

CSSP REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT, 2001-2002

The Council of Scientific Society Presidents (CSSP) met Nov. 16-19, 2001 in Washington, DC, at the American Chemical Society headquarters (pretty nice!). That was probably appropriate, considering how dominated the organization is by the physical sciences.

a) Much discussion about terrorism, counter-terrorism, security, what scientists can do to help, etc. No discussion of alternative energy sources, increasing gas mileage standards, etc. A book by Karen Armstrong was recommended, "A Brief History of Islam."

b) An interesting talk by Marsha Landolt, Dean of Graduate Studies and Vice-Provost, Univ. of Washington, about re-envisioning doctoral education. (www.grad.washington.edu/envision). Mention of interdisciplinary or "team" or "group" Ph.D.s, or "professional Ph.D.s" (Doctor of Science, similar to D.Ed., J.D., etc.)

c) Electronic publication: one of the most interesting talks was by someone from the Association for Computing Machinery, who discussed the pros and cons of electronic journals, member services, etc. He said in passing that ACM has decided that e-voting is not a good idea. I asked why, and he said it was a question of integrity of the voting. ACM now has about 50% of their approx. 800 institutional subscribers also receiving the e-subscriptions. They expect this to grow in the future. ACM publishes 22 journals and charges \$4,500 for print subscription and \$7,800 for online (my notes are not clear whether this is in addition to or for both print and e-).

d) Much talk about bringing scientists to Washington, to meet with Congressional reps.

e) Rita Colwell gave a nice talk about the need for scientists to get involved in K-12 education, teaching teachers, increasing underrepresented groups, interdisciplinary research, etc. No new ground was broken.

f) Informal conversations during breaks and meals were the most useful and enjoyable. I learned that the Soil Science Society of America has paid over \$75,000 to have all issues of their journals electronically archived in a searchable form. [Thank God for Karl and JSTOR for the BSA!]

Virtually all societies are seeing a slow decline in membership and institutional subscribers-- nothing dramatic but just a gradual erosion. It seems that the younger set is less likely to join a scientific society than in earlier generations, which troubles a lot of us. I met Richard O'Grady and see in him a new attitude at AIBS. He was very complimentary about and appreciative of the BSA members who have served AIBS over the years (cheers to Pat!). No sign of ASPB the entire meeting. Crop Science Society and Agronomy Society were closest to BSA, with similar organismal interests and challenges.

Respectfully submitted,

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Botanical Society of America