FASEB’S OUTREACH TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF WOMEN IN BIOMEDICAL CAREERS: THE SUCCESSES, CHALLENGES, AND BARRIERS

Yvette R. Seger, PhD - Director of Science Policy, FASEB
November 13, 2014
What is FASEB?
What Does FASEB Do?

- **Our Mission…**
  - Advance health and welfare by promoting progress and education in biological and biomedical sciences through service to our member societies and collaborative advocacy.

- It is accomplished through Public Affairs activities including…
  - Policy research and development
  - Advocacy and our role as government liaison
  - Coalition building
  - Communication and outreach
Science Policy at FASEB

FASEB Science Policy Committee
Chair: Vice-President for Science Policy
Members: Appointed Society Representatives

- Issues Pertaining to Federal Agency Research Portfolios
- Issues Pertaining to Grants Management/Administration
- Broad Research Policy Issues of Interest to FASEB Community
- Projects/Studies Demonstrating the Benefits of Biological Research

Standing Subcommittees
Members Nominated by Society/Self
- Animals in Research and Education
- Breakthroughs in Bioscience
- Clinical and Translational Research
- Data Science and Informatics
- Training and Career Opportunities

Ad hoc Subcommittees
Members Nominated by Society/Self
- Biosecurity
- Research Enterprise Evaluation
Federation-Level Activities to Promote Women Scientists
FASEB Excellence in Science Award

- Award recognizes achievement in research, mentorship, and leadership by women researchers who are members of a FASEB society
  - Awarded annually since 1989
  - $10,000 unrestricted research grant
  - Keynote lecture during annual meeting of FASEB society of awardee’s choosing
  - Travel and other expenses associated with annual meeting attendance
FASEB MARC Program

- FASEB’s has offered its Maximizing Access to Research Careers (MARC) program for over 30 years
- Supported by grant awards through NIGMS
- Diverse offerings for diverse audience:
  - Meeting Travel Awards
  - Peer Mentors Network
  - Grant Writing Training
  - Postdoc Workshop (Summer 2013)
Society-Level Activities to Promote Women Scientists
Benefits of Society Membership

- Discipline-specific conferences and meetings
- Discipline-specific journals
- Career development opportunities
- Leadership opportunities
- RESEARCH NETWORK
Common Offerings at Annual Meetings

- Career Development Workshops
- Networking Events
  - American Society for Bone and Mineral Research’s “Speed Networking” event
- Co-localized Meetings
  - Endocrine Society and Women in Endocrinology
Career Development

- Mentoring Networks
  - American Physiological Society, Endocrine Society

- Awards
  - Professional Opportunity Awards (travel to conferences, pursue additional research training)
  - Distinguished Scientist Awards (recognize scientific achievement)
  - Mentorship Awards (recognition of role in fostering the careers of grad students/postdocs)
Leadership

- Society Committees focused on issues of particular importance to women scientists
- Monitoring of representation of women and underrepresented groups on society councils and committees
- Increased awareness of Federation-level leadership positions and committees
Research Network

- Society activities foster the development of a research network beyond the home institution
- Participation in Federation-level activities can help expand research network into other disciplines
Successes, Challenges, and Barriers
Successes

- Societies recognize the value of fostering women scientists at the bench and within leadership positions.
- Societies recognize that effort is required to achieve and maintain equal representation of women in research and leadership positions.
- Societies employ a range of offerings and activities to improve the representation of women in research and leadership positions.
Challenges

- **Keeping women in the pipeline!**
- Many conferences still feature predominantly male speaker slates (American Association of Immunologists database)
- Women may not choose to run for leadership positions
- Successful programs may be expanded to serve the broader membership
- Limited reach of programs
  - Requires means to attend annual meetings
  - Awards help a small number of women
  - Network only works if people use it and bring others into it
Barriers

- Work-life balance of research career
- Funding environment
- Restrictions on conference travel
Recent FASEB Success Story

Judith S. Bond, PhD  
FASEB President 2012-13

Margaret K. Offermann, MD, PhD  
FASEB President 2013-14
Thank You!

Yvette Seger
yseger@faseb.org