ACNP Education and Training Committee

Insuring the Next Generation of Neuropsychopharmacology

Nina Schooler, Chair

The ACNP By-Laws describe the Education and Training (E&T) Committee as follows: “The duty of this committee shall be to make recommendations to Council concerning programs of training in neuropsychopharmacology.” This is a very general charge which allows the Committee to adapt to the needs of the College. The major ongoing function of the Committee is to review applications for the travel fellowship programs of the College for young neuropsychopharmacologists (the average age for the last three years was 35). These programs provide an important mechanism for educating new investigators about the ACNP and neuropsychopharmacology, and also expose the College to fresh ideas.

Since 1981, Mead Johnson Pharmaceuticals has provided support for the ACNP/Mead Johnson Travel Fellowship Program. Each year, ten young scientists who have a commitment to both research and teaching are selected to attend the Annual Meeting. A major responsibility, challenge, and joy for the Committee is to select these awardees from a group of highly competitive applicants. Applicants are most often sponsored by ACNP members, who write powerful letters addressing the often extraordinary accomplishments of these scientists who are at the threshold of their scientific careers. The success of the selection process is made clear as we look back over the roster of former travel fellows. Twenty-eight are now members of the ACNP—one (Charles Nemeroff) is a member of Council and the 1996 President.

What is the CAS?

Arthur Prange, Jr.

Toward the end of last May, Dr. Oakley Ray asked me if I would write an article about the CAS (Council of Academic Societies) for the ACNP newsletter. I was pleased to accept his invitation.

What is the CAS? It is part of the AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges). But before we drown in alphabet soup—I tell people I represent the ACNP to the CAS of the AAMC—let me provide some structure and a morsel or two of history.

In Psychiatric News for May 19, 1995, Dr. Troy Thompson, chair of psychiatry at Jefferson, wrote a splendid piece giving details about the AAMC, which was founded in 1876. All 125 U.S. medical schools are members and all 16 Canadian medical schools are associate members. In 1991 the AAMC moved into the new District of Columbia building, which it owns. In 1994, Dr. Jordan Cohen left the deanship of the medical school at SUNY Stony Brook to succeed Dr. Robert Petersdorf as President of the

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AAMC and head of its permanent staff (which now totals about 250). The AAMC publishes a journal (Academic Medicine), newsletters, updates on matters at issue, and many special reports.

The AAMC often assembles special groups for special tasks, which results in many ad hoc meetings. At several levels it maintains liaison with many other professional groups with kindred interests (one such group is the American Psychiatric Association). The permanent structure of the AAMC is as follows:

1. The Council of Deans (COD) is often seen as the heart of the AAMC. It would not be astonishing, of course, if medical school deans were preeminent in an organization that concerns itself with medical education, practice and research. Dr. Herbert Pardes is presently the chair of the COD.

2. The Council of Teaching Hospitals (COTH) consists of the CEOs of some 400 hospitals, including 72 VA hospitals. In my view, this group has gained importance in parallel with the prominence of issues of who pays whom for what.

3. The Council of Academic Societies (CAS) consists of representatives from about 90 societies. Research is heavily represented, but teaching and patient care are also its concerns. The CAS was organized in 1967. The late Daniel Freedman, M.D., was chair of the CAS in 1980-81. Then, for many years, Dr. Freedman was one of the representatives of the American Psychiatric Association. (At present, the APA’s representatives are

Dr. Thompson, mentioned above, and Dr. Harold PinCUS.) Each member society of the CAS has two representatives. The ACNP’s are Dr. Oakley Ray and myself. By design, Dr. Ray has never attended and I have missed only one meeting since, in 1989, I succeeded Dr. Arnold Friedhoff, the ACNP’s first representative. Like the ACNP, most other societies send only one of their representatives to CAS meetings. Some send different people to successive meetings; some send the same person. The CAS meets with all other elements of the AAMC each fall and by itself each spring.

4. The Organization of Resident Representatives (ORR) has 44 members. They are appointed by the academic societies that train them. Thus, for example, the American Psychiatric Association sends representatives to this group, but the ACNP does not.

5. The Organization of Student Representatives (OSR) consists of a representative selected by each medical school.

Now for a few words about financing and governance of the AAMC. The AAMC is a non-profit organization. It can and does interact with Congress; but it cannot contribute funds to candidates for political office. All member groups (schools, hospitals, societies) pay dues. The ACNP pays $3,160 annually for membership in the CAS. In addition, member groups pay for their CAS representatives to attend meetings. (With my present responsibilities within the AAMC, the ACNP pays for only one trip per year, not the several that I take.) The AAMC

receives support from several charitable foundations, for example, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Commonwealth Fund, Robert Wood Johnson, Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, Charles E. Culpeper, and Macy Foundation. During the 1994 fiscal year, the AAMC’s total expenses were $23,752,911. Thought is being given to restructuring the CAS. One proposal would eliminate CAS dues, to encourage small societies to join.

How is the AAMC governed? Each of the three councils has an elected administrative board. Each administrative board sends members to the Executive Council (which has 29 members—five of whom are from the CAS). The Executive Council is the final deciding body of the AAMC and elects a new chair each year. The current chair is Dr. Kenneth I. Berns, a past chair of the CAS Administrative Board, and chair of microbiology at Cornell. Dr. Herbert Pardes is the chair-elect. I am a current member of the CAS Administrative Board and

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have been nominated to be a member of the Executive Council in 1996. Here, as in all other successful organizations, the permanent staff is also extremely important.

Only Charles Dickens could tell us what our times are like, and he would probably waffle. For the AAMC, the times are surely unusual. Dr. Cohen took office in April 1994, just as everything medical went from fermentation to boiling. What is going on just now in the AAMC—and the CAS—is not business as usual. One of President Cohen’s first acts—a wise one in my view—was to call for a review of the AAMC, including its structure and goals, to develop a strategic plan. A consulting firm was engaged to guide the process.

Development of the strategic plan cuts across the fixed structure of the AAMC. Thus, for one or another of the review units, members have been drawn from the three councils and two organizations. This in itself has been a useful strategy. The exercise of developing a strategic plan is structured around the following units:

- Working Group on Vision
- Working Group on Momentum

The following other AAMC Advisory Panels have also contributed to the strategic planning effort:

- The Advisory Panel on the Mission and Organization of Medical Schools
- The Advisory Panel on Biomedical Research
- The Advisory Panel on the Strategic Positioning for Health Care Reform
- The Task Force on Medical School Financing

Within the Advisory Panel on the Mission and Organization of Medical Schools there are several working groups:

- Preserving the Medical Schools’ Academic Mission in a Competitive Marketplace
- Nurturing the Development of Primary Care
- Capturing the Promise of Biomedical Research
- Tapping the Power of Information
- Adapting to Resource Constraints
- Fulfilling the Social Contract

I am a member of the Advisory Panel on Mission and Organization of Medical Schools and, within that, the working group on “Capturing.” The various units have gathered information, collated it, and exchanged it with each other. The exercise will be completed in late 1995. I think it will have a substantial impact on what the AAMC does and how it does it. At the very least, members of the various fixed groups should work together in the future with even more facility.

I had planned simply to offer you some generalizations about the AAMC and the CAS, but found that they would be meaningless without the foregoing description. Now the time has come to editorialize. After about six years at CAS and almost two years on its administrative board, I have come to regard the AAMC as indispensable for gathering and disseminating information and for representing the concerns of academic medicine in all its many facets. Several issues are hotly contested at present. While most of them are related directly or indirectly to the advent of managed care, two other issues always hover in the background: 1) do the deans and hospital CEOs dominate the AAMC; and 2) are medical faculties adequately represented? My answer to the first question—surprise, surprise—is yes. Deans are ultimately in charge of medical schools, and CEOs are increasingly in charge of money. Do faculties get heard? I think they do, through their deans and also through the CAS, but there is no faculty council per se. It is true that some CAS representatives are academic chairs and some are what we call deanslets, but many, like me, are simply faculty members. One can also ask if research gets a fair hearing. I think it does. I speak for it and so do many others, not least among them Herb Pardes. And every time I get a chance, I explain what the letters ACNP stand for. They stand for a lot.

My turn on the administrative board of the CAS expires at the end of 1996. Any member society of the CAS can send, as a general member, anyone they want for as long as they choose, but I plan to retire from the job at the end of 1996. The ACNP should pick my successor in time for him/her to attend the November 1996 meeting with me. The ACNP custom has been for the president, with the concurrence of Council, to name the representatives when need occurs. Is this the best way to do it? However this may be, I do think there is substantial advantage to a society if its attending representatives serves at least five years.

ACNP Voice Mail To Route Calls Efficiently

If you’ve called the Secretariat recently, you know that the ACNP now has voice mail. This new feature should improve the Secretariat’s efficiency. The main voice mail greeting will be changed periodically to reflect the time of year, i.e., the current greeting lists the Annual Meeting, while in the spring it will list Annual Dues.
Invited Guest Privileges Extended

At its July 1995 meeting, Council responded affirmatively to a request by Jo Ann Engelhardt that Invited Guest privileges be extended to spouses/significant others of deceased members so they may attend future Annual Meetings of the College. Registration (including a name badge and packet) will be provided at no cost to these individuals. These individuals will be automatically sent Invited Guest registration packets for three years after the member’s death and may request the Invited Guest packet for any and all future meetings.

In taking this action, Council recognizes that the ACNP has for so many years been an essential and meaningful part of many members’ professional and personal identity, and is, for many, an extended family. This step is taken to prevent the loss of the activities and camaraderie experienced by many spouses over the years. David Engelhardt used the term “American College of Significant Others” to describe these spouses. By extending complimentary Invited Guest privileges to these individuals, Council acknowledges, in a small way, their contribution to their spouse’s career and to the success of the College and the importance of our Annual Meeting. ▲

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Elect, and another (George Zubenko) is a member of the E&T Committee and helping to select those who will follow in his footsteps. A complete list of Mead Johnson awardees who are now College members is at the end of this article.

The second fellowship program, the Minority Travel Fellowship Program, began in 1990 and is supported by the College and a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health. The College sought the program because of a concern regarding the low recruitment of minority scientists to the field of neuropsychopharmacology and our strong commitment to changing that situation. Five fellowships are awarded each year to support the travel and attendance of the awardees to the Annual Meeting.

The E&T Committee meets during the summer to select the travel fellows for both programs. Prior to the meeting, committee members read the applications and sponsor letters and rank the candidates. But, much as with grant application reviews, the Committee interaction provides the opportunity to reach a consensus based on knowledge and judgment from many perspectives. Candidates are judged by what they have accomplished as revealed by their CVs, their statement of what they hope to accomplish in their careers, and very importantly, by the sponsor’s letter. The senior individuals who nominate candidates are often eloquent about the meaning and value of an applicant’s work. This not only helps the committee understand where their work fits into the field, but also the individual’s future potential.

There are three groups of travel fellows at the Annual Meeting who are not chosen by the E&T Committee. Marion Merrell Dow supports the attendance of five travel fellows, selected by the ACNP Past President through his visits to the four traditionally black medical schools. The Upjohn Summer Fellow is similarly selected by the Past President. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) provides travel support to several advanced medical students and/or beginning residents.

The experience of all five groups of travel fellows at the Annual Meeting is enhanced by a mentorship program that links College members with travel fellows. Once the fellows have been selected, each is matched with a mentor. The mentors are chosen from College members who have submitted their names (and their areas of interest/expertise) to the E&T Committee. The mentorship program is thus only as good as the volunteers, and that means it is very good. The response of the membership to the request for mentors is impressive. Well before the deadline, the Mentor Interest Forms come rolling in, documenting the willingness of College members to help young colleagues find their way at our

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Suggestions or Comments

If you have any comments or suggestions about this newsletter, please send them to the Secretariat at:

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sometimes overwhelming Annual Meeting and also to have the pleasure of introducing and welcoming a new colleague to the field.

Travel fellows are invited to present a poster at the Meeting and their posters are so identified. Travel fellows are also given the opportunity to attend the Annual Meeting and present a poster for the four years following the award.

In addition to choosing mentors for each fellow, the E&T Committee acts for the ACNP in hosting an orientation reception for all the fellows and mentors. Throughout the Annual Meeting, the Committee, and especially the Co-Chairs of the Committee, keep a watchful eye on the fellows to insure that their ACNP experience is rewarding.

As the outgoing Chair of the E&T Committee, I would like to challenge the College membership to make the committee’s task even harder in future years. This year we have 48 applications for the Mead Johnson Fellowship Program, and while it will be difficult to select the ten best, I would like next year’s committee to have an even more difficult time because of an increased volume of applications. We received only nine applications for the Minority Fellowship Program this year. Again, increase the difficulty of the Committee’s work by nominating more minority individuals who qualify and can benefit from attending the Annual Meeting.

During the coming years, the E&T Committee will need to face a difficult task. As funds for a wide range of activities become scarcer, we will need to assure the sponsors of these fellow-

ship programs that travel fellowships are indeed productive and do actually channel individuals into careers in neuropsychopharmacology. Demonstrating that training or training programs “work” is notoriously difficult, but strategies need to be developed. Beyond this challenge, the Education and Training Committee’s main function will continue to be the assurance of a fair review of applications and a successful meeting experience for those chosen. ▲
**Calendar of Events**

**1995 ACNP Calendar**

**September 15:** Poster abstract deadline for 1995 Annual Meeting.

**November 1:** Early registration deadline for 1995 Annual Meeting. After this date, rates increase $50 for each registration category.

**1995 Meetings**

**September 11-15:** ISPNE XXVI Congress—in Munich, Germany

**For information:**
ISPNE '95
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Max-Planck-Institute for Psychiatry
Kraepelinstrasse 10
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Phone: 49 89 30 62 2/1
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**Sept. 30th-Oct. 4th:** 8th Annual Congress of the ECNP—in Venice, Italy

**For information:**
C.M.O. S.r.l.
c/o Mr. Lorenzo Mori

**December 11th-15th:** ACNP Annual Meeting—in San Juan, Puerto Rico

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