



SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF REPRODUCTION Newsletter

Volume 20, Number 1

February 2003

From the President—

Update on NIH Study Section and IRG reorganization

My commentary for this issue of the newsletter will be brief, essentially an introduction to the letter below from Review Division Directors at the Center for Scientific Review (CSR), NIH. Probably no issue has been more troublesome to the community of reproductive scientists than the potential impact of the reorganization of the Integrated Review Groups (IRGs) and Study Sections at the NIH upon the quality of review of grant applications in our discipline. I have asked those at the CSR who are most involved in the IRGs that encompass our discipline to send the SSR membership a letter—both to address our concerns and to bring us up to date on the overall process. **I have highlighted those sections of the letter that are most directly relevant to the reproductive sciences.** As indicated in the letter, the directors at the CSR invite your comments. On behalf of the Society for the Study of Reproduction, I thank Drs. Martin, Postow, and Schneider for this informative letter.

If you have comments or concerns about the reorganization of IRGs, or concerns about any other matter related to the Society, please send them to me (PLKEY@umich.edu), or call me (734-763-9543), and I will bring them to the attention of the Board.

—Landis Keyes

Reproductive Sciences Research and the Reorganization of Study Sections at CSR

Designing New Study Sections. The Center for Scientific Review (CSR) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Department of Health and Human Services, is in the second phase of its reorganization activities following upon the recommendations of its Panel on Scientific Boundaries for Review (PSBR: <www.csr.nih.gov/events/summary012000.htm>). During this second phase, CSR

organizes Steering Committees composed of staff from CSR and the appropriate NIH Institutes to solicit nominations of scientists from relevant communities and professional societies, such as the Society for the Study of Reproduction, to participate on Study Section Boundaries (SSB) Teams. Each SSB Team recommends guidelines for the study sections within one of the Integrated Review Groups (IRGs) proposed in the PSBR report. Between February 2001 and December 2002, CSR convened 15 of the planned 17 SSB Team meetings.

Organ Systems Research and the Reproductive Sciences. One of the hallmark conclusions of the PSBR report was that the members “assigned high priority to the goal of reviewing applications that apply to a given disease/organ system in the context of the biological question being addressed because we believe that such a system results in the greatest net benefit.” This priority is reflected in the PSBR recommendation that CSR create four new organ system IRGs: Pulmonary Sciences; Renal and Urological Sciences; Digestive Sciences; and Hematology. Four additional IRGs based on existing organ-centered IRGs were also proposed: Cardiovascular Sciences; Immunology; **Endocrinology, Metabolism, Nutrition and Reproductive Sciences;** and Musculoskeletal, Oral and Skin Sciences. The three neurosciences IRGs will also continue in their current form. Therefore, once the reorganization is complete, 11 of CSR’s IRGs will have an organ-system orientation.

Aspects of reproductive sciences research were considered by three SSB Teams: the Endocrinology, Metabolism and Reproductive Sciences, the Renal and Urological Sciences (RUS), and the Biology of Development and Aging (BDA) IRG SSB Teams, representing more crosscutting themes. These Teams acknowledged the importance of clustering research in reproductive sciences within specific study sections. A significant portion of the applica-

tions that have been reviewed in Human Embryology and Development -1 (HED-1), Reproductive Biology (REB), and Reproductive Endocrinology (REN) Study Sections were assigned in mock sorts during this process to the Cellular, Molecular and Integrative Reproduction (CMIR), and Pregnancy, Neonatology and Lactation (PNL) Study Sections within the proposed Endocrinology, Metabolism, Nutrition, and Reproductive Sciences (EMNR) IRG. The Development 1 and 2 Study Sections in the BDA IRG are focused more on fundamental properties of development rather than the biology of reproductive organs or reproductive competency. The RUS IRG SSB Team recommended that male reproductive track development and sexual dysfunction be clustered in the Urological and Kidney Development and Genitourinary Diseases Study Section; while the EMNR SSB Team made a parallel recommendation to cluster this research in the CMIR Study Section.

Opportunity for Public Comment. The guidelines proposed by each SSB Team are posted on CSR's Web site (<www.csr.nih.gov/PSBR/IRGComments.htm>) for a period of 90 days to allow comment by the scientific community. The summaries of the public comments made on the BDA and RUS IRG guidelines are available on this Web site. We hope to have a summary of the comments received for the EMNR IRG posted in February.

Resolution of Shared Interests. NIH staff will consider the proposed study section guidelines and the comments received from the research communities. CSR will consult with experts as necessary to clarify instances where different study sections and IRGs have shared interests, and we will make other modifications to the proposed guidelines. The Director of CSR, following presentations and discussions by the CSR Advisory Committee, will approve the final form and substance of each study section's guidelines. The process developed by CSR to implement these recommendations is deliberately cautious and iterative in order to achieve substantial community involvement and the best possible organization of review committees. **The proposed EMNR IRG, which includes the proposed CMIR and PNL Study Sections, will likely be discussed by the Advisory Committee at its May 2003 meeting.**

Directing Your Application. **The purpose of the shared interests between the new IRGs is not to split the reproductive sciences. Rather, the shared inter-**

ests are designed to ensure that applications are not forced into one review venue or another and that applicants can exercise control over where their applications are reviewed. All applicants are encouraged to review the guidelines and study section rosters before submitting their applications and to request the assignment they believe is most appropriate. Historically, CSR honors about 80% of such requests. A common reason for not honoring such requests is a conflict-of-interest with a member on the requested review panel.

Additional Year of Advance Notice. New study sections will begin meeting no sooner than one year after the CSR Director approves them to ensure that applicants are fully aware of the nature of the study sections before they submit their applications, and to complete logistical arrangements. For example, CSR has established preliminary rosters for the reorganized Hematology study sections. These rosters have been posted on our Web site (<www.csr.nih.gov/Committees/rosterindex.asp>). The first meetings of the new Hematology IRG study sections will occur in June 2003 (receipt date February/March 2003). **Assuming the EMNR IRG guidelines are considered and accepted at the CSR Advisory Committee meeting in May 2003, the new EMNR study sections would review applications submitted in early 2004 at the first EMNR meetings in the summer of 2004. In the meantime, the current HED-1, REB, and REN study sections will continue to meet as usual.**

For additional news and information about CSR's PSBR reorganization, visit the CSR Reorganization Activities Web page at <www.csr.nih.gov/review/reorgact.asp>.

Sincerely,

—Michael R. Martin, Ph.D., Director
Division of Physiology and Pathology

—Elliot Postow, Ph.D., Director
Division of Biological Basis of Disease

—Donald Schneider, Ph.D., Director
Division of Molecular and Cellular Mechanisms
Center for Scientific Review

For updates on the 2003 Annual Meeting, check the SSR Web site at

www.ssr.org

Preview of program for SSR's 2003 Annual Meeting

Plans for the scientific program at this summer's Annual Meeting in Cincinnati are right on schedule. The plenary and minisymposia topics and speakers have all been selected on the basis of several criteria and have resulted in what we believe to be a balanced and interesting program with something for everyone. The Keynote Address will be given by Professor Lord Winston, who will speak on "IVF/ART: Progress and Concerns." The State-of-the-Art Lectures will be given by S. K. Dey, who will present the Moulton Memorial Lecture and will speak on "Molecular Road-Map to Implantation: Past, Present and Future"; Paolo Sassone-Corsi, who will speak on "Genetic Dissection of Transcriptional Control in Male Germ Cells"; and Benita Katzenellenbogen, who will speak on "2003 Perspective of Estrogen Receptor Mechanisms and Cellular Regulation." The theme of the President's Symposium is *Reproduction and the Environment*; President Keyes has recruited Lou Guillette to speak on "Reproduction and Environmental Contaminants: Endocrinology, Evolution, and Alligators," and Sally Perreault to speak on "Tracking Down Reproductive Health Risks for Humans Exposed to Environmental Contaminants."

As in past years, there will be 15 minisymposia over three days with five sessions running concurrently. Topics were chosen from some 120 suggestions received from the Program Committee and the SSR membership.

The most notable changes in the program for 2003 are the moving of the State-of-the-Art Lectures to 8:00 a.m. and the poster sessions to 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.. This was done to add increased time for viewing posters (until 2:00 p.m. if so desired) and also to make it easier for individuals to get to the many noon-hour meetings and events on time. This has been a problem in past meetings, and placing more flexibility in this busy time slot was done in an effort to correct this.

After the submission deadline, abstracts will be reviewed by the members of the Program Committee and placed in either platform or poster sessions. We will once again plan to have 21 platform sessions with seven running concurrently, each containing eight talks. The remainder of the abstracts will be placed in poster sessions and grouped according to topic.

I encourage all SSR members to send in abstracts of their best work and plan to attend the Annual Meeting July 19–22. With what we believe to be a well-

balanced scientific program and the excellent work of the Local Arrangements Committee, it should be a memorable meeting. See you in Cincinnati. ■

—Doug Stocco, Chair
Program Committee

Techniques Workshop

The Techniques Workshop will be held on Saturday, July 19, in conjunction with SSR's Annual Meeting in Cincinnati. This year's workshop, organized by the Education Committee, is titled "Proteomics, Imaging, and Transgenics." Speakers will be:

Proteomics: Dr. Donald F. Hunt, University Professor of Chemistry and Pathology, University of Virginia. Dr. Hunt's research focuses on the development of new methods and instrumentation for the structural characterization of proteins and their post-translational modifications at the low femtomole/attomole level and the application of these new methods to important structural problems in cell biology and immunology.

Imaging: Dr. Robert B. Silver, Professor, Departments of Pharmacology, Physiology, and Radiology, Wayne State University School of Medicine. Dr. Silver's research involves the role of calcium, eicosanoids, and networked metabolic enzymes in regulation of calcium signals and mitotic cell division, and also synaptic transmission and secretion. A cornerstone of his research is use of high-performance computational processing and analysis of video microscopy images.

Transgenics: Dr. Jose Cibelli, Vice President of Research, Advanced Cell Technology, Inc., Worcester, MA. Dr. Cibelli is one of the pioneers in the area of cloning with transgenic somatic cells in bovines for the production of animals and embryonic stem cell-like cells. Dr. Cibelli's efforts led to the generation of the first transgenic calves by cloning. His recent research involves therapeutic human cloning.

The workshop workbook, breakfast, coffee breaks, and lunch are included in the registration fee of US \$100 (\$125 after June 8) for faculty and \$50 (\$75 after June 8) for students. To register for the workshop, check the appropriate box on the registration form for the Annual Meeting. Onsite registration will also be available prior to the workshop. ■

—Kyle Selcer, Chair
Education Committee
E-mail: selcer@duq.edu

SSR Endowment Fund

The Society gratefully acknowledges these contributors to the Endowment Fund during 2002.

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Larry Ewing Memorial Trainee Travel Fund

The Society gratefully acknowledges these contributors to the Larry Ewing Memorial Trainee Travel Fund during 2002.

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Trainee Affairs Committee plans for Annual Meeting

Congratulations to all trainees who have submitted an abstract for this year's Annual Meeting in Cincinnati! Attending the Annual Meeting is a great opportunity, with lots of chances for professional development and fun social interaction. We urge you to take advantage of all the great programs the Society provides for its trainees.

Several travel awards are available to help with the cost of the meeting. Some of these travel awards require submission of an expanded abstract, and information on these competitions is posted on the SSR Annual Meeting Web site. In addition, all SSR trainee members who submit an abstract and have financial need can apply for the Larry Ewing Trainee Travel Award. Over the years, this wonderful award program has helped many trainees with the costs of attending the Annual Meeting.

Be sure to sign up for the Trainee-Mentor Luncheon in your registration for the Annual Meeting. This event fills up every year and is a great way to meet and socialize with both eminent scientists and your fellow trainees. This year's mentors will be associated in some way with the overall theme of

Minority Affairs Committee

In the effort to bring minorities into the mainstream of the ISSR and to increase the participation of minorities in SSR activities, MAC is planning the following activities at this year's Annual Meeting:

- Minority mentoring day, where a programmed activity is scheduled for a day for high school and undergraduate college students. This has been a well-organized, popular event in previous years, so MAC will continue to follow this tradition.

- MAC is still soliciting the names of minority members of the SSR to co-chair slide sessions in their areas of expertise at the Annual Meeting. Doug Stocco, Chair of the Program Committee, would like to have this list by the end of February. If you would like to nominate yourself or a minority colleague, please send me the information by that deadline.

- MAC and the Trainee Affairs Committee are cosponsoring a session at the Annual Meeting. Look for details soon!

- The Minority Affairs network-building breakfast, an event started last year, is being replaced by an evening networking reception with plenty of time for interaction.

- MAC's Web site has been launched recently as part of the SSR Web site. MAC will greatly appreciate receiving your feedback.

- Last, but not least, MAC is planning to apply to NIH for a grant to support MAC activities on a regular, sustainable basis. The proposal will be modeled after other NIH-sponsored events such as symposia for the Endocrine Society, American Society for Cell Biology, and other professional societies. Please let me know if you are willing to work on developing this proposal. Your help will be greatly appreciated by MAC and SSR.

Please feel free to contact me or my fellow members on the MAC. ■

—Rajagopala Sridaran, Chair
Minority Affairs Committee
E-mail: sridaran@msm.edu

the meeting, *Reproduction and the Environment*. Kelli Valdez of the University of Arizona is organizing this year's luncheon. Keep your eyes open for information on this event, and remember that the earlier you register, the more likely you are to get your first choice in seating.

The placement service provides another great opportunity for professional development. It is organized by trainees and held at the Annual Meeting each year. If you will be making a transition to a new position soon, consider submitting your information to this free service. Registration materials for the placement service will accompany the meeting information. It is best to submit early, before the meeting, and be sure to bring some updated CVs with you to the meeting! In addition, to keep the placement service running smoothly, we need trainees to volunteer to work at the service during the meeting. This is a wonderful way to help your fellow trainees. Shifts are short, a time commitment of one to two hours. An e-mail requesting volunteers will be sent out this spring.

If you have questions about the Annual Meeting, travel awards, or other trainee issues, please contact me (thompson.kary@epa.gov) or Jennifer Bowen (jmbowen@uic.edu). We are happy to hear your ideas, thoughts, or concerns! ■

—Kary Thompson
Senior Trainee Representative

Development Committee

The Development Committee has been very active this fall and, most important, we have been very successful. Over the spring and summer, we devised a comprehensive, computerized tracking sheet that allows members to see, in real time, the results of our fund-raising efforts to support the Annual Meeting and the journal. This spreadsheet contains valuable contact information for companies that have supported the Society in the past and/or have been major beneficiaries of SSR members' supply and equipment expenditures. The sheet also identifies the committee member with primary responsibility for contacting each company, thereby preventing multiple requests. We used this streamlined system to approach potential donors before fiscal closure in the fall, when financial decisions are made for the coming year. Despite the economic downturn, our fund-raising efforts are ahead of where they were at this time last year, evidence that the new system will benefit the Society. We also have new NIH support in the form of a \$10,000 contribution from NIEHS. We encourage all members to contribute information for the tracking sheet by contacting Judy Jansen (ssradmin@ssr.org).

A key component of the success of the Development Committee has been the hard work of the subcommittee chairs, Drs. Ben Tsang (Industrial Relations), Richard Stouffer (Sponsorship of Annual Meeting), and Gil Greenwald (Endowment), and the members of their committees. Also, Dr. Andy LaBarbera, who is organizing this year's Annual Meeting in Cincinnati, has joined our group. Their efforts have helped raise much of the money that we will need to finance the Annual Meeting. We look forward to continued success in the new year. ■

—Susan Fisher, Chair
Development Committee

Report from the Treasurer: questions and answers

What does the Treasurer do?

The SSR has grown over the years to become a formidable organization, with an annual budget that will approach \$1.8 M for 2003. The role of the SSR Treasurer, as outlined in the Society's Bylaws, is to "have or delegate responsibility for the funds, securities, receipts and disbursements of the Society." Delegate is the operative word, as most of these transactions are conducted by the SSR Business Office, under the able management of Judy Jansen. The other important tasks of the Treasurer are to chair the Finance Committee, to prepare and present semiannual reports on the financial status of the Society, and to oversee the SSR investment portfolio. The annual budget is developed by the Business Office, then discussed in detail with the Treasurer, with modifications and clarifications made as necessary. In past years, the budget was then presented by the Treasurer to the Board of Directors at the midwinter Board meeting. Because approval of the budget occurred after the year in question had begun, it was not a prospective budget. A change was therefore made in 2002; the budget for 2003 was developed in October, presented to the Board in electronic form, and approved in advance of the beginning of the fiscal year.

So, how did we do in 2002?

The SSR posted a small positive balance for the 2001 fiscal year. As of this writing, not all of receipts, expenditures, etc. are known for 2002, but it looks as though there will be a balance of revenue and expense. As noted in earlier messages, the budget comprises three envelopes: membership, publications, and Annual Meeting. The membership income is derived primarily from dues. Expenses charged against membership income include the management costs of the Society as well as other items such as Board expenses. Outlay has traditionally exceeded income in this budget category. Income for the publications envelope comes from dues, library sub-

scriptions, page and color charges, reprint, royalty and advertising revenue. In spite of the remarkable changes in publications procedures, including the move to online submission, publications income has provided a modest margin of revenue over expense. The Annual Meeting component of the budget has consistently been profitable and subsidizes the membership costs. This tradition continued in 2002. Thanks to the able management of Bob Koos and the Local Arrangements Committee at Baltimore, there was a net gain of income over expense of \$68 K. This, combined with the modest yield in publications income, provided a bottom line in the black for 2002.

What's happening with our investments?

Although there has been some recovery recently, the stock markets were not terribly kind to investors in 2002, losing 13, 20, and 27% for the Dow Jones, Standard & Poors, and NASDAQ indices, respectively. The Society has an investment fund of approximately \$1.1 M, and endowment funds totaling \$310 K, invested in eight mutual funds. In comparison to the indices, our placements held up well for 2002; all of the funds in which we are invested performed substantially better than the broad S&P index. Nonetheless, the Society portfolio lost 7 percent of its value in 2002. The stock market has made a substantial recovery since its low point in mid-October. This recovery is expected to continue in 2003, and we can expect our portfolio to improve. SSR's investments are discussed in detail at the Finance Committee and Board meetings, and we will continue to manage our investments to maintain the best yield for the Society.

What does the future hold?

In the near term, our financial condition is healthy. Nonetheless, as I have frequently stated, SSR can anticipate decreases in revenue over the medium term, particularly in the publications envelope of the budget. This may take the form of a decreased number of personal or library subscriptions, conse-

New Members

Regular

Joyce C. Chen
Isabelle Donnay
Alfonso Gutierrez-Adan
Lawrence B. Hendry
Shuji Hirata
Kazuhiro Kikuchi
Slavica Krantic
David M. Lee
Ian Lewis
Jonathan Chi-Hang Li
Takashi Miyano
Jean-Pierre Ozil
Gleydes Gambogi Parreira
Morgan R. Peltier
Bruce D. Schultz
Ernest E. Smith
Shuji Takiguchi
Jinghe Tan

Douglas D. Taylor
Michael A. Thomas
Regina M. O. Turner
Hitoshi Ushijima
Tomohiko Wakayama
Nicola Jane Winston
Patrick Y. D. Wong

Associate

Idhaliz Flores

Trainee

Phillip Hilmi Abbosh
Bruce A. Adams
Theresa Anttila
Lei Bao
Nicholas Berry
Alicia Branch
Ylva Brandt

Miao Chang
Sung-Yun Chen
Roy Dahle
Joseph S. Dosch
Rachael Gager
Jianbo Hu
Amy L. Jackson
Olivia C. Kilian
Andrea Friederike Lang
Fabio Pereira Leivas Leite
Shaye K. Lewis
John S. Montgomery
Thomas R. Peavy
Marina C. Peluffo
Leah M. Pyter
Bryan Riggeal
Aurora Shehu
Ioannis Taitzoglou
Nicole Shivonn Tinffo
Chiung-I Tseng

Jiing-Rong Wang
Jonathan E. Welker
Missaka P. B. Wijayagunawardane
Katja M. Wolski
Chiu-Lung Wu
Yu-Ching Wu
Jing Xu
Ching-Han Yu

Change of status

To Regular:
Malini Bajpai
Mohd Amin Beg
Vilceu Bordignon
Daniela Bomgardner
Asok D. De Sousa
Mark P. D. Dow
Fafael Fissore
Mei-Mei Kau

Dong Ryul Lee
Ari Mayer Mackler
Jiude Mao
Prema Narayan
Gary R. Newton
Melissa Pepling
Jeffrey J. Reese
Carmen M. Rodriguez
James R. Schwartz
Gunapala Shetty
Qing-Yuan Sun
Jonathan L. Tilly
Jenny Y. M. Tse
Brendan J. Waddell
Graham Young

To Associate:
Susan E. Becker
Alicia A. Goyeneche
Constance A. Kersten
Richard C. Seals
Karen Swanchara

quent to the ongoing revolution in electronic publishing. In addition, some important spending initiatives are under discussion. The Board of Directors is in favor of rendering the entirety of the *Biology of Reproduction* archives (from inception in 1968) in electronic form for retrieval on the Internet. The costs of this project are not known precisely, but could be in the range of hundreds of thousands of dollars. To meet these medium-term needs, the Society requires increased income, in particular, further donations, further private sector participation, and new sources of funding. Recent events suggest that the income stream may be broadening. At the 2001 and 2002 Annual Meetings, substantial income was realized from an unprecedented source: the exhibits in the meeting hall. Further, the efforts of the Development Committee are beginning to pay off with increased endowment and increased support from industrial sources. These are promising results, but these trends must continue if the Society is to survive and thrive.

Has anyone read this far?

The SSR is your Society; it represents the world's best known forum for publication and presentation of research in reproductive biology. It also provides a place to meet, for exchange of ideas and for camaraderie among scientists. Please support your Society and help to maintain its fiscal health in any way you can. ■

—Bruce Murphy

News from *BOR*

The year 2002 has been a very exciting and successful one for *Biology of Reproduction*. The Bench>Press online submission, review, and manuscript processing feature was introduced in October 2001, and currently over 90% of manuscripts and revisions are being submitted online. Additionally, the much-anticipated Publish Ahead of Print feature was added in October 2002, allowing online posting of PDFs of papers within 15 days of acceptance.

In 2002 there were 922 new submissions and 784 revisions handled by the Editorial Office. The number of new submissions is a new record for *BOR* and represents a 28.4% increase over last year and a 42.9% increase during the tenure of the current editorial team.

The average time taken from submission to first decision was 24 days for new submissions, 17.6 days for revised manuscripts that had to be sent to one or more reviewers, and 4.3 days for revised manuscripts that required an editorial decision. The average time taken from first submission to final acceptance was 90.5 days; this, of course, was dependent upon when the revision was submitted. The overall acceptance rate was 55.7%.

All manuscripts were sent to three reviewers; 62.4% of the reviews were received on time, 19.4% were less than 1 week late, and 7.5% were between 1 and 2 weeks late. To meet the time deadlines for maintaining a prompt and timely turnaround time, the editors in some cases had to make decisions based on two reviews. The overall average for the number of reviewers per manuscript was 2.8.

The Associate Editor, Darrell W. Brann, the Editorial Coordinator, Paulette Sample, and I wish to extend to all of you a very happy, prosperous, and successful 2003. We also take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to the dedicated and coordinated effort of the Managing Editor and her staff, members of the Editorial Board, the reviewers, and the authors of manuscripts in helping bring *Biology of Reproduction* to its current state of excellence. ■

—Virendra B. Mahesh
Editor-in-Chief

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Every SSR member is a member of the Membership Committee. Yes, we do have a fine Membership Committee consisting of SSR members from around the world, but we need your help. Just think, if each SSR member would recruit one new member or check that past members have renewed their membership, our roll of members would increase significantly. Remember that the cost of membership for trainees is \$25, which is less than the difference between registration as a nonmember and member at SSR's Annual Meeting.

Here is where we stood on membership as of January 1, 2003. Membership as of June 30, 2002, is shown for comparison.

Category	6/30/02	1/1/03
Regular	1,517	1,341
Trainee	550	368
Associate	191	175
Emeritus	85	82

I urge all of you to recruit new members and check that former members have renewed. I am sure that each of us has someone in our research group or a faculty member next door who would welcome the opportunity to join SSR.

—Janice Bahr, Chair
Membership Committee

News from the Reproductive Sciences Branch, NICHD

As has been the case for the past several years, NIH has entered Fiscal Year 2003 without an appropriation. For NICHD, this means that noncompeting awards will be funded at committed levels, and awards for new or competing continuation grants will be issued, but on a more selective basis until there is an appropriation. Stay tuned!

Continuing with our intent to provide an overview of the scientific programs administered by the Reproductive Sciences Branch (RSB), this newsletter piece will highlight our two major clinical research programs: Reproductive Medicine Gynecology and Reproductive Medicine Andrology. The Reproductive Medicine Gynecology Program, directed by Dr. Estella Parrott, brings together a broad spectrum of initiatives that facilitate development of a multidisciplinary framework for a research agenda in benign gynecological conditions such as endometriosis, uterine fibroids, polycystic ovary syndrome, and premature ovarian failure. Several new initiatives seek to stimulate activities in underresearched areas of interest to the RSB. In this light, a Request for Applications (RFA), entitled *Leiomyomata Uteri: Basic Science and Translational Research*, has recently been issued to stimulate research into the mechanisms underlying the growth and pathogenesis of uterine fibroids. This RFA can be viewed at grants1.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-HD-03-005.html and has an application receipt date of April 14, 2003. Applications are also encouraged in the area of vulvodynia (PA-02-090; grants1.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-02-090.html); active until March 1, 2005) and basic biomedical research on pelvic floor structure and function.

Clinical trials are an important adjunct in our quest to delineate optimal treatment modalities. The Cooperative Reproductive Medicine Network is designed to conduct clinical studies in high-priority areas of reproductive medicine. This ongoing program is currently enrolling subjects in a randomized clinical trial comparing clomiphene citrate and metformin for the treatment of infertility in women with polycystic ovary syndrome.

NICHD has initiated several programs to meet the challenge of preparing a cadre of clinician-scientists for careers in academia. The Reproductive Scientist Development Program is a multidisciplinary, multi-institutional research career development program for obstetrician-gynecologists in cell and molecular biology and related fundamental sciences. The goal of the program is to identify and encourage academically promising young physicians within departments of obstetrics and gynecology who are seeking to develop a research career. The Women's Reproductive Health Research Career Development Centers program was developed by NICHD to support the careers of obstetrician-gynecologists who have recently completed postgraduate clinical training and are beginning basic, translational, and/or clinical research. The objective of this program is to increase the number and skills of obstetrician-gynecologist investigators through a mentored research experience leading to an independent scientific career addressing women's reproductive health. For further information about

these research programs and career development centers, please contact Dr. Parrott at 301-496-6515 or ep61h@nih.gov.

The Reproductive Medicine Andrology Program is directed by Dr. Tracy Rankin. This program encompasses studies of disorders of male reproductive function and of the male reproductive tract that affect fertility, as well as investigations of those processes involved in normal male fertility including studies of spermatogenesis, spermiogenesis, epididymal sperm maturation, structure and function of sperm-specific proteins, and spermatozoal motility regulation. Additionally, the Andrology Program supports studies on the development and function of the somatic cells of the testis, somatic-germ cell interactions, and the endocrine interactions that are critical for fertility acquisition and maintenance. Priority areas for this program include spermatogonial stem cell studies, studies on the function of the male accessory glands in normal reproductive function (epididymis, seminal vesicle, prostate), and clinical investigations focusing on male reproductive function. This research is supported primarily through funding of investigator-initiated projects, as well as through special initiatives. A Program Announcement (PA) entitled "Development of Cell-Selective Tools for Studies of the Bladder, Prostate, and the Genitourinary Tract" (grants1.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-02-143.html) is active through February 2005. Additionally, Dr. Rankin encourages investigators to utilize mouse mutants created through ENU mutagenesis, particularly those developmental mutants created at Baylor University that impact fertility (www.mouse-genome.bcm.tmc.edu/ENU/MutagenesisProj.asp). For more information, please contact Dr. Rankin at 301-435-6979 or rankint@mail.nih.gov. ■

—Louis DePaolo, Director
Reproductive Neuroendocrinology Program

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

One measure of the health of a society is the willingness of its members to nominate highly qualified individuals for elective office each year. This year our Society gets an A plus. We have received an impressive and lengthy list of individuals for each office: President-Elect, Treasurer, and two Directors. The Society appreciates your recent nominations. The SSR Nominating Committee is evaluating the nominees and will select several candidates for the ballot. The Directors during their meeting in February will approve the ballot, after which it will go to the membership for final voting. The new officers and directors will begin their terms of office at the Annual Meeting this summer in Cincinnati.

—Jan Roser, Chair
Nominating Committee

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