

Public Education & Communication Committee
Annual Report
September 2007

Part 1 — Charter Updates

Below are the responsibilities of the Public Education & Communication Committee as defined in the approved charter. Please provide updates on activities since the last annual meeting in green.

Advise

- Advise the Council of the Society for Neuroscience on print and electronic products, and services that promote the concepts and explain the progress and promise of neuroscience research.
 - Continued the production of *Brain Briefings*; *Brain Research Success Stories* series has been completed and revision process for *Brain Facts* has been initiated and is scheduled for completion in the fall of 2008.
 - A new publication, *Research & Discoveries* has been initiated. The first prototype was completed.
 - A new page for the press, providing information about *The Journal of Neuroscience*, including details on a new service allowing prepublication access to embargoed articles to appear in *JN*, has been launched. The Neuroscience in the News Web feature informs members and the public of published stories on neuroscience research in a timely manner.
 - The expanded Media Resource Directory, a listing of field experts with experience working with the press, was launched.
 - The annual meeting Press Books were available on CD for the first time this year.
 - Two new advocacy videos were completed in the patient video series which helps inform members, the public and elected officials about the human toll of neurological and psychiatric disorders.
 - The FY2007 SfN annual report included three articles on neuroscience research: How Neuroscience Research is Aiding Returning War Veterans; the Genetics of Brain Disorders; and Neuroscience and Architecture.

- Serve as a source of information to Council on education issues pertaining to neuroscience education in the K-12 sector and our member's efforts to engage in public education and outreach.
 - Second decade of Brain Awareness campaign – collaboration with Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives has been strengthened, resulting in a 42% increase in the number of members, chapters, and others reporting on Brain Awareness events and activities.
 - SfN and DABI jointly recognized each reporting BAW organization or individual with a certificate of appreciation.

- *Brain Briefings*, designed for use by high school biology teachers, continue to be the most visited site on the SfN Web site (after annual meeting and membership directory).
- Ongoing support to educators and members requesting the Neuroscience Resources for the Classroom CD (over 10,000 distributed since Fall 06), Brain Facts and other SfN resources utilized in schools and other education venues such as museums and science centers. This includes information requests that are submitted to two general SfN email addresses.
- Advise Council on potential strategic partnerships with other professions/associations to accomplish the goals of the SfN strategic plan.
 - Partnership with the National Health Museum was launched and plans for a collaborative initiative were developed.
- Advise Council on the messages the Society should communicate through the membership to a variety of public audiences.
 - Initiative to develop core concepts in neuroscience for teachers has been launched and is on track for completion in the summer of 2008.
 - Successful collaboration between GPA and PECC to execute Public Advocacy Forum at the annual meeting.
 - Successful completion of a number of articles in *Neuroscience Quarterly* highlighting SfN's public education and outreach activities.

Represent

- Represent SfN in its partnership relationships with the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA), National Association of Biology Teachers (NABT), the Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives (DABI), and other educational organizations.
 - National Science Teachers Association and National Association of Biology Teachers (NSTA/NABT) – successful relationship resulting in an increased presence of neuroscience at the annual conventions of these two organizations. New effort to promote neuroscience education resources (SfN's) in the premier biology teacher's journal resulted in a 31% increase in requests for *Brain Facts* in the month that the ad appeared.
 - Successful partnership with the National Science Olympiad. Neuroscience content became the focus of two of the events (thousands of students and teachers involved) and SfN was prominently featured as a sponsor at the national tournament attended by 5,000.
 - DABI – strategic collaboration for second decade of joint campaign is in place.
 - Annual Report highlights programs and science, and serves to inform potential partners about the mission and goals of SfN.
 - SfN works annually with DABI to execute two Brain Bee competitions—one in NYC and one in Washington, DC, both of which were successful

- this past year and reflected an increase in participation.
 - SfN participates in the International Brain Bee program through the annual event held in Baltimore in March, by sponsoring the International Champion to attend the annual meeting, and by arranging and supporting an internship of the champion in the research laboratory of an SfN member. In addition, SfN partners in sponsoring two regional Brain Bees—one in New York City, and one in Washington, DC.
- Facilitate communication between the Society and media, including the transfer of new scientific knowledge developed by SfN members to the media, K-12 teachers, education leaders, advocacy groups, elected officials and the public.
 - Publication and distribution of *Brain Facts*, *Brain Briefings*, and *Brain Research Success Stories*.
 - K-12 teachers/education leaders: Thousands of teachers reached through workshops, information dissemination, web-based resources and targeted outreach. Thirteen Neuroscientist-Teacher Partner Travel Awards in 2007. Maintenance and steady growth of the Neuroscientist-Teacher Partner Program at sfn.org. Teacher & school participation in BAW worldwide.
 - Brain Awareness Week brochure produced. Planned use to increase number of members and educators who participate in the program.
 - New publication series: Research & Discoveries launched to underscore the importance of how curiosity-driven basic research leads to advances in human health.
 - Elected officials: Elected officials are invited to participate in BAW activities.
 - Public: The public is invited to participate in BAW activities in places such as community centers, schools, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, etc.
 - Media: Science Journalism Student Award, now in its second year, brings two students to the annual meeting to become familiar with neuroscience and establish comfort with the field which will positively impact their career development.
 - Media: 2007 Annual Meeting press book 1 includes news releases for 17 press conferences involving work of some 100 scientists; part 2 of the press book highlights some 800 lay-language summaries of potentially newsworthy abstracts for the press.

Manage Activities

- Build the capacity of K-12 educators to integrate neuroscience content in science teaching activities through collaborative activities.
 - NSTA convention: Conducted workshops and reached thousands of teachers through the exhibit. Numerous SfN members present to interact directly with teachers.
 - Neuroscientist Teacher Partner (NTP) Database serves as a catalyst to bring neuroscience directly to educators.

- Disseminated Neuroscience Education CD, supported teacher professional development using SfN resources.
 - NTP travel awards—successful expansion to thirteen pairs resulting from more than twice as many applications in 2007 than in 2006.
 - Provided a suite of materials on line for teachers wanting to participate in Brain Awareness Week.
 - Worked cooperatively with creators of the “Wired to Win” IMAX film to distribute DVD copies of the movie to members at the annual meeting in San Diego.
- Execute initiatives aimed at increasing the involvement of SfN members and chapters in public education and outreach, such as Brain Awareness Week.
 - Strategic initiatives generated for Brain Awareness campaign by joint effort of Dana Alliance and SfN. (described previously)
 - Refined and further expanded our efforts to document BAW efforts in 2007. Enhanced the on-line feature and again made these reports available at www.sfn.org/baw. (As mentioned earlier, there was a 42% increase in the number of BAW reports submitted in 2007.)
- Increase involvement of SfN members and chapters in public education and outreach.
 - Assisted Membership and Chapters Committee with inclusion of educational programs information to be featured at the first Chapters Workshop being planned for San Diego.
 - Routinely communicated with members through the Chapters Bulletin to feature education-related activities and opportunities.
 - Better recognition of Chapters participating in BAW. (See earlier entry about certificates.)
- Catalyze a shift in the professional culture of SfN members and chapters to more consistently include and embrace public communication, outreach, and education about neuroscience.
 - Science Educator Award is now in its fourth year.
 - Feature article on neuroscience education appeared in October in the *Journal of Neuroscience*.
- Provide an electronic gateway via the SfN Web site to educational resources that will foster the integration of neuroscience content in education activities.
 - Web development underway that will feature an on-line version of the Neuroscience Education CD. Site will afford SfN the opportunity to continually refresh and enhance the resources included in this gateway. Launch is planned for early 2008.
- Facilitate collaborative activities with the Committee on Animals in Research that will deliver a balanced message on the use of animals in biomedical research to educators and the public.

- Successful meetings of the Coalition for Animal Research Education (CARE) throughout 2006-7 involving numerous scientific societies and biomedical organizations in addition to NIH Office of Science Education resulting in a proposal to launch a widespread communication campaign targeting middle school students.
- Publicize to the media new neuroscience findings presented each year at the SfN annual meeting through a program of structured press briefings.
 - 18 press conferences at Neuroscience 2006 resulted in 175 original stories and more than 350 clips. Seventeen press conferences planned for Neuroscience 2007.
- Publicize new neuroscience findings published throughout the year in scientific journals.
 - As of September 30, 21 news releases were produced from *Journal of Neuroscience* articles in 2007, compared with 11 in all of 2006. This is from a total of 67 candidates forwarded to experts based on recommendation from PECC over 39 issues.
 - Tracking and reporting media mentions began early 2006; some media picking up news releases include *Science*, *Nature*, Associated Press, Reuters, *Washington Post*, BBC, *HealthDay News*, *Scientific American*, other international media.
 - In 2007, we successfully launched online prepublication access to *Journal* articles for press.
- Promote interesting neuroscience research on topics of interest to the public through newsletters, brochures, the SfN Web site, and other print and electronic products.
 - Continued producing two-page *Brain Briefings* to inform educators and press about neuroscience

2007

December – Beyond Marijuana: Endocannabinoids and Therapies

November – Appetite and Food Intake

October – Gambling and Risk-Taking

September – Tourette Syndrome

Summer - Sleep Deficits

June - Adult Neurogenesis

May - Gender and Pain

April - Rett Syndrome

March - Pathological Aggression

February - Treating Tay-Sachs Disease

January – The Adolescent Brain

2006

December – Myasthenia Gravis

November – Muscular Dystrophy

October – Migraine

- Completed the *Brain Research Success Stories* series which highlights recent success and future potential of neuroscience to government officials and the public:
Since November 2006: The Adolescent Brain, Myasthenia Gravis, Pathological Aggression, Peripheral Neuropathy, Tay-Sachs Disease, and Tourette Syndrome
- *Brain Facts*, a primer on the brain and nervous system, was reprinted due to overwhelming popularity. The second printing was 25,000 copies. The book will be revised and ready for Neuroscience 2008.
- Respond to media inquiries on neuroscience topics.
 - Performed on ongoing basis as needed by PI staff.
- Empower SfN members to engage in public dialogue and provide them with the tools to do so.

Monitor

- Monitor trends in K-12 science education and curricula.
 - Growth in neuroscientist/teacher partnership program identifying successful models.
 - Public education department staff completed a thorough review of neuroscience-related curricular and educational resources in the summer of 07 in preparing a new version of the Neuroscience Education Resources for the K-12 Classroom CD ROM.
- Oversee the vetting of the scientific content of the Society's published materials by panels of scientists appropriately knowledgeable about the specific field discussed in the materials.
 - Ongoing on as-needed basis for press releases and all publications.
- Maintain a media resource directory of neuroscientists who are knowledgeable and at ease when speaking to science writers
 - Currently includes about 150 scientists. We expanded the directory, including photos, profiles, experts' publications, and easier navigability. Completed in time for Neuroscience 2007.
- Coordinate with the Professional Development, Mentoring, and Development Cluster to provide media training to our membership.
 - Coordinated 17 press conferences for Neuroscience 2007 and provided background information to speakers for how to present their work.
- Review the compilation of media stories about neuroscience in order to measure how effectively the intended messages are getting across to the media and whether they are being communicated appropriately to the public.
 - Monthly reports on media mentions. Meta and content analysis

performed when possible as resources allow.

- Evaluate each year's program of press releases and press conferences for effectiveness.
 - Monthly reports on media mentions.

Coordinate and Communicate

- Coordinate and strategize with Government and Public Affairs Committee, the Committee on Animals in Research, as well as the Membership and Chapters Committees about suggestions for how to best use the Society's educational materials to inform policymakers and educators, and about new materials and products that should be developed and produced.
 - Points of intersection are between PECC and Coalition on Animals in Research, Public Advocacy Forum and Membership and Chapters. In all areas, materials are being explored, better marketed and reviewed in a collaborative manner.
- Communicate with other Society groups such as the Program Committee and the editorial board of *The Journal of Neuroscience* as needed to help generate suggestions about key scientific discoveries, ideas and topics that should be targeted for communication to the media and the public.
 - Discussions ongoing; Exploring initiatives with *Journal* to increase media coverage. (See Journal information kit, prepublication access above.)
- Coordinate activities with the other committees in the Public Outreach Cluster, which also includes the Committee on Animals in Research and the Government and Public Affairs Committee. The chair will serve as the committee's representative on the cluster steering committee.
 - Communication among the cluster chairs at Council meetings and via conference calls as needed provides the vehicle for ongoing dialogue.

Part 2 — Other Updates

Please provide updates on any other activities of the committee that are not already covered in the charter.

Additions of liaisons from C-DIN and the Neuroinformatics Committee.
Replacement of 11 members of PECC
Committee realignment – it is critical to give chair discretion in helping blend the two cultures. Recommendations from CoC should be with approval of chair. This is particularly important with large committees that were realigned.

Part 3 — Questions for Cluster Steering Committee / Council
Use the space below to propose questions for discussion by the Cluster Steering Committee (if appropriate) and/or Council.

Formalize a proposal for a major event from BAW, PAF and GPAC per year.
Formalize strategy for recurrent themes of Public Advocacy Forum at each of three sites for AM.
Importance of Brain Awareness campaign to message delivery: How can committees within the cluster better support the campaign?
Integration of animal research into other publications targeted to public.
Need for new liaison from CAR to be appointed.
Process for submission of proposals to Council needs to be reviewed.

Part 4 — Other Comments
Use the space below for any other comments.

Directive regarding internal versus extramural funding for projects would be helpful.
Prepare SfN infrastructure for extramural funding opportunities.
Number of staff and specialization required to support desired activities.