

International Affairs Committee-US National Committee
Annual Report
October 2007

Part 1 — Charter Updates

Below are the responsibilities of the International Affairs Committee-US National 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, the President of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), and the International Brain Research Organization (IBRO) Governing Council on international matters that are relevant to neuroscience.

Represent

- Serve as the US National Committee to IBRO and as the United States and Canadian Regional Committee of IBRO. The joint committee will participate in the activities and governance of IBRO on behalf of the National Academy of Sciences and the Society for Neuroscience.
 - The IBRO School of Neuroscience entitled, “Fundamentals of Epilepsy” took place May 27-June 1, 2007 in conjunction with the first Canadian Association of Neuroscience (CAN) annual meeting in Toronto, Canada. IAC-USNC supported the course in the amount of \$15,000 through the funds provided by IBRO.
- The chair also serves as a member of the Executive Committee of the Governing Council of IBRO.

Manage Activities

- Promote basic and clinical neuroscience research worldwide by hosting or participating in one or more international neuroscience activities per year.
 - As part of its ongoing strategy of increasing neuroscience training opportunities for scientists in developing countries, the IAC-USNC organized a 3-day workshop, July 10-12, 2007, prior to the start of the IBRO World Congress in Melbourne, Australia, July 12-17, 2007.
 - The course was modeled after the Neurobiology of Disease Workshop (NDW) offered at SfN’s 2004 Annual Meeting entitled, “Neurodegenerative Diseases: Different Phenotypes, Shared Mechanism of Pathogenesis.” The workshop focused on shared underlying mechanisms common to Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, frontotemporal dementia and other dementias, and neurodegenerative disorders characterized by intracellular and/or extracellular aggregates of proteinacious fibrils. Presenters discussed current understanding of the molecular and genetic mechanisms

relevant to each of the neurodegenerative diseases and patient presentations were used to introduce basic scientists to the clinical disorders. The course organizer was John Trojanowski of the University of Pennsylvania, who also led the 2004 NDW. Other faculty included: Virginia M.-Y. Lee, PhD, MBA, University of Pennsylvania; Colin Masters, MD, University of Melbourne; and Barry Greenberg, PhD, Neurochem, Inc.

- The workshop was aimed at graduate students and postdocs from developing countries in Asia. The call for student applications was advertised through the Society for Neuroscience Nexus, IBRO's Web site and newsletter, and e-mails to the Asia-Pacific Regional Committee (APRC) to IBRO. A total of 36 applications were received and 21 students were selected, representing China, Hong Kong, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Y. S. Chan of APRC/IBRO helped with selecting the students.
 - The IAC-USNC is working with committee member Sharon Juliano on developing a course in Africa focusing on "Train the Trainers" for 2008. The objective is to provide information to neuroscientists from developing countries on several general topics of interest to a broad range of neuroscientists
- Encourage the professional development of promising young neuroscientists with an emphasis on the developing world both in their own regions and in established courses and programs in developed countries by offering travel awards to the SfN annual meeting and financial assistance to committee-approved Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL) and Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory (CSHL) and other approved neuroscience courses.
 - Once again in 2007, the committee worked with IBRO's Board of Schools and Marine Biological Laboratory and Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory (CSHL) course instructors to identify and encourage highly qualified and motivated research trainees from developing countries to apply for admission to summer neuroscience courses at the MBL and CSHL. This initiative is referred to as the "IBRO Fellows Program." In 2007, a total of three MBL fellowships and five CSHL fellowships were awarded (see attached list).
 - In addition to funding their participation in the MBL and CSHL courses, the 2007 IBRO fellows who submit an abstract will receive a travel stipend of \$1,500 to either the 2007 or 2008 SfN Annual Meeting, plus one complimentary workshop registration for a course during the week of the SfN Annual Meeting.
 - Offer the very best of the young developing scientists around the world who complete these international training courses a subsequent opportunity to have a two- to three-month lab experience in an excellent laboratory with a stipend to cover approved travel and living costs.
 - The IAC is developing contacts and strategies for this and will make it one of its major objectives in the coming years.

- Identify specific training and development needs and opportunities of neuroscientists around the world, through a needs assessment.
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- Investigate third party funding options for providing more intensive training courses outside the United States.
 - The committee is continuing to explore opportunities for additional funding. During the spring 2007 IAC-UISNC meeting, the committee discussed some opportunities to partner with other funding organizations. A more in depth discussion will take place in San Diego.
- Maintain a Web site that offers information and resources for neuroscientists in all countries.
 - The committee has continued to work on a seminar and neuroscience methods series to bring up-to-date neuroscience information to researchers in developing countries via the Internet (www.iac-usnc.org). Web-based neuroscience lectures are accessible by scientists worldwide and feature narrated data slides by prominent neuroscientists from the NAS and the SfN. Soon to be our newest feature on the site is the Neurobiology of Disease Workshop, “Motor Neuron Diseases: A Didactic Journey from Spinal Muscular Atrophy to Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis” which was featured at the 2006 SfN Annual Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia.

Coordinate and Communicate

- Coordinate activities with the other committees in the Member Development and Benefits Cluster of the Society for Neuroscience, which also includes the Membership and Chapters committee, and the Professional Development, Mentoring, and Diversity Cluster, which includes the Committee on Women in Neuroscience and the Committee on Diversity in Neuroscience. The chair will serve as the committee’s representative on the cluster steering committees.
 - Vice-Chair, Greg Quirk participated in the August Cluster and Council Meetings in St. Paul, MN. Both Chairs will continue to participate in the Proposal Mentoring Program for 2008.
- Liaise with the Canadian Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction and other Canadian neuroscience organizations as appropriate.
 - SfN Staff members, Eun-Joo Chang and Charyl Delaney attended the first annual Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction (INMHA) - Canadian Association of Neuroscience (CAN) Annual Meeting.

Part 2 — Other Updates

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

The committee was successful in obtaining NIH funding under the NIH Blueprint to support its activities with \$120,000 per year for five years.

Part 3 — Questions for Cluster Steering Committee / Council

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

The committee chair now meets on a regular basis with the committee that organizes the Neurobiology of Disease workshops. The committee's interests would be well served by similarly close liaisons with other committees in the clusters to which it belongs.