

Committee on Women in Neuroscience Annual Report

November 2008

Part 1 — Charter Updates

Below are the responsibilities of the Committee on Women in Neuroscience (C-WIN) as defined in the approved charter. Please provide updates on activities since the last annual meeting in green.

Manage Activities

- Promote the excellence of women in neuroscience through events at the annual meeting and ongoing committee activities throughout the year
 - C-WIN events at the 2007 meeting were a great success, with substantial participation and extremely positive feedback. The spring meeting was held on March 26, 2008, at SfN headquarters. The Committee's goals continue to grow in response to SfN's strategic plan and member needs.

- Host a luncheon to honor the accomplishments of women in neuroscience at the annual meeting.
 - The 2007 Luncheon was extremely successful. Dr. Eve Marder gave the talk and 200 people attended the luncheon. The slide show presentation, Dr. Marder's talk and the summary of the table discussions have all been posted on the committee's website.
 - During this year's luncheon:
 - The co-chairs will review the highlights of the working groups from last year's luncheon and accomplishments of the committee during the past year.
 - Huda Akil will serve as the keynote speaker.
 - A PowerPoint presentation will highlight women neuroscientists.
 - Break-out discussions will focus on opportunities and strategies for career advancement and networking.

- Host an awards ceremony to honor recipients of the Lifetime Achievement, Career Development and travel awards at the annual meeting.
 - The 2007 awards reception was a success, but the committee decided to consolidate its efforts and recognize all the award recipients at the C-WIN luncheon rather than having a separate awards reception. In the case of the Mika Salpeter Award, SfN will be honoring the winner along with the recipients of other SfN achievement awards and prizes at SfN's main awards reception.
 - This year's award recipients are:
 - Mika Salpeter Lifetime Achievement Award**
Ben Barres, MD, PhD

 - Patricia Goldman-Rakic Hall of Honor**
Lawrence Katz, PhD

The Career Development and the Louise Hanson Marshall awards will not be awarded in 2008, as determined by the awards selection committee.

- Manage the mentoring programs at the annual meeting to foster networking and mentoring opportunities for young women and men in neuroscience.
 - As of mid-October 2008, there are 110 mentors and 75 mentees signed up for this year's mentoring program. A group of C-WIN members will meet in Ann Arbor, Michigan, to do mentor/mentee matching for 2008.
- Select the winners of the graduate student and postdoctoral fellow travel awards.
 - C-WIN selected eleven graduate student travel award winners and eleven post-doctoral travel award winners for 2008.

Graduate Student Winners

Susan Bartko - UK
Cameron Jeter - US
Jamie Johansen - US
Ji Hyun Ko - Canada
Kami Koldewyn – US
Geraldine Kass – US
Guarav Kumar – Australia
Ingrid Nieuwenhuis – The Netherlands
Michelle Previtera – US
Jamie Reed – US
Norma Andrea Velazquez Ulloa – US

Postdoctoral Winners

Sarah Clinton, PhD – US
Robert Cudmore, PhD – France
Caroline Larsen, PhD – New Zealand
Radhika Madhavan, PhD – India
Shreesh Mysore, PhD – US
Ilona Obara, PhD – US
Otilia Obreja, PhD – Germany
Catherine Stoodley, PhD – US
Erzsebet Szatmari, PhD – US
Jenny Tam, PhD – US
Natalie, Zahr, PhD – US

- Work with SfN and the Professional Development cluster, composed of C-WIN, the Committee on Diversity in Neuroscience (C-DIN) and the International Affairs Committee (IAC), to provide opportunities for professional development of SfN members at the annual meeting, as well as during the year, through local chapters, and through grants awarded to SfN from federal and foundation sources.

- C-WIN participated in the Fall 2008 Cluster meeting in San Diego.
- C-WIN and C-DIN reviewed and discussed mentor matching software programs during their spring 2008 meetings. The committees will discuss further development of the mentoring program at future meetings.

Coordinate and Communicate

- Take an active role in encouraging women, underrepresented minorities, international and young scientists to propose symposia and mini-symposia to the Program Committee each year to showcase their work.
 - The PDMD Cluster offered mentoring services to those wanting help in developing and submitting proposals to SfN for annual meeting symposia and mini-symposia. While this service was available to all who requested it, the idea came from a desire for a greater number of competitive proposals from diverse applicants who may be less experienced in writing such proposals. The Cluster invited past Program Committee members to serve as mentors because of their expertise and experience in planning the annual meeting and reviewing proposals for these sessions. Of the 25 requests for mentors in 2008, all were matched with mentors. Eleven of the mentees submitted a proposal and four of those proposals were accepted into the 2008 Program.

As part of the Professional Development Workshops at Neuroscience 2007, C-WIN member Jill Becker led a workshop entitled, “SfN Symposium/ Mini-symposium: Demystifying the Process and Increasing Success.” People who attended the workshop were encouraged to bring ideas for symposia and mini-symposia, and feedback was provided in small breakout groups.

The workshop focused on the following: how to choose a topic; understanding the process of proposal evaluation and selection by the SfN Program Committee; constructing proposals that cut across traditional themes and topics; and ways to enhance the inclusion of women, minority and international scientists in symposia and mini-symposia. Speakers included past and present SfN Program Committee members (Rae Silver, Terry Robinson), as well as Dr. Huda Akil and Dr. Judy Illes.

- Coordinate professional development workshops at the SfN annual meeting through the SfN Professional Development workshop proposal mechanism.
 - C-WIN asked Kim Byrnes to lead a workshop at Neuroscience 2008 entitled “Time Management Workshop: Combining Family and Neuroscience.” Faculty will include: Marina Wolf, Tracy Bale, Mark Burns, Alisa Schaefer, John Ngai, Mike Lehman, Laurel Haak, Cynthia Jordan and Marc Breedlove.

- Coordinate activities with the other committees in the Professional Development, Mentoring, and Diversity Cluster, namely C-DIN and IAC. The chairs(s) will serve as C-WIN's representative(s) on the Professional Development Cluster's steering committee.
 - C-WIN will be collaborating with C-DIN to submit an ADVANCE Program grant to the National Science Foundation in January, 2009. Dr. Jill Becker, incoming C-WIN Chair, will serve as co-PI with Dr. Anne Etgen, incoming C-DIN Chair.
- Help disseminate the call for nominations for the Lifetime Achievement awards and the Career Development award, and applications for the graduate student and postdoctoral fellow travel awards.
 - Completed.
- Contribute to the Society's "member needs surveys" by identifying areas that need to be addressed.
 - Completed.
- Help solicit recommendations from the membership to the Committee on Committees to ensure that a diverse pool of nominees is invited for committee and leadership service in the Society.
 - C-WIN's co-chairs do not feel that member rotation and replacement is working well at the present time. Despite timely submission of names of prospective new members, neither the process nor the representation and diversity of the committee are satisfactory. The co-chairs would be happy to work with Council, Staff and the CoC to improve upon this in the coming year.
 - The co-chairs are also concerned that the centralization of awards selection has diluted the commitment to them and has resulted in a reduction in qualified nominees. Again, the co-chairs would be happy to work with Council, Staff and the CoC to improve upon this in the coming year.

Part 2 — Other Updates

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

C-WIN is honored to have played a role in the decision of Dr. Bernice Grafstein to make an initial three-year contribution to establish a new SfN award to recognize excellence in mentoring. This comes as a direct recognition of C-WIN's success to date.

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.

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