engineers” and is available from Georgiana M. Searles, Director of Education, North Carolina Museum of Life and Science, PO Box 15190, Durham, NC 27704. Anyone interested in developing APS initiatives in this area should contact APS headquarters in Bethesda.

Francis L. Belloni

## Coalition for Education in the Life Sciences

The Coalition for Education in the Life Sciences (CELS) is a fledging organization made up of representatives of more than 20 professional life science societies (including the American Physiological Society). It was first conceived in February 1991 at a National Life Science Education Conference sponsored by the American Society for Microbiology and The Johnsons Foundation at Wingspread in Racine, Wisconsin. This conference was called to address the deteriorating state of science education in our nation's schools and public perception of science issues. Unlike the chemical and engineering societies, the life sciences societies have not had a common forum through which to act. Therefore this Coalition was established 1) to enhance the ability of the life science community to speak with a unified voice regarding life science education and 2) to promote pub-

lic understanding of important life science concepts.

At the end of this initial conference, an executive committee was established to set up the structure of the organization and to begin to conduct activities related to the goals listed above. A second conference was held at Wingspread in February 1992 at which time the delegates identified a set of issues that help define life science and its relationship to society as a whole (e.g., wellness, resource utilization). In addition, several areas for action were identified. These areas include 1) policy advocacy for public policy change and implementation on behalf of life science education, 2) clearinghouse activities to disseminate information about available materials, programs, and scientific expertise to support life science education, 3) strategies for successful teaching especially as may apply to large enrollment undergraduate introductory life science courses, 4) regional CELS initiatives to promote statewide alliances bringing together life scientists to improve local science education agendas, and 5) CELS information distribution in the form of a flyer describing its mission and activities to be used for establishing industry support, for lobbying efforts, and for promoting awareness of the combined efforts of the affiliated organizations in the area of life science education. Specific programs currently being planned include a "Briefing about CELS" to be held on June 9, 1992 in Washington, DC to inform the scientific community as well as the public and private agencies about CELS and a conference entitled "Strategies for Teaching Biology" planned for the winter of 1993.

Then confronted with the facts about how our public educational system has failed to provide our citizens with basic knowledge in critical life science fields, it is obvious that something must be done. To this end, our own society has sponsored several programs (e.g., the high school teachers' summers research opportunities, the conferences for science teachers and students at the society's meetings, the interaction with undergraduate life science professional organizations). These activities have had some impact (albeit for the most part, unmeasurable) on the individuals involved and their local communities. It seems obvious that the impact of such activities could be multiplied if they were part of a larger program. CELS has the potential to play a pivotal role in such program development as well as in areas of policy making. The people involved in the CELS organization are an energetic, concerned, and committed group with wide-ranging plans, the success of which depends on the support of the membership of the affiliated organizations. I was pleased to represent the APS at both of the Wingspread conferences and encourage our society's continued involvement with the CELS organization.

Lois J. Heller  
APS Education Committee