

Report of Council of Scientific Society Presidents (CSSP) Representative

American Chemical Society Building, 1155 16th Avenue NW, Washington, DC

Past-Past President Pat Gensel represented BSA for one day of the CSSP meeting, December 7-10, 2002, as I was in Australia for a research visit. I attended and represented BSA at the 25th annual meeting of CSSP, May 3-6, 2003.

The meeting began on Saturday, May 3, with a keynote address by Marty Apple. His address built on many of the same themes that he presented in his keynote address at our Botany 2002 meeting last summer concerning the importance of pursuing federal monies. Research is one of the “optional” items in the federal government, as compared with Medicare, Social Security, and military expenditures. The people favor doubling the NSF budget and can see the benefit, but it is a hard sell in Washington. His evangelistic message is that all of us need to help. Dr. Marilu Goodyear, CIO and Vice Chancellor of University of Kansas spoke on “Scholarly Libraries and Science Journals: Adversaries or Partners?”—a talk that focused on BioOne. Her discussion was accompanied with a discussion that non-profit societies will no longer be able to count on the same revenue stream to support their journals. Dr. Michael Maccoby of Maccoby Group presented a talk on “Strengths and weaknesses of narcissistic leadership” in which he discussed personality types with respect to society leadership. Dr. Roger Herman of The Herman Group presented “Futuristic Lectures: Emerging Megatrends.” His talk focused on the next generation, changes in communication, electronic connectedness, and how it will affect the way we do things in the future. URL: <http://www.herman.net/> free email listserv. Dr. Karen Stephenson of NetForm completed the session with a discussion of “Organizational Trust Networks” in which she reported her study in which she quantified connections between persons in similar organizations at different levels and what it could tell us.

Sunday, May 4 was occupied by committee meetings, including a myriad of topics. I attended a group that discussed the Internet and scholarly communication. During this meeting we discussed many topics and agreed to organize links. A science editor from UPI also visited and discussed how scientific organizations could help with interpreting news in the sciences. She was particularly interested in follow-up “op-ed” pieces targeted to appear within about a week of a major science story (e.g., genome project, cloning humans, etc.). A second round of committee meetings occurred before lunch in which I attended a meeting on “Science Policy and the State Department” which was remarkably interesting. The guest was Dr. Norman Neuriter, who is the director of scientific liaison. He has developed a system of professional interns (mostly professors on sabbatical) who work within the State Department to develop policy in key areas of technology. A critical area of concern is the slowness with which visas are issued to foreign nationals who participate in research in the US. There are many instances of delay and the system is one that seems to forget what is learned on prior investigations of researchers. This was followed up on Monday by a presentation from a Department of State undersecretary (Dr. Neuriter’s boss). The afternoon included committee reports. Individual presentations by research experts covering broad areas of what is the future in mathematics, physics, and biochemistry were interspersed throughout the three days.

Monday, May 5 continued general discussions and talks. Two talks centered on allegations about events suggesting that the current administration was tampering with the formulation of scientific policy. One example was a lay board appointed to examine policy with regard to cloning and other issues. Members of this board were recommended, but never approved until all but about two persons on the original recommended board had been replaced. There was also concern about editing scientific data to support policy. This was followed by a talk by an undersecretary of the Department of Homeland Security announcing a competitive research grant program that they have initiated. A reception at the close of the day recognized several persons and the CSSP on its 25th anniversary. Tuesday, May 6 began with breakfast near the Capitol at “The Monocle” followed by a visit to talk to the Chair of the Science Committee of the House of Representatives. This was cancelled, with regrets, but we got to sit in the chamber for about an hour and took pictures of all. This was followed by presenting a special award for his support of science to Senator Kit Bond (of Missouri), Chair of the Senate Science Committee. Afterwards we met with our State Legislators individually. I was able to meet my Representative, Tom Cole (R-OK), talked to a staffer at Senator Inhofe’s office and dropped off literature at Senator Nickels’ office.

Respectfully submitted, -Scott Russell, President, BSA