

International Affairs Committee Annual Report

October 2009

Part 1 — Charter Updates

In May 2009, Council approved a new charter for the International Affairs Committee (IAC), reflecting the committee's separation from IBRO and NAS. Below are the responsibilities of the IAC as defined in the new charter. Activities and programs that were implemented during 2008-2009 that fell under the old IAC-US National Committee (IAC-USNC) charter are indicated.

Advise

- Advise the SfN Council on international matters of relevance to neuroscience and to the Society.
 - *IAC chair Carol Barnes was part of the working group, with two Council members, that recommended revisions to SfN's international strategy and participated in discussions with IBRO regarding the restructuring of the IAC-USNC.*
 - *Carol Barnes visited Korea and Japan to participate in meetings with Korean neuroscience societies and the Japan Neuroscience Society at their annual meeting in Nagoya. Outcomes will be reported to Council at their fall meeting.*
- Provide guidance and input to SfN staff on communications/messaging strategies for engaging international members at the annual meeting and year-round, including development of an e-newsletter and a part of the SfN Web site that offers information and resources for SfN's international membership.
- Provide direction and guidance to SfN staff on occasional surveys and focus group discussions with international members to monitor their changing needs and level of engagement.

Manage Activities

- Develop and implement, with approval from the appropriate governing body, in collaboration with the SfN Professional Development Cluster and other neuroscience societies (as appropriate), training and skills building courses/workshops for international neuroscientists, during and outside the annual meeting, including potentially outside the U.S.
 - *IAC Chair Carol Barnes and IAC member John Hildebrand were nominated by SfN President Tom Carew to serve on a joint SfN/FENS Professional Development Working Group. The charge of the group is to develop recommendations for collaborative projects or approaches on issues related to professional development. The working group decided to use the \$50,000 pledged by Council to support a joint FENS-SfN School on "Brain evolution and its consequences for brain pathologies." This first PENS-SfN school will be held March 21-26, 2010 at the Stazione Zoologica "Anton Dorhn" in Naples, Italy. The course is co-organized by a European-US team from Karolinska Intitutet in Stockholm and Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN.*

- Oversee travel award program for promising young international neuroscientists to attend the SfN annual meeting.
 - *SfN, through the IAC, funded 30 SfN/IBRO international travel award recipients to the SfN annual meetings in 2008 and again in 2009. Eligible participants are neuroscientists under age 35 from developing countries, and the selection process is managed by IBRO. Each recipient receives a \$2,000 stipend.*
- Oversee the Miledi Program Planning Committee's implementation of the grant-funded Ricardo Miledi Neuroscience Training Program aimed at trainees from Latin America and the Caribbean.
 - *The IAC-USNC oversaw the Miledi Program Planning Committee (MPPC), chaired by IAC member Greg Quirk, and the 2009 course preparations. The 2009 course was held in Queretaro, Mexico, from Sept 14 – Oct 9 on "Miledi's contributions to translational science: basic neurobiology and clinical aspects." Fifteen students were chosen from 7 different countries.*

The MPPC facilitated a call for proposals to host future Miledi courses. The MPPC received proposals from six institutions in Latin America: Mexico (2), Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, and Panama. After a careful review of the proposals, the MPPC selected Mexico City as the course site for 2010 and Uruguay for 2011. However, SfN was notified by The Grass Foundation that they are ceasing funding for the Miledi Program due to their financial situation. SfN has already received funds for the 2010 course, but funding for the remaining two years of the grant has been suspended.

- Investigate and pursue third-party funding sources to support international collaboration for training activities approved by Council.
- Develop opportunities and oversee activities to educate the general SfN membership about topics related to international neuroscience.
- Solicit recommendations from the membership for the Committee on Committees to ensure that a diverse international pool of nominees is invited for committee and leadership service in the Society.
 - *SfN encouraged Japanese members to submit names for committee service. The Japanese members responded and submitted 6 names to serve on various SfN committees. Of these nominees, three were selected to serve on the Program Committee (2) and the Neuroinformatics Committee (1).*
- Promote basic and clinical neuroscience research worldwide by hosting or participating in one or more international neuroscience activities per year. **(IAC-USNC charter)**
 - *The third IBRO Canadian School of Neuroscience in Neurodegeneration and Regeneration took place from May 24-June 3, 2009 in Vancouver, with funding contributed by the IAC-USNC. The school was organized by Jane Roskams from the University of British Columbia with support from IBRO, Canadian Association of Neuroscience (CAN), Canadian Institute of Neuroscience, Mental Health and Addiction (INMHA), the Montreal Neurological Institute, the UBC Life Sciences Institute, Brain Research Centre, UBC VP Research, Stem Cell Technologies, UBC Institute for Brain*

Health, Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research, and the International Collaboration on Repair Discoveries. The school had over 100 applicants and was able to admit twelve from Argentina, Brazil, Indonesia, China, India, Morocco, Kenya and Cuba. The school covered various genetic, pathological and medical aspects of neurodegenerative processes and strategies to promote regeneration and repair. The selected students also attended the Canadian Association for Neuroscience annual meeting.

- *The IAC-USNC contributed funding for the EGE Vth Biennial International Neuroscience Graduate Summer School in Izmir, Turkey, from June 29-July 4, 2009. The school was organized by Gonul Peker and Reha Erzurumlu on “Neuro-glial Interactions from Womb to Tomb in Health and Disease.” The school accepted 51 students from 6 different countries, mostly from Turkey but attendees also came from Azerbaijan, Greece, Romania, Tunisia and Ukraine.*
 - *Committee members Greg Quirk and Janis Weeks led the International Fellows Orientation Session at Neuroscience 2008. The 2008 orientation session was the most successful to date. The organizers suggested that a larger room and more time would be better for future orientation sessions to ensure all fellows are able to get their questions sufficiently answered. Plans have been finalized for the 2009 orientation session in Chicago.*
 - *The Inaugural International Fellows Poster Session was held at Neuroscience 2008. Invitees included past and current Hugo Arechiga Fellows, MBL/CHSL Travel Fellows and IBRO/SfN Travel Award recipients. Of the 81 invited fellows, 44 accepted and presented a poster. The IAC-USNC was pleased with the turnout and the event was declared a success. The committee recommended that the event be more highly publicized in the future.*
 - *In November 2008, Council agreed to fund an additional IBRO Return Home Program award for 2008. SfN’s future contributions to the program will depend on the outcomes of a program evaluation by IBRO (with SfN input, as requested), and review and recommendations by the IAC.*
- **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. (IAC-USNC charter)**
 - *In 2009, the IAC-USNC again supported the IBRO Fellows Program, collaborating with IBRO’s Board of Schools and course instructors from MBL and CSHL 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. In 2009, three MBL fellowships were awarded to students from Brazil, India and Romania. SfN has not yet been notified of this year’s CSHL fellowship recipients.*

- *In addition to receiving funding for their participation in the MBL and CSHL courses, the 2009 IBRO fellows who submitted an abstract will receive a travel stipend of \$1,500 to attend either the 2009 or 2010 SfN Annual Meeting.*

Coordinate and Communicate

- Coordinate with the SfN Higher Education and Professional Development Cluster to identify opportunities for SfN to partner with FENS, IBRO and its regional committees and national neuroscience societies around the world in support of professional development activities for international members, including those in developing countries.
 - *See bullet above regarding SfN's collaboration with FENS and IBRO on the Programme of European Neuroscience Schools.*
- In concert with the Membership & Chapters Committee, encourage formation of and support for international chapters.
 - *IAC Chair Carol Barnes participated in discussions and meetings overseas with SfN members that led to the submission of international chapter petitions from Norway and Korea. A chapter in Trondheim, Norway, was established and two new chapter petitions from Korea will be reviewed by the MCC at their fall meeting.*
- Collaborate with the committees of SfN's Public Outreach Cluster to support national neuroscience societies in their domestic advocacy and public education initiatives through collaborative activities, funding, and provision of technical assistance (advocacy tools and resources), when requested.
- Coordinate with SfN's Public Education & Communication Committee, IBRO and national neuroscience societies to support programs related to International Brain Awareness Week and other international public education activities.
 - *The Public Education & Communication Committee Chair Nick Spitzer traveled to Nagoya, Japan, and participated in a joint SfN-Japan Neuroscience Society symposium on "Neuroscience and Society: Global Perspectives" that also included presentations by the president-elect of FENS and past president of the Australian Neuroscience Society. The symposium was co-organized by SfN and the IAC chair attended.*
- Coordinate North-American focused activities with the Canadian Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction; Canadian Association for Neuroscience; Mexican Physiological Society; Federation of Neuroscience Societies of Latin America and the Caribbean (FALAN) and other relevant organizations.
 - *The IAC-USNC collaborated with INMHA on the 2009 IBRO School held in Vancouver from May 24-June 3. The 3rd Canadian School in Neurodegeneration and Regeneration hosted 12 students from 7 different countries. For the first time since the school began, students from Asia and the Pacific were also allowed to enroll.*
- Up to three members of the IAC also serve as members of the US/Canada Regional Committee of IBRO (USCRC). They are responsible for keeping the IAC informed of the USCRC's activities and representing SfN's perspective and

interest to IBRO.

- *IAC recommended three committee members to serve as liaisons to the US-Canada Regional Committee to represent SfN interests to IBRO and vice versa. IBRO is working to finalize the USCRC roster.*
- Coordinate activities with the other committees in the Membership Development and Benefits Cluster and the Higher Education and Professional Development Cluster of SfN. The chair will serve as the committee's representative on the Clusters' steering committees.

Part 2 — Other Updates

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

The IAC-USNC held its spring meeting on April 13, 2009. The committee discussed its current programs as well as the plans underway at the time for reorganizing the IAC-USNC into separate SfN and IBRO committees. There was support from the committee for the new direction, recognizing that SfN's growing international membership requires a governance structure that aligns with the Society's revised international strategy aimed at meeting the needs of all its international members – both in developed and developing countries.

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.