

SUPPORTING the Neuroscience

Community



Since its founding, SfN has recognized the power and promise of neuroscience to spark passion among scientists of all ages and across the globe. As the neuroscience community continues to expand and diversify, SfN works to harness the commitment and passion of scientists through membership, chapters, and professional development programming that support the teaching, training, and life-long pursuit of neuroscience. In FY2009, SfN member services and programs have been adapting and evolving to reflect these trends and serve changing needs.

Membership: Growing and Changing

Members, nearly 39,000, are the source of SfN's strength as the neuroscience profession's largest professional society. In just 40 years, the Society has grown from 500 members to a record high of 38,761 in 82 countries at the end of 2008. SfN's continued membership growth in a challenging economic period is a sign of the compelling value members find through their engagement in the Society and its activities and programs.

Composition of the Society's membership in 2008 continued the trend of fastest growth among student and international members, with students now comprising 26 percent and non-U.S. members comprising 36 percent of total members. In response, SfN has adapted its strategies and programs to address the needs of these growing member segments. Younger members are a key impetus behind SfN's efforts to integrate Web-based tools

and technologies into communications and programming to enhance outreach, while international members are benefiting from more professional development opportunities and seeing greater representation within the Society's governance structure. Any regular member, regardless of the country where they live and work, is now eligible to serve as a Councilor, and Council has appointed more international members than ever to serve on SfN committees.

Responding to Member Needs

Another adaptation to better serve member needs is SfN's introduction of new membership and annual meeting registration rates for postdoctoral fellows in 2009. Just as in 2005 when SfN created the undergraduate student member category, the reduced dues and fees for postdoctoral fellows are



Above: Ramesh Vemuri from the National Institute on Aging introduced graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and junior neuroscientists to training opportunities through the National Institutes of Health at the "How to Fund Your NIH Training Proposal" workshop during Neuroscience 2008.

aimed at facilitating greater participation by younger generations of neuroscientists.

Responding to member needs also came in unexpected ways this year as members in the United States and Italy faced crises following natural disasters. When Hurricane Ike destroyed much of eastern Texas in October 2008, SfN established a special fund for travel awards to the annual meeting and supported recovery efforts at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston that benefited neuroscience graduate students and research fellows. In response to the earthquake that devastated the Abruzzo region of Italy in April 2009, SfN made a donation to assist affected students and young investigators in need.

The Society also is laying groundwork for continued innovation by implementing strategies that emerged from the 2007 member survey and resulting membership enhancement plan. Efforts include better communication with members to raise awareness of SfN benefits and to facilitate interactions with the Society. At Neuroscience 2008, "Did You Know" signs conveyed essential information about SfN to members and potential members alike, and member communications tools are evolving to encompass social networking sites, such as Facebook, as other ways of engaging the community.

In February, SfN launched a new data management system that forms the foundation for future member service enhancements and more efficient information processing. Members can easily renew their membership, update profiles, and express interest in special content areas. Soon, more personalized communication preferences will be available through the system.

Serving New Members

While continuing to better serve its individual members, SfN is expanding its operation to serve the neuroscience community in new ways in the years to come. Arising from a consolidation with the Association of Neuroscience Departments and Programs, SfN has created a new category of institutional program members to represent and address the needs of members engaged in educating and training new generations of neuroscientists.

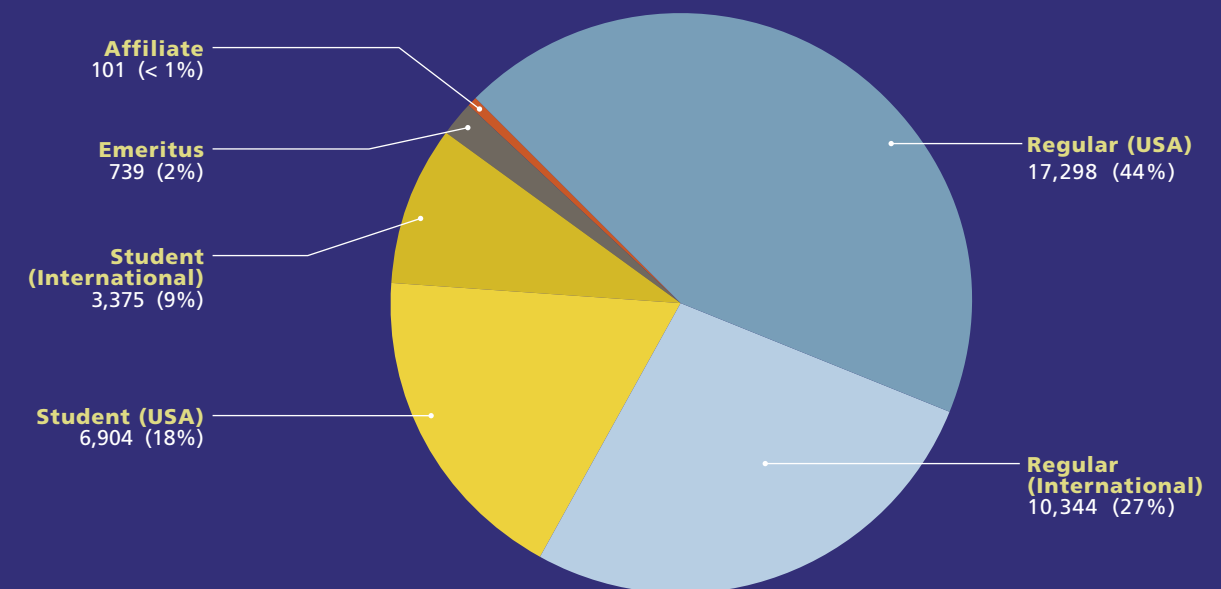
Over the coming fiscal year, SfN will focus on increasing value for its members and strive to meet evolving needs of both its individual and new institutional members, as well as the field of neuroscience.

LEARN MORE:
www.sfn.org/membership

FIGURE 3 Membership Growth



FIGURE 4 2008 SfN Membership by Category



Then: 1970

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP: 1,029
STUDENT MEMBERSHIP: 39
INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP: 24
CHAPTERS: 10

Now: 2009

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP: 38,761
STUDENT MEMBERSHIP: 10,279
INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP: 13,885
CHAPTERS: 138

Chapters: Expanding Engagement and Reach

As the organization grows, so does chapter expansion and engagement at the local level. This trend evolves from a prescient understanding of the SfN founders that local chapters have tremendous potential — helping members to network, share information, and educate the public about neuroscience in their communities.

Increasing International Presence

Chapters continue to grow at a fast pace, and today, SfN has 138 chapters in 45 of the United States and 18 countries worldwide. The first SfN chapters were established in 1970 and by the following year there were 25 chapters. The number doubled five years later and doubled again to 100 in 1993. Consistent with trends in international membership, chapters outside the United States saw the largest growth during FY2009, with 10 of 12 new chapters established in nine countries on five continents. Among them are the first chapters in Africa (Nigeria), Argentina, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, Spain, and Wales.



A local primary school student participates in the Ile-Ife, Nigeria chapter “Biology of the Brain” quiz and debate.

Supporting Success at the Local Level

To facilitate and support chapter efforts, SfN increased its chapter grant funding by 60 percent starting in FY2009. SfN made 39 direct grants to chapters, enabling them to engage in such activities as student-oriented regional conferences and launching new Brain Awareness Week programs. To help new chapters get off to a strong start, SfN began to provide start-up grants to all new chapters this year. SfN also funded a total of 27 grants that allowed chapters to organize visiting lectures by eminent neuroscientists at their campuses through the Grass Traveling Scientist Program, which continued in 2009 with funding from The Grass Foundation. The Society is also encouraging chapters to consider advocacy opportunities — whether in support of research investments or to support responsible animal research — for chapter grant proposals as well.

The second annual chapter workshop, held during Neuroscience 2008, drew nearly 100 participants. Organized and led by the Membership and Chapters Committee, the “Global SfN Chapter Invigoration” workshop featured chapter representatives who shared success stories, ideas for chapter activities such as science advocacy and education, and experiences starting international chapters. A Chapter Resource Kit continues to be updated and made available online.

Growing Engagement and Roles

Local and regional chapters are increasingly engaged in a wide range of activities as SfN’s grassroots arm. The 2009 Capitol Hill Day, for example, involved 19 chapters, a 46 percent increase over 2008. The vital role of chapters in fostering public outreach and education about neuroscience was again recognized through the Next Generation Awards. The 2008 awards were given to two chapters for

promoting engagement in educational outreach by young neuroscientists and to individual members for their exceptional public outreach efforts.

The continued vitality and growth of chapters worldwide and their potential to contribute to new programs and initiatives are crucial to the future of SfN. For example, roles for local chapters were

built into several grant proposals this year. SfN will continue to develop strategies that tap the energy and engagement of members at the local level to help achieve its mission.

LEARN MORE:
www.sfn.org/chapters

Chapters

NORTH AMERICA		118
Canada		11
Mexico		2
United States and territories		105
EUROPE		8
Denmark	Aarhus	1
Norway	Trondheim	1
Spain	Madrid	1
Switzerland	Swiss Alpine	1
Turkey	Izmir	1
Ukraine	Kiev	1
United Kingdom	London and Wales	2
ASIA & THE PACIFIC		8
Australia	Brisbane, Melbourne, and Sydney	3
China	Shanghai and Hong Kong	2
India	Bangalore	1
New Zealand	Otago	1
Singapore		1
LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN		2
Argentina	Buenos Aires	1
Chile	Santiago	1
AFRICA		2
Nigeria	Ile-Ife and Kaduna	2
TOTAL		138

Professional Development: Fostering the Community

SfN professional development programming continued to evolve to meet member needs during FY2009. An increasingly younger and more international membership, along with a growing range of career options and varying needs at different career stages for all members, encouraged SfN to explore new strategies and structures that position the organization for the future.

New Strategies, New Focus

The renewed focus began to crystallize at Council's summer 2008 strategic planning discussions

where leadership discussions focused on the need to broaden and enhance the Society's professional development offerings, including outside the annual meeting. The fiscal year ended with the adoption of several significant changes in strategies and governance structures that reinforce existing strengths while taking advantage of new opportunities.

Looking ahead, members will benefit from a revised professional development strategy that is more comprehensive and embraces a broader array of objectives to support professional development interests and needs. The newly created Professional Development Committee (PDC) allows SfN to more effectively develop and pursue programs and services for all its members. The PDC builds on a combination of the Committee on Diversity in Neuroscience (C-DIN) and Committee on Women



Neuroscience 2008 offered three Short Courses to more than 850 registrants.

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in Neuroscience (C-WIN), incorporating and broadening their missions, activities, and members.

In a major development in the Society's evolution as a steward for the neuroscience profession, SfN will directly serve the neuroscience teaching needs of its members through a consolidation with the Association of Neuroscience Departments and Programs (ANDP). ANDP members overwhelmingly voted in support of a decision to become a formal part of SfN. As part of the consolidation agreement, the SfN Council formally adopted into its strategic plan a new higher education and training strategy that includes the creation of a new Committee on Neuroscience Departments and Programs (CNDP), a new class of institutional program members, and incorporation of ANDP's mission, programs, and services.

Recognizing Achievement

Meanwhile, throughout the year, SfN continued to promote and recognize professional achievement of its members. Professional development offerings at Neuroscience 2008 were expanded and continued to grow. SfN recognized nearly 200 individuals in the form of fellowships, travel awards, and scientific achievement awards and prizes. The Swartz Prize for

Theoretical and Computational Neuroscience was presented for the first time at Neuroscience 2008. The newest addition to the Society's awards recognizing the work of neuroscientists is the Bernice Grafstein Award for Outstanding Accomplishments in Mentoring. Supported by and named after SfN's first female president, the award will be presented for the first time at Neuroscience 2009.

Commitment to Diversity

Underscoring its commitment to enhancing diversity in neuroscience — gender, racial and ethnic, and geographic — SfN expanded its support and advocacy for the role of women and minorities in neuroscience, and service to its international members. Working closely with leaders of SfN's diversity and women's committees, the Society submitted two federal grant proposals: one aimed at advancing women neuroscientists within the ranks of academia and the other at increasing diversity within the mental health workforce through a national mentoring network. SfN succeeded in receiving NSF funding for the three-year *Department*



Top: Young neuroscientists present snapshots of current research at the Diversity Fellows Poster Session.
Right: Women of all ages and professional roles talk about their personal journey in the pursuit of a scientific research career during the Mentoring Reception.



Chair Training to Increase Women in Neuroscience (“TWiN”) project, which is expected to benefit more than 30 academic institutions.

In its third year, the “Celebration of Women in Neuroscience” annual luncheon featured SfN past president Huda Akil as guest speaker. The event’s popularity continued with more than 200 attendees at the Neuroscience 2008 event, which featured a slideshow showcasing accomplishments of women neuroscience leaders.

The Society supported 49 diversity trainees during FY2009 under the Neuroscience Scholars Program (NSP), a three-year fellowship for minority neuroscience trainees. Funded by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS), the program has benefited several hundred trainees since its inception in 1981. SfN was recently awarded a grant renewal designed to expand and enhance the program over the next five years. Meanwhile, at Neuroscience 2008, events such as the Diversity Fellows Poster Session and NSP Mentor-Fellow Breakfast drew record participation, and the newly introduced NSP orientation session received positive reviews.

Embracing an International Perspective

SfN continues to expand its activities and collaborations to benefit its growing international membership, both in developing and developed countries. Efforts to adapt to changing needs are now reflected in a new international strategy and realigned International Affairs Committee (IAC) adopted by Council.

In FY2009, the Society supported several initiatives aimed at advancing neuroscience in developing countries. An innovative “Teaching Tools in Neuroscience Workshop,” organized by the IAC-US National Committee to IBRO, benefited 65 junior faculty members in Africa. SfN contributed for the second year to IBRO’s Return Home Program in which promising junior neuroscientists are given small grants to support their successful reintegration into their home institutions. In a new and highly successful initiative, SfN organized a poster session for international fellows at Neuroscience 2008; the session will be expanded in 2009.

Recognizing that European members constitute the largest group of members outside North America, SfN continued to strengthen its relation-

Then: 1981

PROGRAM NAME: *Traveling Fellows Program for Underrepresented Minorities*

OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE: *Minority Education Training and Professional Advancement Committee*

PARTICIPANTS: *5 Travel Fellows*

Now: 2009

PROGRAM NAME: *Neuroscience Scholars Program*

OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE: *Diversity in Neuroscience Subcommittee/Professional Development Committee*

PARTICIPANTS: *55 Scholars*

ship with the Federation of European Neuroscience Societies (FENS). SfN exhibited at the 2008 FENS Forum in Geneva and hosted a social for students and postdoctoral fellows from North America, including the nine winners of SfN’s travel awards to the FENS meeting. To guide future collaboration in the areas of professional development and advocacy, the SfN and FENS presidents established joint working groups. One result thus far is agreement on a multi-year collaboration that brings SfN together with the FENS/IBRO Programme of European Neuroscience Schools (PENS); the first joint course will be held in Naples, Italy, in March 2010. The Society also initiated outreach to the Japanese neuroscience community, which represents the single largest country of SfN members outside the United States. SfN met at Neuroscience 2008 with leaders of the Japan Neuroscience Society (JNS), resulting in plans for a joint symposium at the JNS 2009 annual meeting.

LEARN MORE:
www.sfn.org/professional_development