

# NEUROSCIENCE

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Q U A R T E R L Y

*"I am delighted to announce to SfN's members the plan for a new building. All of us on Council are confident that this is a decision that will enhance the SfN's financial and programmatic stability going forward, and help ensure the Society's ability to organize a great annual meeting and produce a high-quality journal for the foreseeable future."*

—SfN President Anne Young

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## SfN to Acquire New Headquarters

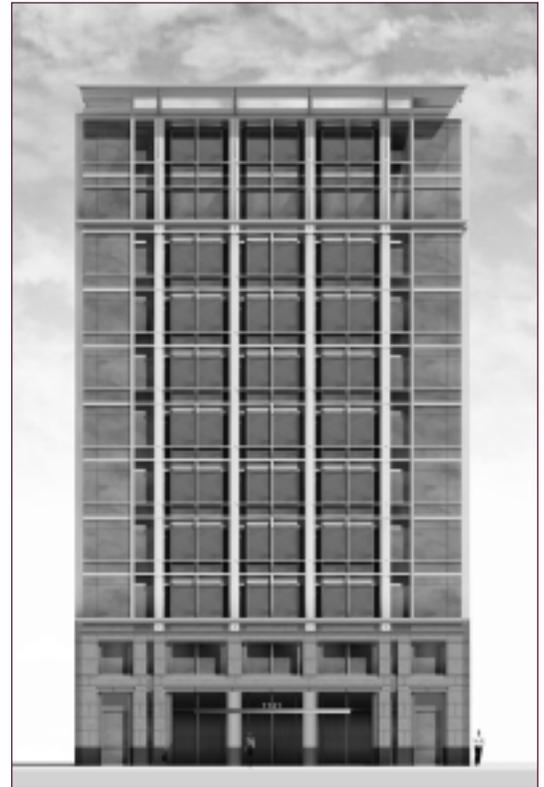
At its August meeting, the Society for Neuroscience (SfN) Council voted to acquire a new headquarters building in Washington, DC, located just south of Thomas Circle. The 11-story, 84,000-square-foot building will serve as the Society's new home when the current lease ends at the end of 2005. SfN will occupy three floors of the building and the remaining space will be rented to tenants to produce income to support the Society's programs.

The building will include lobby display space to showcase neuroscience achievements to the public and conference rooms to hold staff, Council, and SfN committee meetings, which will reduce ongoing expenses for hotel meeting space.

"I am delighted to announce to SfN's members the plan for a new building," said SfN President Anne Young. "All of us on Council are confident that this is a decision that will enhance the SfN's financial and programmatic stability going forward, and help ensure the Society's ability to organize a great annual meeting and produce a high-quality journal for the foreseeable future."

With the expiration of SfN's 10-year lease at Dupont Circle approaching, the SfN Council began discussing future real estate options for the Society in November 2002. After review of financial projections for various real estate purchase and lease scenarios, Council concluded that purchasing a building made the most sense in terms of long-term financial stability for SfN. In November 2003, Council authorized the beginning of a serious search to identify possible acquisitions in downtown Washington, DC, which remains one of the strongest and most stable commercial real estate markets in the nation. An ad hoc committee on real estate was formed, chaired by President-elect Carol Barnes, and consisting of Treasurer Richard Haganir, Treasurer-elect William Greenough, Past Treasurer Ray Dingleline, Investment Committee Chair and Past President David Cohen, and Councilor Nancy Wexler.

The real estate committee engaged Trammell Crow Company, one of the most experienced real estate advisory firms in the Washington area, to assist SfN in its search for a building. The committee's goal was to find a full-service firm that could assist with locating a building, financing the purchase, architectural and structural review, building assessment, construction management of renovations, office relocation, tenant leasing, and building management after acquisition.



SfN's new headquarters building will be at 1121 14th St. in downtown Washington, DC.

## 2004 Elections: Issues for Neuroscience



Anne Young,  
SfN President

The economy. War in Iraq. Terrorism. Education. Leadership. These are some of the themes we've all heard about from presidential candidates during the past few months. They no doubt will continue to discuss them through the fall election season.

Within a few weeks of receiving this issue of *Neuroscience Quarterly*, you will have the opportunity to cast your vote in one of the most important national elections in recent history. I strongly urge you to exercise your

important role as a citizen scientist and to make informed decisions about the future. The positions on the issues of both major parties can be found at [www.democrats.org](http://www.democrats.org) and [www.mnc.org](http://www.mnc.org).

And in the process of making up your mind, I strongly urge you to think about some other important issues that directly affect the scientific enterprise and what we do as neuroscientists to help improve the health of people everywhere. In recent years, the Society for Neuroscience (SfN) has become much more actively engaged on issues such as biomedical research funding, stem cell research, the teaching of evolution in schools, and mental health parity.

One of SfN's four strategic plan goals is to "engage in public affairs and advocacy activities in support of neuroscience research." The plan goes on to state: "SfN will help to educate policymakers about the value of scientific advances and the importance of sustained governmental funding and support for scientific research. Working collaboratively with relevant federal funding agencies, other scientific societies, health advocacy groups, and other associations and organizations, SfN will help to inform public policy by effectively communicating to policymakers new scientific knowledge and the implications of the latest neuroscience research.

"SfN's role in public affairs and advocacy will help to ensure that neuroscientists have increasing resources to contribute to new scientific discoveries and the application of new knowledge to improve individual and public health and provide other social and educational benefits for people everywhere."

Following this directive, SfN's leadership has joined several coalitions to ensure that everything possible is done to impress upon policymakers and key members of Congress the importance of biomedical research funded through the National Institutes of Health (NIH). For years, we have been members of the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research Funding and Research!America—both of which advocate for increased NIH funding—and the National Association for Biomedical Research, whose mission is to advocate for sound public policy that recognizes the vital role of humane animal use in biomedical research, higher education, and product safety testing.

Within the last two years, we have joined several other coalitions. This year we joined the Campaign for Medical Research (CMR), which was established in 1998 by philanthropist John Whitehead as a nonprofit organization dedicated to working with the executive and legislative branches to double the annual NIH budget by Fiscal Year 2003. Upon the successful completion of the doubling effort, CMR has worked to ensure that Congress does not shift its focus from medical research funding. Over the past six years, the Campaign has conducted more than 350 meetings with top administration officials, senators, and congressmen. This year, through continuing efforts of former House minority leader Bob Michel, CMR made possible several meetings between SfN representatives and key congressmen who sit on important budget and appropriations committees.

Because of this extraordinary access to key public officials, the group is regarded as a key player in advocating for continued progress in medical research funding. CMR has been strongly supported by leading scientific organizations such as the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology.

Another of our key partners is the Joint Steering Committee for Public Policy (JSC), a coalition of the American Society for Cell Biology, the Genetics Society of America, and SfN. It advocates for basic biomedical research funding and policy and represents some 57,000 scientists. The JSC's goal is to assess government policy related to the conduct of research and to ensure that funding is provided in scientifically effective ways. A top priority is to obtain optimal federal funding for basic biomedical and biological research, with emphasis on the NIH and the National Science Foundation.

JSC's congressional liaison committee operates an alert system urging scientists to relay their opinions on important issues to their representatives, a personal visit program that encourages scientists to visit their representatives, and a program urging scientists to submit opinion pieces to publications emphasizing the contributions of biomedical research to the local community. The JSC also develops position papers on issues such as indirect costs, economic contributions of biomedical research, and support to fill key federal science and health positions in a timely fashion.

JSC was the primary organizer of the Congressional Biomedical Research Caucus, a bipartisan group of representatives who provide an ongoing presence for biomedical research in Congress. The caucus advocates for biomedical research and hosts roughly 10 briefings annually by leading scientists who explain their research to members of Congress and their staff. Among the JSC's urgent action items are letter campaigns in opposition to legislation that would ban cloning or nuclear cell transfer technology and to support stem cell research and the NIH Stem Cell Guidelines.

This year, SfN joined the American Brain Coalition (ABC), an organization of some 30 patient advocacy groups, neurology

professionals, and neuroscience researchers. Its purpose is to leverage the combined resources of member organizations to improve the quality of life for those affected by brain and nervous system diseases and disorders. ABC's activities include developing and distributing information about brain and nervous system diseases; advocating with legislators, regulators, and other public and private policymakers; and supporting increased funding for basic and clinical biomedical research on the brain and nervous system.

ABC recently adopted a vision statement stating that it "seeks to advance the understanding of the functions of the brain in health and disease, and to reduce the burden of brain disorders." ABC's goals are to advocate for research funding and progress toward a cure; to help build a health-care system more responsive to people with both acute and chronic brain disorders; and to advance public understanding about the cause, impact, and consequences of neurological and psychiatric illness in our society.

And we're not only joining coalitions. SfN has markedly raised its visibility on Capitol Hill through many individual visits with key budget players organized by CMR and through our new legislative advisory firm Cavarocchi Ruscio Dennis Associates. We expect to build on this start and have an increasing presence on Capitol Hill and with individual members of Congress in the years to come. We hope to better mobilize our 102 American chapters to visit their congressional representatives in their home districts to advocate for increased federal biomedical research funding and other issues important to neuroscience.

Just for the record, I now live in the Massachusetts 8th Congressional district once represented by former Speaker of the House Thomas "Tip" O'Neill. One of his most famous lines was "All politics is local." We all would benefit by taking this advice, getting involved, and telling our representatives about the progress and promise of neuroscience.

SfN also fulfills its mission to inform the public and legislators through issuing policy statements on topics important to neuroscience. In addition to our policy on the use of animals in research ([www.sfn.org/policies](http://www.sfn.org/policies)), which dates from the 1980s, we have more recently taken positions on other issues of importance to neuroscience and science.

After the formation of our strategic plan, SfN issued a Statement on Stem Cells and Their Potential. In 2002, Council and the Governmental and Public Affairs Committee felt it was important that SfN issue a statement that expresses our support for "continued and careful use of nuclear transplantation techniques to produce new treatments for a vast array of devastating diseases." SfN issued an accompanying press release and posted the statement to the main SfN Web page. The statement may now be found at [www.sfn.org/stem-cells](http://www.sfn.org/stem-cells).

While stem cells are central to the field of neuroscience, there are other topics that many SfN members feel strongly about

that fall within the broader range of science policy. For example, the issue of whether evolution or intelligent design is being taught in our classrooms was a concern to many committees and SfN members around the country. In 2003, when a number of state boards of education were considering banning the teaching of evolution from textbooks and lesson plans, SfN leadership felt a statement of support for teaching evolution and downplaying intelligent design theory was necessary. The Governmental and Public Affairs Committee was tasked with formulating a statement that was circulated to other committees and to Council for approval. The statement was posted in February 2004, and can be located at [www.sfn.org/evolution](http://www.sfn.org/evolution).

In 2003, my predecessor Huda Akil sent a letter to every member of Congress expressing support for mental health parity. This legislation was co-sponsored by 242 House members and 66 Senators in the 107th Congress. The bill would have eliminated disparate health-care coverage for those who seek mental health treatment. It did not mandate coverage of mental health benefits, but applied only to plans that already provided mental health coverage. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated that the implementation of H.R.4066 would increase insurance premiums less than 1 percent. Several studies have indicated that increase would be offset by decreased absenteeism, increased productivity, and fewer physical illnesses as they relate to mental health. "The improved quality of life for individuals who are treated for their mental illnesses cannot be measured," Akil noted.

SfN also issued a legislative alert to members, asking them to write their senators, encouraging them to create legislation that would mandate equal insurance coverage for mental disorders and physical disorders, presuming that the providers offer both services. SfN leadership felt this legislation was important in eliminating stigma associated with mental disorders. The alert noted that "SfN strongly believes that there is no scientific or medical justification for placing separate and discriminatory limits on insurance coverage for individuals with mental illness. Research has demonstrated there is a physiological basis for many mental illnesses and a high success rate when mental illness is treated. These individuals should receive the same level of insurance coverage as individuals with traditional physical illness. Thus, the issue at hand is not only about mandates, but ending a form of discrimination that has no basis in science."

Spreading its legislative and policy concerns into the area of mental health was an important step for the Society. SfN continues to advocate for mental health parity at every opportunity. While this legislation did not pass in 2004, SfN plans to host a briefing on the topic in 2005 for key leaders in Congress.

I hope that some of what I've described above will serve as motivation for you to think about issues important to ensuring continued public funding for biomedical research, for neuroscience, and for improving the health of people worldwide. And that it will help you to make an informed decision when you cast your ballot on November 2. ■

## President-Elect addresses SfN's building purchase



Carol Barnes,  
SfN President-Elect

**NQ: Why did the Society become interested in purchasing a building for its headquarters?**

**Barnes:** Because the lease at Dupont Circle is expiring at the end of 2005, the SfN Council has been discussing future real estate options for the Society since November 2002. After careful discussion and review of various real estate lease vs. purchase scenarios, Council decided in November 2003 to authorize a formal search for a building to purchase. This decision

will enhance the SfN's financial and programmatic stability going forward and help ensure the Society's ability to organize a great annual meeting and produce a high-quality *Journal* for the foreseeable future. Having our own building will provide a place where we can hold events to educate the public and policymakers in Washington, DC, about the brain and neuroscience research. It would also provide space for the Society to expand its programs and staff in the future, if needed. SfN currently employs 67 staff members, and we have outgrown our current space.

**NQ: Why is now the right time to proceed with such a purchase?**

**Barnes:** The Washington, DC, real estate market continues to be strong and interest rates are still relatively low. Also, our outside investment committee experts pointed out that ownership of a building helps to diversify the investment portfolio. The property's value can be expected to increase over time. Because the Society will occupy only three of the 11 floors of the building, the rental income from the other floors will provide another revenue stream to support SfN's future programs.

**NQ: What unanticipated issues did the Real Estate Committee have to face in grappling with the idea of purchasing a new building?**

**Barnes:** When we started the process, we expected to purchase an existing building. As we got further along, it turned out that the most appealing opportunities were the handful of buildings just beginning construction. Because the building was already designed by the developer, we didn't have the opportunity to design the whole building from scratch, but, on the other hand, it could be completed in a reasonable time frame, and it would be new space with modern, efficient building systems. This makes it more attractive to the SfN staff and for tenants, as well as more cost-effective to operate. Also, because it is just being built, we have a much freer hand to design SfN's own space in the building.

*Continued on page 15...*

*...New Headquarters, Continued from page 1*

Trammell Crow identified approximately 60 possible building options in downtown Washington, DC, that fit or might fit within SfN's parameters. After numerous site visits by staff and review by the real estate committee, Council voted in May to make an offer to acquire 1121 14th Street, currently a parking lot to be developed by DRI Partners. This firm has developed over 70 buildings in and around the Washington area, many of which are association headquarters. The base building on 14th Street has been fully designed, the city has issued the permits, and the construction is about to commence. SfN will take ownership of the building upon completion, which is scheduled for December 2005, with move-in planned during the first quarter of 2006.

In June, SfN reached agreement with the seller consistent with the terms authorized by Council in May 2004 and executed a non-binding letter of intent stating the key economic and commercial terms. After appropriate legal, environmental, engineering, and architectural reviews, negotiations on a binding purchase and sale agreement were completed in August.

Financing of up to \$35 million to purchase the building and construct SfN's space will be provided by Bank of America. The financing package will include the use of low rate tax-exempt bonds issued by the District of Columbia and repaid by SfN, along with a standard commercial mortgage. This hybrid mechanism is commonly used by nonprofit organizations when purchasing a building in Washington, DC, to reduce their borrowing costs.

"As a result of prudent financial planning decisions made over many years by the SfN Council, the Society now has significant financial reserves and a projected continuing balance of revenues and expenses," said Cohen. "This strong financial picture qualified SfN for highly preferred lending rates from Bank of America."

To design SfN's office space in the new building, the real estate committee chose Envision Design, a 20-person firm in Washington, DC, that specializes in sustainable architecture, so-called "green" design, which incorporates principles and materials that seek to provide environmentally sensitive, healthy, and productive workplaces. They have designed attractive, award-winning headquarters space for the World Wildlife Fund and Greenpeace, among others. Examples of their work may be viewed at [www.envisionsite.com](http://www.envisionsite.com).

"Envision Design's work embodies the values of a sustainable environment that are important to SfN members," said Real Estate Committee Chair and President-elect Carol Barnes. "We are very excited to be working with them on a plan to create a vibrant, healthy, sustainable workplace for our staff, and a home for the Society's dynamic and growing programs and activities in the coming years." ■

# President's Council on Bioethics Member Michael Gazzaniga Discusses Ethics and Neuroscience



Michael Gazzaniga

*Michael Gazzaniga is the director of the Center for Cognitive Neuroscience at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. Gazzaniga has served on the President's Council on Bioethics since 2002.*

**NQ: The impartiality of the President's Council on Bioethics has been questioned because the President dismissed some members and replaced them with others whose views are more in line with those of the administration.**

**Is it possible to keep bioethics committees, such as the President's Council on Bioethics, unbiased and open to considering dissenting views to ensure that they uphold their responsibility to provide the public with effective, safe, and thoroughly thought-out discussions and decisions?**

**Gazzaniga:** There were many Council members who were not at all pleased with the surprise decision to dismiss two members. Both are outstanding people. Whatever went into that decision was wrongheaded and misguided and regrettable. It is not that there is not a rationale for the decision—it was simply a bad decision.

On the larger matter of whether the Council can serve as a forum for discussing important ethical issues of our time, I believe the answer is a resounding yes. The Council is currently seeking to add another member to its ranks from the neuroscience community, and I think that will bring greater balance to the group. The Council as a whole is loaded with talented people who represent various moral, scientific, political, and professional points of view. It is not primarily a council of basic scientists. This, to me, is what makes it interesting. Having someone sitting next to you who might be a professor of law from Harvard who totally disagrees with you on the ethical implication of a particular scientific fact is invigorating, not demoralizing. It makes you sharpen your own arguments and realize these decisions and discussions are ongoing in the real ideological and social context of our time. Of course, sometimes I am pleased with the outcome and sometimes I am not.

**NQ: The medical prolonging of life has long been a topic of ethical debate. From the Council's perspective, what does the future application of stem cell research and therapies, with their potential for lessening the effects of the diseases of aging, bring to this debate?**

**Gazzaniga:** There were certainly many views on this topic, and the question goes to the heart of why the Council's deliberations are highly charged and complicated. For those who have a moral or religious problem with tampering with a human embryo, the possible payoff of stem cell research is of little or no interest. For

those who do not confer to an embryo the same moral status one confers to an adult or baby or even a six-month-old fetus, there is great hope and promise that stem cell research will bring great relief to millions of suffering people. As a result, there is a deep split within the Council.

**NQ: Stem cell research is severely hampered in the United States as a result of lack of funding and by ethical concerns, despite the fact that this research and therapy could greatly help the public. Is the tide turning on stem cell research in the United States? On the basis of the Council's discussions thus far, where might the Council be headed on this topic?**

**Gazzaniga:** I think the tide is turning. Many members of the Council such as myself have been vocal advocates to move ahead. William Safire has championed the cause in *The New York Times*, as has Nancy Reagan. There is a raging debate on the issue within the conservative media (i.e., *National Review*) and elsewhere. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) seems to be moving on the issue. As far as the Council itself goes, I think the topic is off the table. We made three contributions. The first report on human cloning resulted in a vote that went largely underappreciated. In fact, although seven members favored a ban on all cloning, both reproductive and biomedical, seven other members supported moving forward with regulations. An additional three members had no ethical problem with biomedical cloning but urged a four-year moratorium. So, in fact, the majority of the Council supported biomedical cloning, differing on the timing of its implementation.

The second contribution came out as a report that summarized papers prepared by researchers in the field. There was a lot of throat clearing in the summary of those reports and a tremendous amount of prepublication editing of objectionable wording. Overall I did not see this report as terribly illuminating.

The third contribution, however, the report on regulations, resulted in many of us writing personal statements that accompanied the main report. The idea behind this document was to set out reasonable guidelines for policymakers to consider for the management of the in vitro fertilization industry. Another major objective was to propose a way to break the current legislative logjam on cloning by making a distinction between reproductive and biomedical cloning. The report recommended banning reproductive cloning and made no comment on biomedical cloning. This implicit approach was considered to be a way to get broad assent on the Council for the report. We will see. There are powerful forces at work on the Council. The indirect approach is not my style, and in my personal statement I called explicitly for federal funding of biomedical cloning and stem cell research.

**NQ: From discussions so far, where do you think the Council may be headed with regard to the bioethical concerns regarding research on aging, Alzheimer's disease, and dementia?**

...Gazzaniga Q&A, Continued from page 5

**Gazzaniga:** These issues came up at the last two meetings. As I noted earlier, one must keep in mind the Council is not a scientific body. It has representatives from several different philosophical, religious, ethical, legal, and scientific disciplines. Thus, while it is fascinating to hear an update on the neuroscience of Alzheimer's disease by such people as Dennis Selkoe, it should be realized the next consultant might well be dealing with the moral significance of withholding medications to a seriously demented person. All in all, and so far, the Council is a place to hear about issues of concern to both neuroscience and society at large.

**NQ: What are the most important topics in the area of neuroscience that the President's Council on Bioethics will consider in the near future?**

**Gazzaniga:** As far as I can tell, there is no specific agenda. Dozens of suggestions have been made to Chairman Leon Kass and his staff that range from considering the nature of conscious experience to issues of free will and determinism, to problems of dementia. The Council was formed mainly to deal with advances in biotechnology such as cloning and stem cell research. It has spent an enormous amount of time on that issue, for better or worse. It is now grappling with where to go and what to do. Neuroscience issues should be prevalent in this next phase.

**NQ: Does the President's Council plan to consider the ethics of memory boosting and using research to create techniques and medications to produce "better" memories and to eliminate "bad" memories?**

**Gazzaniga:** This issue has already been addressed in the publication *Beyond Therapy*, which is a report that grew out of several presentations to the Council by such neuroscientists as James McGaugh and cognitive neuroscientist Daniel Schachter. The Council explored the issue but made no recommendations.

**NQ: What are the Council's views on using psychopharmacological medication for enhancement purposes only?**

**Gazzaniga:** Again, the Council explored the issue and made no recommendations. Steve Hyman gave an extensive examination of the uses of Ritalin. There is, needless to say, an active discussion that surrounds its use and possible misuse, especially as it is now being used to enhance normal performance on such tests as the SAT.

**NQ: How can neuroscientists become better informed of the Council's discussions?**

**Gazzaniga:** The Council meetings are open, and within days of the meeting a full transcript of the meeting is on the Web site. More generally, I think the Society ought to begin to consider issues in a continuing and proactive way. One of the issues is when neuroscience has something to say and when it does not. Ethicists tend to like extreme examples of a problem, and frequently the discussions that emerge from such examples are bizarre. One job of the basic scientist is to state clearly the likelihood that such and such will actually occur. For example, are

we really on the brink of developing techniques to erase or block out human memory, that is, specific experiences from our past? That one ought to get neuroscientists going!

**NQ: How can the views of neuroscientists feed into the Council's discussions?**

**Gazzaniga:** Recommendations for topics and speakers are completely open and should be addressed to relevant members of the Council or directly to the Council. I think this would be very helpful.

**NQ: Will the Council consider the ethical issues related to the conduct of clinical trials? Such issues might include the need for disclosure of negative results or the progression of animals used in such trials, i.e., directly from mice to humans, without intermediate primate studies.**

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— Michael Gazzaniga

**Gazzaniga:** This sounds like an important question and issue, and I could easily imagine the Council discussing this. Of course, it is also a good topic for other oversight committees in Washington as well. In fact, I guess, as I think about it, this sort of question ought to first be discussed by a scientific body, such as the National Academy of Sciences.

**NQ: Coalition for the Advancement of Medical Research President Daniel Perry wrote in the June 2004 issue of PLoS Biology that, aside from public comment periods, patient organizations have little involvement in the President's Council on Bioethics, even though the Council handles important issues that have a great impact on the public. Does the Council have an adequate voice for patients?**

**Gazzaniga:** I think the Council has had a good mechanism for hearing from stakeholders and patient organizations. These are serious people, highly motivated to influence one and all mechanisms of the U.S. government in an effort to promote research agendas consonant with their particular needs. That is a good force to have represented. I do think there is another very positive force on the Council on this point. The physicians who actually practice medicine are very forceful in supporting the need for treatments and new medicines. Even when a practicing physician is thinking about a new biotechnology that affronts a personal belief, I find they try to rise above that belief and get on with the business of helping the disease in question. ■

# NIH Creates Scientist Oversight System In Response to Reports of Conflict of Interest

After much controversy surrounding conflict of interest issues at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the agency is instituting a new oversight system that will likely be in place within the next six months. Among the restrictions are that NIH scientists with direct and indirect authority over NIH grants (including institute, deputy, clinical, and scientific directors) will be banned from consulting for drug or biotechnology companies. Lower-ranking scientists will have to limit such activities to a maximum of 400 hours per year (about eight hours per week), with no consulting performed during federal work time.

Under the oversight plan, no NIH employee will be able to accept stock options as a payment for outside work. All paid outside activities will be subject to at least one new level of review by an ethics advisory committee. In addition, paid speaking engagements will not be allowed at an institution that accepts NIH money. NIH employees can be compensated for speaking at nonprofit organizations, editing textbooks, teaching, or practicing medicine, and they can accept awards that appear on a future list of “bona fide” awards.

NIH came under fire early this year, with conflict of interest allegations pointed at NIH campus-based researchers. In late 2003, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that scientists—some of whom at the time were ranking officials at NIH—collected consulting fees and stock options from biomedical companies. These arrangements were reportedly not disclosed to the public. NIH Director Elias Zerhouni ordered an immediate review of every outside consulting relationship entered into by an NIH employee within the last five years to confirm that all rules and regulations were followed and that the activities were in the best interest of the public.

“The NIH’s first priority is to uphold its high standards for patient safety, ethical practices, and scientific excellence. We are concerned about the recent allegations about how NIH manages conflicts of interest. NIH takes this issue very seriously,” said John Burklow, associate director for communications at NIH. “Even though we want our scientists to stay involved in the science and health community beyond NIH and share their knowledge broadly, we recognize there must be stringent standards and transparent policies for managing potential conflicts of interest. Full disclosure is essential, and we must continue to protect the patients’ safety and the public’s interest while advancing science to address important health problems. We also are committed to doing everything possible to avoid even the perception of a conflict.”

To that end, Zerhouni formed an NIH Blue Ribbon Panel on Conflict of Interest Policies at the end of January 2004. The panel was a working group of the Advisory Committee to the Director. Zerhouni appointed Bruce Alberts, president of the National Academy of Sciences, and Norman Augustine, chairman of the Executive Committee of Lockheed Martin, to serve as co-chairs of the panel. The panel’s mission was to review

existing NIH laws, regulations, policies, and procedures on conflict of interest, including consulting arrangements and outside awards; to review requirements and policies for the reporting of NIH staff’s financial interests, including which interests are subject to public disclosure, and what portion of NIH staff file public disclosures; and to provide recommendations to the NIH Advisory Committee to the Director for deliberation and final recommendations to the NIH Director.

While the blue ribbon panel was working on its report, Congress moved ahead independently. In December 2003, House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Billy Tauzin (R-Louisiana) and Oversight and Investigation Subcommittee Chair James Greenwood (R-Pennsylvania) had ordered NIH to turn over nine points of information or sets of documents relating to consulting agreements between NIH employees and drug companies and other outside activities. NIH submitted information in mid-January 2004.

A *Washington Fax* article from February 26, 2004, cites Greenwood’s letter to Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson, noting “to date, the committee has not yet received dollar amounts for any of the consulting arrangements in the listing provided by NIH.” At a January 22 hearing before the Senate subcommittee, Zerhouni testified that an internal agency review found no evidence proving patient harm or undue influence due to the financial arrangements of intramural scientists. Greenwood responded, “Without the information on the dollar amounts of the past consulting arrangements and without the records of the internal reviews, I am unable to evaluate such statements about these NIH outside arrangements.”

On May 6, 2004, the NIH panel submitted a final report to Zerhouni for consideration. The panel proposed that stricter guidelines be imposed on high-level NIH employees, stating that these employees should be subject to greater limitations on the amount and type of compensation they receive from pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies and that they should be required to disclose more details about those arrangements. The panel was clear about tightening oversight and restrictions on outside consulting arrangements, including tracking all Form 520s (requests for outside activities) on an annual basis and increasing the number of employees required to file annually a confidential disclosure form (Form 450). The panel also noted that NIH should expand the Form 450 filing to include senior NIH employees.

Blue Ribbon Panel members expressed the motivation behind their recommendations: “We tried to be more thoughtful with regard to what an intramural bench scientist might do while still being reasonably judicious in terms of restrictions that were imposed so as to avoid any potential conflicts of interest,” said panel member Phillip Pizzo, dean of Stanford University’s School of Medicine, in the June 9, 2004, *Washington Fax*. “We

# Lawmakers Focus on Global Mental Health

A Capitol Hill briefing in June focused on the urgency of addressing the global burden of mental health disorders and substance abuse, as well as their social consequences. Speakers at the briefing, sponsored by the National Institute of Health's Fogarty International Center and the Rhode Island congressional delegation, included Sharon Hrynkow, acting director of the Fogarty International Center; Richard Nakamura, deputy director of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH); Eric Caine, chair of psychiatry at the University of Rochester Medical Center; Nora Volkow, director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA); and all four members of the Rhode Island congressional delegation: Rep. Jim Langevin (D), Sen. Jack Reed (R), Sen. Lincoln Chafee (R), and Rep. Patrick Kennedy (D).

Rep. Langevin spoke about the late Congressman Fogarty's key role among a group of congressional advocates responsible for the growth and development of the NIH, in particular his advocacy of global health research. The Fogarty Center bears his name.

"The Fogarty Center along with NIMH and NIDA are addressing the growing burden of mental health disorders, yet much remains to be done," Rep. Langevin said. "Research and training in global health issues in the poorest countries of the world can contribute to advances that benefit the whole world."

The Fogarty International Center fosters research partnerships between U.S. scientists and foreign counterparts through international training grants, research grants, and fellowships, Hrynkow said. Although the Fogarty has not been traditionally thought of as having a neuroscience component, Hrynkow is a neuroscientist, and the institute funds more than 50 neuroscientists around the world.

"We often think of mental health as a domestic issue, in terms of the social problems it raises in our own society," said Hrynkow. "But, in fact, mental health problems occur globally, and with greater movement across borders—whether by choice or by displacement—mental health disorders may not be rooted in any one particular region but may affect others as well."

Sen. Reed drew a connection between the despair of radical Muslims in the Middle East and national security implications for our own country: "Mental health is not just a national issue—it is a national security issue," he said. "If we do not do something to address the sense of hopelessness, sense of despair

in some parts of the world, our national security will be compromised. Military solutions alone are not enough."

Nakamura noted that the burden of mental illness can be measured and is enormous compared with other diseases. To measure both premature death and disability, the World Bank and the World Health Organization developed a single measure called the Disability Adjusted Life Year (DALY). One DALY represents one lost year of healthy life.

Measures such as the DALYs point to success in ameliorating some of the scourges most often considered global health problems, but also to the lack of attention given to global mental health problems. Unipolar depressive disorders, for example, are now more likely to result in lost years of life than diarrheal diseases, malaria, or heart disease for all age groups worldwide. Mental illness ranked behind only cardiovascular diseases as a contributor to disease burden in the United States, Canada, and western Europe, as measured in DALYs.

Among 14- to 55-year-olds, unipolar depressive disorders ranked behind only HIV/AIDS as creating the greatest disease burden worldwide in 2000, the latest year for which information is available. In developed countries, the disease burden created by unipolar depressive disorders was even higher for this age group, as measured by DALYs.

The University of Rochester's Caine noted that, worldwide, deaths from suicide are greater than those from war and homicide combined. With the aid of a grant from Fogarty, Caine is helping to develop programs to train mental health professionals in Hong Kong and mainland China in suicide prevention.

"Suicide is the most adverse outcome of a variety of adverse outcomes," said Caine. "By training professionals in suicide prevention, we are also training them in dealing with a variety of other mental health disorders."

The program currently targets older men, who are often unlikely to seek the help of mental health professionals, and people who have moved from China to Hong Kong. The program's interventions are modeled on those used by the U.S. Air Force in dealing with similar populations, such as military families who move often and have inadequate support networks.



Rep. Jim Langevin (D)



Sen. Jack Reed (R)



Sen. Lincoln Chafee (R)



Rep. Patrick Kennedy (D)

# Acting Director of NIH Fogarty International Center Addresses Global Neuroscience Issues



Sharon Hrynkow

Sharon Hrynkow is acting director of the Fogarty International Center (FIC).

**NQ: The Fogarty International Center has been described as the diplomatic arm of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). What do you believe are the major global health challenges of this century? How can Fogarty help facilitate collaboration between the NIH institutes and global organizations to address these challenges?**

**Hrynkow:** Fogarty does two things for the NIH. On the diplomatic side, we are the State Department, if you will, for the NIH. We know what is developing across the NIH in terms of international activities, and we try to convey that through the Department of Health and Human Services and through the State Department to intergovernmental bodies, international organizations like the World Health Organization, and to the NIH counterparts abroad. We serve a coordination function, and one with real value added. We also support a set of research and training programs that allow us and our NIH partner agencies to address global health issues. Through our diplomatic efforts and through our capacity building and research efforts, we are able to move the global health agenda forward.

In terms of the major global health challenges, HIV/AIDS is at the top of the list, given the growing numbers of HIV-infected individuals around the world, including in the United States. Emerging infectious disease is also a great concern for us, such as the new viruses and bacteria that we see emerging every year, including West Nile virus, SARS, and the ever-changing influenza viruses.

Mental illness is another area of increasing concern. We held an outreach event on Capitol Hill recently to discuss the growing challenges facing us and other nations from mental illness (see story, p. 8). The leadership of both the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), joined in this effort to raise awareness of the global burdens of addiction and other critical challenges to individuals, families, and societies. Drug use, including alcohol abuse and alcoholism, and depression all pose immediate and growing threats. If we can do a better job now in terms of research and training of mental health professionals and scientists around the world, we will be able to stem some of the impact of the mental health burden that we know is growing.

**NQ: What role does the Fogarty International Center play in neuroscience research?**

**Hrynkow:** A few years ago, we recognized that mental illness and disorders in cognitive development would play an increasing role in the global burden of disease, and that there were opportunities to advance key areas of science. We developed several

programs that allow us to address some neuroscience challenges. We did this in consultation with leading neuroscientists around the world, including Torsten Wiesel, and, of course, with our sister NIH agencies, including the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, NIDA, NIMH, and the National Institute on Child Health and Human Development. We now support a research exploratory grant program, seed grants to develop preliminary data on "Brain Disorders in the Developing World." This program allows U.S. scientists to work in partnership with scientists around the world on critical neuroscience challenges, including epilepsy, autism, central nervous system impacts of HIV and AIDS, malaria-related seizures, and factors in disorders of cognition in development and aging.

We also support another program that looks at mental health services research. What we know in our country is that delivery of mental health services may not always be up to par. If you look in the developing world, you see a similar situation, only with weakened infrastructures. We began to link our research programs and others from across the NIH, including those of NIMH in particular, to consider how we could build programs that would reduce the burden of mental illness through research training programs. Today, we support a collaborative, multidisciplinary training program to build clinical, operational, and health services research expertise in the mental health and drug abuse areas. Some of our investigators are working in China and India, just as examples, to help prepare a cadre of professionals who can develop effective programs in suicide prevention or managing alcoholism.

*"In many countries, mental illness is underdiagnosed, underrecognized, and undertreated. Recognizing the burden of morbidity and mortality related to mental illness is the number one challenge, and part of what we strive for is raising awareness of mental illness as a global burden."*

— Sharon Hrynkow

**NQ: What new initiatives are planned for neuroscience research?**

**Hrynkow:** We expect that our "Brain Disorders in the Developing World" program will evolve from a seed grant program to a full-fledged RO1 program in 2006. This program, plus the companion program related to mental health services research and training, will allow us to network brain researchers and mental health professionals around the world in new and exciting ways, which include, but are not limited to, addressing issues related to the co-occurrence of psychiatric disorders and

...Hrynkow Q&A, Continued from page 9

alcohol use. According to the 2004 World Health Organization Report, alcohol is one of the largest menaces to health in the world's developing countries, followed by high blood pressure and tobacco. Another area of importance is the neuroscience of alcohol and psychoactive substance use and dependence.

Two additional programs, now ongoing, will continue to be key for us as we support the neurosciences. One is the "Stigma and Global Health" Program, launched in 2003 to look at stigma, its causes and consequences, and to develop new knowledge so that we can combat it. We understand very keenly that stigma prevents people from seeking care and signing up for clinical trials, and we want to know how and why certain attitudes contribute to stigma in societies. A number of the research awards that we made, again, in partnership with more than a dozen NIH institutes, focused on how stigma relates to drug abuse, epilepsy, or mental illnesses such as psychosis. We are very excited about what we are going to uncover from the stigma program as it relates to the neurosciences.

Second, our program on tobacco research and training, developed and supported with NIDA and the National Cancer Institute (NCI), is today the largest of its kind. Given the impact that tobacco will have on global health, particularly in countries with weak health-care infrastructures, this program will continue to be important.

**NQ: What do you believe are the major challenges for neuroscience internationally?**

**Hrynkow:** I think the biggest challenge is recognizing that there is a problem in mental health. In many countries, mental illness is underdiagnosed, underrecognized, and undertreated. Recognizing the burden of morbidity and mortality related to mental illness is the number one challenge, and part of what we strive for is raising awareness of mental illness as a global burden.

There is a shortage, too, of qualified researchers around the world to tackle some of these issues, so our second challenge is to build the next generation of researchers, both basic scientists and clinical researchers, who are able to participate in neuroscience research. This is as true in the developed world as it is in the developing world.

**NQ: How can research on global health issues be useful in our own country? What can we gain that we can take back and implement in our own society?**

**Hrynkow:** The United States is a country of many populations and communities. We are genetically very diverse. We are sociologically very diverse. As we work in partnership with colleagues internationally to understand genetics or to develop socially and culturally appropriate behavioral interventions that work, we are moving science forward and building relationships. We know too that low-tech interventions developed abroad, like oral rehydration therapy, can have an incredible impact not only in the poor country in which it was developed (to treat diarrhea) but also around the world. We are looking for low-tech advances that would improve health abroad and that could be applicable back home. Let me make one final remark on what we gain from working abroad, and this goes beyond the science. As Americans working with partners abroad, we gain understand-

ing of other cultures and other people, and we share our own perspectives with them. Mutual understanding and relationships are a critical component of our work internationally.

**NQ: How does the war on terrorism affect the global health initiatives of Fogarty?**

**Hrynkow:** The backdrop upon which all NIH international programs work, and the FIC programs in particular, has become increasingly complex over the past few years. Visa and related issues have complicated efforts for scientists to travel, to take new positions, or to attend scientific meetings. These are the new realities. At the same time, our resolve as an agency has only been strengthened: International cooperation is perhaps more important than ever. We want to be sure that scientists from every nation have the opportunity to participate in the scientific enterprise, to the greatest extent possible. This includes those in Iraq and other Middle Eastern nations. To the extent that we can build bridges of understanding and trust, while working cooperatively to move a shared scientific agenda forward, we will be doing well.

*"We are looking for low-tech advances that would improve health abroad and that could be applicable back home . . . As Americans working with partners abroad, we gain understanding of other cultures and other people, and we share our own perspectives with them. Mutual understanding and relationships are a critical component of our work internationally."*

— Sharon Hrynkow

**NQ: How can the Fogarty work with organizations like the Society for Neuroscience? Can you address the opportunities and challenges for neuroscience?**

**Hrynkow:** The Society for Neuroscience is a huge network of experts, not only in the United States, but around the world. If we can map our network of trainees and grantees over the Society's networks, then I believe we can gain leverage and benefit from both. One concrete way that we are hoping to move forward involves having the Fogarty neuroscience trainees attend the annual meeting of the Society for Neuroscience. Getting these individuals more connected to professional societies like SfN is incredibly powerful and will provide scientists in developing countries with a fabulous range of opportunities and contacts beyond what they normally would get through the Fogarty infrastructure. To look at this from the other side, SfN can also be valuable to us as we work to identify needs and opportunities abroad in the neurosciences. Through increased communication and exchanges, we will be able to move the global neuroscience agenda forward in exciting new ways, to the ultimate benefit of the health of people everywhere. ■

did that by certainly making it clear that there were limits in terms of the amounts of outside activities that could be engaged in both in terms of the amount of dollars that could be received and the amount of time spent.”

Zerhouni recognized that tight restrictions could have an adverse impact. “It would be a mistake to ban all compensated activities with outside organizations. Such an action would be bad for science, unfair to employees, and ultimately hinder our efforts to improve the nation’s health,” he said in a hearing before Greenwood’s subcommittee in early June. Other panel members said that stricter limitations might discourage younger scientists from participating in such collaborations, and lead them to pursue careers in the private sector, where they could make higher salaries.

After the Blue Ribbon Panel released its report, the House Oversight Subcommittee called Zerhouni and the Blue Ribbon Panel co-chairs to a hearing. They were questioned for more than four hours. Zerhouni said NIH had already implemented a number of changes to prohibit outside consulting by high-ranking NIH scientists key to grant-making decisions and had increased the number of employees who have to file financial disclosure forms. But these steps and the report itself did not satisfy the subcommittee. In the May 13, 2004, *Washington Post*, Rep. Greenwood asked, “If this kind of reform was good enough for Congress, why isn’t it good enough for the National Institutes of Health?”

In mid-June, the Oversight Subcommittee found evidence that more than 100 NIH scientists engaged in financial arrangements with pharmaceutical companies, and that such arrangements did not receive the proper review and approval because many within NIH were unaware of them. This surprise disclo-

sure about many NIH scientists prompted Zerhouni to take action and implement a stricter oversight system proposal, including the absolute ban on consulting for higher level NIH scientists and the maximum consulting hours for lower ranking NIH scientists of 400 hours per year.

Responding to the concern that the new oversight system may not satisfy the House Oversight Committee and that exploring individual, extramural grants was next on Congress’ list, the Society for Neuroscience held a meeting with Rep. Greenwood and his top legislative adviser on the subcommittee on July 7, 2004. Mark Rasenick, vice chair of the SfN Governmental and Public Affairs Committee, met with Rep. Greenwood.

Rasenick agreed with Rep. Greenwood that all outside activities (of both NIH and extramurally funded scientists) should be reported and evaluated for possible conflicts of interest. He stated, however, that some government-corporate collaborations had the potential to be of significant benefit to science and, ultimately, to public health. He described several examples of university-corporate collaborations that provide a synergy in data generation not possible with either university or corporate research alone.

Rep. Greenwood stated that it was not the subcommittee’s intention to explore the arrangements for extramural scientists receiving NIH funding, and that the focus would be on scientists on the NIH campus. He stressed that they were aware of the need for government science jobs to remain attractive to younger researchers and said that he did not want to deter anyone from pursuing a career at NIH.

“Yet it is essential that scientists at NIH adhere to a reasonable set of guidelines for conflict of interest,” Greenwood said. ■

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# Neuroscience 2004 Promises Exciting Science and Improved Services; Minisymposia Are Added

Neuroscience 2004 is almost here and promises to be more exciting than ever. A record 15,984 abstracts were submitted, and meeting attendance may exceed last year's 28,778 attendees, which was also a record high.

Although it is too late to take advantage of advance registration, on-site online registration, at a reduced fee, is available from September 22 through the annual meeting and is strongly recommended. Current paid SfN members receive an additional discount on registration fees. On-site registration is available starting Friday, October 22. For more details, please go to [www.sfn.org/registration](http://www.sfn.org/registration).

This year's meeting begins on Saturday, October 23, and ends on Wednesday, October 27. On Saturday, scientific and poster sessions begin at 1 p.m. and end at 5 p.m. each day. On Sunday through Wednesday, scientific sessions begin at 8 a.m. and run until 5 p.m. each day. Exhibits are open from 9:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. Sunday through Wednesday.

## ACTIVITIES OF INTEREST

The lectures, symposia, and minisymposia offered at this year's meeting will provide an array of interesting topics in neuroscience, with a broad appeal. The 28 symposia will cover topics from each of the nine themes of development, synaptic transmission and excitability, sensory systems, motor systems, homeostatic and neuroendocrine systems, cognition and behavior, neurological and psychiatric conditions, techniques in neuroscience, and history and teaching of neuroscience. This year marks the debut of minisymposia as a category of presentation. Twenty-seven minisymposia are scheduled, also covering the entire range of themes (see story on page 13).

Physician attendees may obtain Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits for a number of these activities. Please note that attendees wishing to acquire CME credits at the annual meeting must register for CME before or during the annual meeting, not after the fact.

A variety of workshops and activities are also being offered this year. There are workshops geared toward introducing neuroscience to teachers and high school students, as well as the lay public. Other workshops are geared toward the professional development of meeting attendees. The FASEB Career Resources Center will once again be available free of charge to meeting registrants.

At least 27 socials and more than 80 satellites will also be held at Neuroscience 2004.

## USER-FRIENDLY FEATURES

As always, the Society strives to make the annual meeting easier for attendees to navigate and enjoy. For those choosing to register on-site at the annual meeting, even more self-registration terminals will be available this year.

In its quest to strengthen benefits available to members and annual meeting registrants, the Society has arranged for free wireless Internet service in parts of the convention center to be used on personal computers and PDAs. More information regarding this service is posted on the SfN Web site ([www.sfn.org/wireless](http://www.sfn.org/wireless)).

Also new this year on the SfN Web site is a "virtual exhibit" to help attendees plan their visit to the exhibits prior to traveling to the meeting. Please visit [www.sfn.org](http://www.sfn.org) for more information. This feature will be available onsite to those attendees using a personal computer, laptop, or PDA.

The official SfN exhibit booth will be centrally located on the exhibit floor (Booth #2114). Members can stop by the booth to address membership inquiries, learn more about *The Journal of Neuroscience*, get information on chapter activities, meet with mentors or mentees, and buy Neuroscience 2004 T-shirts.

*This year marks the debut of minisymposia as a category of presentation. Twenty-seven minisymposia are scheduled, also covering the entire range of themes.*

Shuttle service between the convention center and most of the official hotels will be offered, with frequent departures facilitating easy transportation between destinations.

To accommodate the needs and time constraints of the meeting attendees, this year there will be three Message Center stations located throughout the lobbies of the Convention Center. To simplify networking with colleagues, this year the Directory of Registrants has been integrated with the Message Center. As requested by many attendees, both the Message Center and the Directory of Registrants will have extended morning and evening hours at Neuroscience 2004. The Message Center and the Directory will also be available via the Internet, 24 hours a day during the meeting. For more information, please see [www.sfn.org/resources](http://www.sfn.org/resources).

The *Program* will once again consist of a general book, five daily books, and an author index, making it a more manageable tool for navigating around the annual meeting. Morning and afternoon tabs in the *Program* will help make planning easier. If you have any questions before the meeting, see [www.sfn.org/am2004](http://www.sfn.org/am2004) for more information.

See you in San Diego! ■

# New Neuroscience Award Established

An exciting addition to the annual meeting program—the Peter Gruber Lecture—will debut at Neuroscience 2004. Seymour Benzer of the California Institute of Technology will speak on “Adventures in Neurogenetics.” Benzer will focus on the evolution of *Drosophila* and the relevance of its evolutionary changes to humans.

Benzer will also be awarded the first Peter Gruber Foundation Prize in Neuroscience. The award recognizes distinguished work in the field of the brain, nervous system, and spinal cord. Benzer will receive a \$200,000 unrestricted cash prize and a gold medal.

The Peter Gruber Foundation, funded entirely by philanthropist Peter Gruber, was originally involved in supporting local charities, primarily in the U.S. Virgin Islands. In 2000, the foundation expanded its base and began awarding prizes to various disciplines internationally. The awards currently focus on cosmology, genetics, justice, women’s rights, and now neuroscience.

Citing neuroscience’s “potential to dominate the century,” the Peter Gruber Foundation created the award to “shine light on a field that has much to contribute,” according to the foundation’s Web site.

“The Gruber Foundation has a tradition of establishing awards honoring the world’s most distinguished individuals in human rights and the sciences,” said Solomon Snyder, chair of the Peter Gruber Foundation Neuroscience Advisory Board and a past president of SfN. “This track record, along with the magnitude of the Gruber awards, should render the new Gruber Neuroscience Prize the Nobel of neuroscience.”

Presentation of the award and delivery of the lecture at the SfN annual meeting seemed a logical pairing to the Gruber Foundation. “The annual meeting is when some 30,000 neuroscientists from all over the world come together to learn about new developments in the field and to honor and celebrate the leaders in the community,” said Torsten Wiesel, a Nobel laureate and SfN past president, who also sits on the Gruber neuroscience advisory board.

Benzer, a graduate of Brooklyn College and Purdue University, has been a professor at the California Institute of Technology since 1967. He began his career studying gene structure and code, and eventually switched to the burgeoning field of neurogenetics, where research revolutionized the field of behavioral genetics. He is currently an active emeritus professor at the California Institute of Technology.

“Seymour Benzer is a giant in the field. He brought genetics to the study of behavior and of neural function. He instilled in us one of the most fundamental ideas that we now take for granted: that genes control behavior,” said SfN Past President and Peter Gruber Foundation Neuroscience Advisory Board member Huda Akil. “His selection is not only an apt recognition of his groundbreaking contributions, but it also sets the highest standards for this award.”

Look for information on applications and deadlines for the 2005 Peter Gruber Neuroscience Award on the SfN Web site, in *Neuroscience Quarterly*, and in *Neuroscience Nexus* during the coming year. Information is also available on the Peter Gruber Foundation Web site at [www.petergruberfoundation.org](http://www.petergruberfoundation.org).

The Peter Gruber Lecture and award presentation will take place Saturday, October 23, from 4:15 to 5:15 p.m., in Ballroom 20 of the San Diego Convention Center. ■

## Minisymposia: A Strong Addition to Neuroscience 2004

This year’s annual meeting marks the debut of an exciting new presentation category. Minisymposia are similar in format and purpose to regular symposia, but with shorter presentations by more speakers, to encourage greater participation for younger investigators and to expand the diversity of annual meeting presenters.

“This format will give younger scientists, including women and members of underrepresented minorities, an opportunity to present their work in focused sessions, enhancing their exposure and impact at the annual meeting,” said Leslie Tolbert, chair of the SfN Program Committee. Minisymposia will feature six speakers, two more speakers than for symposia. Both symposia and minisymposia last for two and a half hours.

The new format will also benefit attendees. “The minisymposia will give meeting participants an opportunity to hear series of presentations that are more in-depth than the 10-minute talks and more tightly focused on specific scientific issues,” Tolbert said.

This year, an impressive 168 proposals were received, of which 27 were selected, covering a variety of themes and topics, from Alzheimer’s disease to manipulating single neurons in vivo.

“We are very happy with the number and quality of minisymposia proposals we received,” said Richard Haganir, SfN treasurer and chair of the SfN Annual Meeting Working Group. “This is only the first year for minisymposia, and already the number of applications exceeded those for regular symposia. The minisymposia will be an outstanding new forum for cutting edge research, which will further energize the annual meeting.”

The proposal submission deadline for minisymposia is soon after the annual meeting. The Program Committee encourages young investigators to start thinking about topics for Neuroscience 2005. More information on the minisymposia proposal submission process will be available at [www.sfn.org/minisympro](http://www.sfn.org/minisympro).

## FENS Forum in Lisbon a Success

The Federation of European Neuroscience Societies (FENS) held a successful fourth forum in Lisbon, Portugal, July 10–14, 2004. The forum is held every two years, and it has grown in size and stature since its inception in 1998 in Germany. The meeting now has the distinction of being the largest European meeting of neuroscientists, and this year it attracted 4,450 attendees, with 3,300 poster displays and 94 exhibitors.

“The Forum provides an excellent opportunity for European neuroscientists to gather together, creating an optimal floor for exchanges of ideas on the future of neuroscience in Europe,” said FENS Secretary General Monica Di Luca.

The Society for Neuroscience exhibited materials for the first time at the Lisbon meeting. A new FENS project highlighted during the forum was the Network of European Neuroscience Schools, an initiative designed to encourage students to participate in graduate work at European universities. An extensive network of European graduate schools in the neurosciences has been created to facilitate the program.

The Society voiced its support for this initiative at the FENS officers' meeting with SfN President-Elect Carol Barnes, which focused on forging partnerships between FENS and SfN, and devoted a significant portion of the meeting to discussing ways to encourage young North American scientists interested in doing postdoctoral fellowships in Europe.

SfN featured a booth displaying information about all Society-supported programs. Materials offered included: Brain Facts, a 52-page primer on the brain and nervous system; an education CD-ROM, a disk containing educational materials and useful resources; Brain Briefings, a two-page newsletter explaining how basic neuroscience discoveries lead to clinical applications; and Brain Research Success Stories, publications focusing on recent successes and the future potential of neuroscience. Also avail-

able were the SfN Annual Report and Brain Awareness Week (BAW) Report. All materials presented garnered a large amount of interest from forum attendees.

The Society also supported 15 North American students with travel stipends of \$1,500 each. The travel awards were distributed on a competitive basis to honor outstanding graduate students nominated by their local chapter. Regional chapters were eligible to submit a single nomination to the SfN Chapters Committee. The nominee must have been a first author on an abstract to be presented at the FENS Forum. The Chapters Committee made the final selection for awards based on the scientific merit of abstracts and letters of recommendation from the student's adviser and nominating committees of the local chapters. Award recipients visited the Society booth to accept their awards.

Featured at the Forum this year were special and plenary lectures, symposia, technical workshops, and poster presentations. Topics covered ranged from brain development and learning to stem cell therapy and spinal cord repair.

The Public Awareness of Brain Research Symposium was well-attended, with approximately 200 people present. Sponsored jointly by FENS, the Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives, and the International Brain Research Organization (IBRO), the symposium addressed a wide range of education topics, including BAW activities, the importance of communicating neuroscience to society at large, and the Brain Campaign, a joint effort by FENS, the European Dana Alliance for the Brain, and IBRO to develop a Web site with materials for scientists to use with the public and in schools.

The next FENS Forum will be held in Vienna, Austria, July 8–12, 2006, and the call for symposia will take place in October 2004. Visit the FENS Web site at <http://fens.mdc-berlin.de>. ■

### SfN Election Results

Stephen F. Heinemann has been elected incoming President-Elect of the Society for Neuroscience. He is a professor of molecular neurobiology at the Salk Institute in San Diego, Calif. He served as an SfN Councilor from 1992 to 1996 and on the Governmental and Public Affairs Committee from 1994 to 1997.

“I am looking forward to the challenges for the Society and members for the next few years,” Heinemann said. “We will face the difficult task of preserving investigator initiated funding in the face of budget constraints, the funding of *The Journal of Neuroscience* in the face of an open access environment and the exciting prospect of a new Washington facility for the Society.”

In addition to a new president-elect, several other posts were filled in the election. Michael E. Goldberg, the David Mahoney Professor of Brain and Behavior at Columbia University, has been elected as the incoming Treasurer-Elect. Irwin B. Levitan,

the David J. Mahoney Professor and Chair of the Department of Neuroscience at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Medicine, has been chosen as the incoming Secretary.

Four new Councilors were also elected: Darwin K. Berg, professor of biology, University of California, San Diego; Marie-Francoise Chesselet, professor of neurology and chair of the Department of Neurobiology, University of California, Los Angeles; Carol Ann Mason, professor of pathology, and anatomy and cell biology, Columbia University; and Freda D. Miller, cellular and molecular neurobiologist, Hospital for Sick Children Research Institute and professor, University of Toronto.

The incoming officers and councilors will take office at the end of the SfN Business/Members meeting in San Diego, Calif., in October 2004. Electronic voting closed on July 7, 2004, and was conducted by Survey and Ballot Systems, Inc., of Eden Prairie, Minn. A record number of ballots—5,554—were cast.

...Building Q&A, Continued from page 4

#### **NQ: What were some of the features Council wanted to be included?**

**Barnes:** Council felt it was important to have space for displays about neuroscience, proper modern conference rooms, and that the building and SfN's space conform to principles of "sustainable architecture," or "green" design. We are also exploring the possibility of using the move to newly designed space as an opportunity to work with the developing partnership between neuroscientists and architects. This might include a study of the effect of architectural environment on staff health, sense of well-being, productivity, etc.

#### **NQ: Why was it important to have the building in downtown Washington, DC?**

**Barnes:** Downtown Washington, DC, is a good location for committee meetings and for public education events about neuroscience. Location in downtown DC also makes the office easily accessible for meetings with members and for Capitol Hill visits. The office will be centrally located and Metro-accessible, which helps in recruiting and retaining staff that may live in Maryland, DC, or Virginia. Downtown Washington, DC, is a strong, stable real estate market, which will make it easier to attract other tenants, and makes the building's value over time more likely to grow in a predictable way. The specific neighborhood where the building is located is a high-growth area in DC, and many other nonprofit associations are located nearby.

#### **NQ: What will the Society gain by owning, rather than renting, its central office space?**

**Barnes:** There are two answers to this question. In the short-term, as a nonprofit in DC, the Society will receive tax-exempt financing for the portion of the building occupied by SfN. The rates on this financing are two to three points below commercial mortgage financing. We estimate that up to \$11 million may be eligible for such financing. This really tips the balance on buying vs. renting for a DC-based nonprofit organization.

But for the future, ownership of a building is part of the long-range strategy of the Society to ensure the excellence of its programs. By making us less reliant on other revenue sources, the Society will be in a better position to keep the costs of membership, annual meeting fees, and *The Journal* down, and will be able to devote more resources to new projects that members wish to initiate. By having a new revenue source that is independent of membership fees or annual meeting attendance, the Society can make its financial picture more predictable and stable. This is good news for SfN members who want to make sure that the annual meeting and *The Journal* can be maintained from year to year, no matter what else may be going on with the economy or the Society's short-term financial picture. ■

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...Mental Health, Continued from page 8

"This really is a bidirectional enriching process," said Caine. "Hong Kong is in many ways ready to do suicide prevention more than the United States; the leadership is aligning to say this is an important problem for us. We can help inform them of work in the United States on suicide prevention, and the faster mobilization of leadership to address the problem in Hong Kong can inform U.S. efforts to deal with suicide."

During her comments, Volkow said the burden of drug abuse is \$486 billion worldwide. The level of drug abuse in a given region is an approximate measure of "how much kids believe drugs are harmful," she said, and an indicator of the need to get the word out about drugs' harmful effects.

The three priorities for NIDA in the coming years are smoking; cocaine and alcohol addiction; and inhalant abuse, which Volkow called a "silent epidemic," as a result of inhalants being cheap, legal, and easily accessible to those of lower socioeconomic levels. ■

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