

# Government & Public Affairs Committee Annual Report October 2009

## Part 1 — Charter Updates

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

### *Monitor*

- Track US federal legislation affecting neuroscience.
  - SfN, Research!America and other organizations threw full support behind an amendment supported by Senators Specter, Harkin and Durbin that provided \$10 billion for NIH in the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA).
  - President Obama signed ARRA into law on February 17, 2009. The \$787 billion bill included \$10.4 billion for NIH and \$3 billion for NSF, the highest levels proposed for both agencies in the House and Senate.
  - President Obama signed the FY2009 omnibus appropriations bill on March 11, 2009, which included \$30.3 billion for NIH and \$6.5 billion for NSF.
  - SfN was asked to meet with Sen. Specter's appropriations staff to discuss the potential CAN legislation ("Cures Action Network"). Ultimately, SfN did not take a position on the legislation.
  - SfN announced on March 16, 2009 that it supports partner Research!America's call for a least a 10 percent increase for NIH in FY2010 with a goal of reaching \$40 billion as soon as possible.
  - On May 7, 2009, President Obama released his FY2010 budget request. The budget would give NIH a 1.4 percent increase over the FY2009 level for a total of \$30.9 billion in FY2010. NSF would receive an 8.5 percent increase for a total of \$7 billion, which is consistent with the amount supported by SfN.
  - The U.S. House of Representatives passed the FY2010 Commerce-Justice-Science (CJS) Appropriations bill on June 17, 2009. The bill included \$6.9 billion for NSF, a 6.87 percent increase over FY2009 and slightly below President Obama's request for \$7.045 billion. The Senate CJS bill included the same level as the House.
  - The House on July 24 approved the Labor-HHS FY2010 appropriations bill that provides \$31.3 billion for NIH, a 3.14 percent increase over FY2009. SfN sent a letter to the House Appropriations L-HHS subcommittee Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Tiahrt thanking them for adding \$500 million to the President's request for NIH and encouraged them to add to the funding level as the bill moved through the appropriation process. The Senate Labor-H Subcommittee approved a

- bill that provides \$30.8 billion for NIH, \$500 million less than the House.
  - The House Appropriations Committee approved the FY2010 Military Construction – Veteran Affairs spending legislation and included \$580 million for medical research. This amount included a \$48 million increase for research to address the needs of Afghanistan and Iraq veterans. On July 10, 2009 the full House passed the FY2010 Military Construction legislation.
- Monitor the governmental funding and regulatory environment regarding neuroscience in Canada and Mexico.
  - Neuroscience Canada has been active in advocacy and will present an update during the Fall 2009 GPA meeting.
  - As part of its agreement with SfN, our Mexican counterparts translated all Brain Research Success Stories into Spanish and are working on adapting them for Mexican audiences and will provide an update during the Fall GPA meeting.
  - During its Spring meeting, Council approved the release of the remaining \$7500 for Mexican advocacy and another \$25,000 agreement for Canadian advocacy
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the various coalitions in which the Society participates.
  - SfN was asked to serve on steering committee for Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research. Staff led components of discussions at two town hall meetings, and has worked with RIA and other members to encourage and support as aggressive a posture as possible.
  - American Brain Coalition (ABC) – ABC issued numerous alerts to its members in 2009 on NIH funding and ARRA. ABC is holding a membership and board meeting in Chicago, IL during Neuroscience 2009.
  - Coalition for Life Sciences – SfN members and staff participated in two Congressional visit days organized by CLS. Issues included NIH and NSF funding.
  - Coalition for the National Science Foundation (CNSF) – SfN staff attended CNSF monthly meetings at which Congressional staff and federal officials spoke about current and future NSF funding and related issues.
  - SfN donated \$5,000 to the ResearchMeansHope.org campaign, a targeted advertisement campaign in four congressional districts to reach Members of Congress and their communities on medical research and funding.

***Advise***

- Serve as a source of information to Council on legislative or policy changes that could affect the conduct of neuroscience research in North America, including animal research, stem cell research, evolution, and social issues.
  - Relevant articles are provided to Council as information items.

- President was advised of anticipated changes to stem cell policy and staff worked to develop a response for distribution.
- Propose actions to Council that broaden and strengthen the coalition supporting biomedical research both inside and beyond the scientific community.
  - With the dissolution of the Campaign for Medical Research in June 2008, Invitrogen, American Heart Association, Association of American Universities and others created United for Medical Research. SfN is monitoring the activities of this coalition, which requests a donation of around \$25,000 to participate for an organization of SfN's size. At this time, we continue to monitor coalition progress and would advise on a decision to join.
- Recommend strategic partnerships with a broad array of organizations and individuals that support biomedical research.
  - SfN's 2008 membership in Newt Gingrich's Center for Health Transformation expired in March 2009, and Council voted at its Summer meeting to not renew membership.
- Recommend to Council advocacy collaborations with Canadian and Mexican partner organizations.
  - See advocacy update above. Further updates will be given at the GPA Fall 2009 meeting.
- Recommend strategies to support increased federal funding for NIH, NSF, and other federally funded research agencies.
  - The GPA Committee is being briefed by SfN and CRD staff at its Fall 2009 meeting and receives information throughout the year from SfN staff and legislative advisors. SfN staff produces *Eye on Washington*, a weekly legislative update, which is e-mailed to members of the GPA Committee.

***Represent***

- Provide committee representation to the board of the Coalition for Life Sciences (CLS), maximizing SfN's input in policy discussions and CLS's overarching plans to increase biomedical research funding.
  - SfN representatives to the CLS Board are Steve Hyman and Gerald Fischbach, with GPA member Bob Horvitz also serving on the CLS board. Keith Yamamoto of UCSF took over for Harold Varmus as CLS Chair. SfN attended CLS steering committee meetings this year; SfN executive director and senior director raised SfN's decision to support R!A's ask for FY2010 and helped contribute to CLS's decision to support the same level.
- Participate in the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research Funding to propose appropriations for NIH and the Coalition for Health Funding.
  - GPA staff stay apprised of Ad Hoc's positions, and in 2009, chose to support the Research!America call for at least a 10 percent increase for NIH budget in FY2010. Mona Miller serves on the Ad Hoc Steering Committee, and has worked to help keep the organization on a proactive and assertive advocacy posture.

- SfN signed onto a September 25 CHF letter urging appropriators in Congress to provide the highest level for health programs included in the FY2010 appropriations bills.
- The chair shall be included among the Society's representatives to the American Brain Coalition Board when a slot becomes available.
  - Former GPA Chair Mahlon DeLong, former GPA member Nancy Wexler, and SfN member Don Price sit on the ABC Board.

### ***Manage Activities***

- Organize the Public Advocacy Forum each year at the annual meeting.
  - The 2009 Public Advocacy Forum – “Science and the Economy: Making the Case for Investing in Research” focuses on ways to build support for medical research funding during the current economic climate. Mary Woolley, President and CEO of Research!America will moderate the discussion. Participants include Dr. Phyllis Wise, Provost of University of Washington; Dr. Menelas Pangalos, Executive Vice President of Discovery Research, Wyeth; Dr. Kevin Murphy, Professor of Economic, University of Chicago.
- Work for appropriations for federal agencies supporting neuroscience research.
  - SfN President Tom Carew submitted testimony via e-mail to the House and Senate Labor-Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittees in support of NIH and to the House CJS Subcommittee in support of NSF.
  - Tom Carew, Marty Saggese and CAR incoming chair Sharon Juliano met with NIH acting director Raynard Kington the morning of Feb. 10 to discuss animal extremism and the status of NIH funding in the economic recovery bill.
- Organize advocacy training for neuroscientists at the local level on how to effectively educate the public and advocate to policymakers on behalf of neuroscience.
  - On February 9, 2009, GPA staff attended the SfN Philadelphia Chapter meeting. The meeting included a discussion of how the chapter can engage in advocacy activities. Activities included a presentation and hosting a table of information during the poster session in the afternoon.
  - SfN member, John Byrne authored an op-ed in the Houston Chronicle printed on March 11, 2009 on the recovery funds and BAW activities in Houston.
  - On March 14, 2009, the New Haven Register included a letter from Program Committee Chair, Marina Picciotto, thanking Connecticut lawmakers for supporting science funding.
  - On March 17, 2009, the Times Record in Maine included a letter from SfN member, Seth Ramus, thanking Maine legislators for supporting science funding in the ARRA.
  - The SfN New Mexico Chapter provided a lab tour to Representative Martin Heinrich (D-NM) on June 1, 2009.
  - On August 27, 2009, GPA staff visited the SfN Pittsburgh Chapter to

discuss ways to become involved in advocacy and to prep the chapter for an upcoming lab visit by Representative Mike Doyle (D-PA).

- On September 3, the Chapter held a successful lab visit with Rep Doyle. Rep. Doyle has requested a meeting to discuss animal issues with the chapter.
  
- Notify US members when they should contact their Congressional representatives on key issues.
  - The following legislative alerts were sent in 2009:
    - 1/12/2009 – Urge your Representative to sign the Bilbray/Davis letter to include scientific funding in ARRA
    - 1/13/2009 – Senate Appropriators, support the Specter Amendment (\$10 billion for NIH)
    - 1/15/2009 – SfN Public Outreach Cluster to contact their Representative to include scientific research in ARRA
    - 1/22/2009 – Urge chapters leaders to contact their Representative to support \$10 billion for NIH in ARRA
    - 1/30/2009 – SfN membership to contact Full House/Senate membership to support the Specter Amendment
    - 2/2/2009 – Urge your Representative and Senators to support the \$10.4 billion for NIH and \$3 billion for NSF in ARRA
    - 2/18/2009 – SfN membership, Thank You for scientific funding for NIH and NSF in ARRA (House, Senate and Administration)
    - 3/9/2009 – SfN membership to connect Full House/Senate membership to support \$30.3 billion for NIH and \$6.5 billion for NSF in FY2009 Omnibus Appropriations legislation
    - 3/30/2009 – Urge your Representative to sign on to the Markey letter asking for at least a 7 percent and not more than 10 percent for NIH funding for FY2010
    - 6/30/2009 – Urge your Representative to support a 10 percent increase in NIH funding for FY2010
    - 7/7/2009 – Urge the House Labor-Health and Human Service Subcommittee to support a 10% percent increase in the FY2010 NIH budget
    - 7/24/2009 – Urge your Representative to oppose the Issa Amendment preventing the peer review systems for NIH grants

**Total SfN member messages sent: 23,386**

- Recruit strategic partners from big pharma, the biotech community, and additional members of the science and voluntary health communities, with a plan to put research to work for better health and quality of life.
  - Staff emailed the *Washington Research Update*, a periodic newsletter aimed at engaging the biotech industry in biomedical research advocacy. The e-newsletter was sent on July 9 to 1,553 business leaders.
- Continue a leadership role in a broad array of organizations to bring together

patient and professional groups in support of a shared agenda of expanding research.

- SfN continues to play key roles in ABC, the Ad Hoc Group, CLS, Research!America, and NABR.
- Reach out to industry leaders who exert influence in Washington, DC, based on a shared agenda in support of the economic importance of research in the US and the global economy.
  - SfN staff continue to communicate with Janet Lambert of Invitrogen and Daryl Pritchard of BIO on NIH advocacy.
  - SfN's Economic Fact Sheet, developed at the economy's nadir in Dec/January has formed the foundation for consistent and continuing emphasis on the economic message for advocacy.
- Form strategic relationships with key political leaders who could and will help advance the cause of biomedical research.
  - Tom Carew, Marty and CAR incoming chair Sharon Juliano met with NIH acting director Raynard Kington the morning of Feb. 10 to discuss animal extremism and the status of NIH funding in the economic recovery bill.
  - Representative Martin Heinrich (D-NM) visited the Department of Neuroscience at the University of New Mexico and toured several neuroscience labs. The SfN New Mexico chapter also discussed NIH/NSF funding with Rep. Heinrich. The chapter and Rep. Heinrich's district office is currently developing a science advisory committee.
  - Representative Mike Doyle (D-PA) toured the Center for Neuroscience at the University of Pittsburg and several neuroscience labs. After the tour, Rep. Doyle participated in a Q&A session regarding NIH funding.
  - SfN staff worked with Rep. Joe Sestak (D-PA) to write a statement for the Congressional Record commemorating Brain Awareness Week and Traumatic Brain Injury and PTSD research.

#### ***Generate Policy Recommendations***

- Generate and approve public position statements and legislative alerts on behalf of SfN about legislative or policy changes that affect the conduct of neuroscience for Council review.
  - See above list of legislative alerts.
  - GPA Committee approved revised Federal Funding Strategy section of the SfN Strategic Plan that more closely matches the new focus on increasing member engagement in advocacy.

#### ***Coordinate and Communicate***

- Ensure that relevant policy related information is communicated to the SfN membership.
  - SfN Advocacy Network members receive a monthly e-newsletter with the latest policy developments. Additionally, the network continues to be promoted on the Web site, in NQ, and in Nexus. The SfN Advocacy

Network currently has 1,337 members.

- GPA staff includes legislative updates in Nexus and regularly updates the News and Announcements pages on the Web site.
- Coordinate activities with the other committees in the Public Outreach Cluster, which also includes the Public Education and Communication Committee and the Committee on Animals in Research. The chair will serve as the committee's representative on the cluster steering committee.
  - A Public Outreach Cluster meeting that included incoming GPA and CAR chairs was held at the 2008 Annual Meeting. A meeting to discuss the year's activities and 2010 annual meeting events is scheduled for Oct 21, just before the Council meeting.
  - A joint SfN Capitol Hill Day is being planned for GPA and CAR for March 24, 2010. The newly created CNDP may participate in the Hill Day also.

## **Part 2 — Other Updates**

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

- Incoming Chair Bruce McEwen will begin his three-year term at the end of the Fall 2009 meeting.
- The Committee welcomes four new members at its Fall meeting: Ranulfo Romo as the Mexico representative, Mark Rasenick of Univ of Illinois at Chicago, Bill Martin of Theravance and Ken Miller of Columbia University.
- During the Recovery Bill advocacy effort, Ken Miller of Columbia asked for input and guidance on a sign on letter effort he created to engage more than 60 Nobelists and other scientific luminaries in support of bold and visionary funding. SfN staff helped develop a draft press release.
- SfN continues to financial support and engage in the Institute of Medicine Forum on Neuroscience. David Cohn serves as SfN representative. Mona Miller has attended several meetings in the last 8 months. She was asked to develop and present potential messaging in support of the “Grand Challenges in Neuroscience” and presented at the spring meeting. She also serves on the outreach committee and made significant suggested revision to a document in support of the project's “connectome” emphasis.

**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.