

The International Union of Physiological Sciences: IUPS Editorial

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The International Union of Physiological Sciences

IUPS Editorial

This is the first of a newly established series of IUPS Editorials in *Physiology*. We thank the Editor-in-Chief, Walter Boron, for this opportunity to inform the readers of *Physiology* about the activities of International Union of Physiological Sciences (IUPS).

The most important recent IUPS event was the 35th International Congress of Physiological Sciences held in San Diego, California, from 31 March to 5 April, 2005. This Congress had many new features, including a very successful series of tracks covering some of the most important current physiological themes. As part of Experimental Biology, there were ample opportunities to benefit from and participate in events organized by friendly neighboring subjects and for members of these other societies to see what physiologists had to offer. With more than 10,000 registered participants, this gave unprecedented exposure to physiological research at a time when this subject is undergoing a major revival.

The 35th IUPS Congress in San Diego provided a much needed replenishment of IUPS resources. We therefore have good reasons to be very grateful to the American Physiological Society (APS), not only for organizing a superb scientific event, but also for helping the IUPS rebuild our finances so that we may again plan major initiatives. As described in the 2004 and 2005 IUPS Newsletters (<http://www.iups.org>) the scientific program for the San Diego Congress was generated by the IUPS International Scientific Program Committee (ISPC) in cooperation with the APS under the chairmanship of Walter Boron. Walter did a fantastic job for which IUPS is extremely grateful.

The San Diego Congress also represented the crowning achievement of IUPS President Allen Cowley, Jr. Allen was an outstanding President, responsible for a major restructuring and streamlining of the Union's Commission Structure, which did much to facil-

itate the scientific programming process for the San Diego Congress

During the San Diego Congress, the IUPS Council (for composition see the IUPS web site mentioned above), chaired by Akimichi Kaneko, who at the General Assembly in San Diego was elected to succeed Allen Cowley as IUPS President, met several times and a number of important decisions were made. The following three are perhaps of particular significance:

1) A Long-Range Planning Committee (LRPC) was established under the chairmanship of Denis Noble, who served as IUPS Secretary General from 1993 until 2001, when Ole Petersen took over. Denis has since completed the composition of this key committee. We are grateful to Denis, Allen Cowley, Cecilia Hidalgo, and Yasunobu Okada for taking on this task. The committee will present its report, making recommendations on future IUPS activities, as well as their resource implications, to the IUPS Council when it meets again in 2007. The LRPC is now seeking opinions from member societies and/or individuals on the future of the physiological sciences, the organization of IUPS, IUPS meetings, finance, relations with the International Council for Science (ICSU), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Brain Research Organization (IBRO), and other international organizations, as well as on public relations. We are very interested in receiving opinions from a wide range of the scientific community. Anyone wanting to comment on these issues should write to Denis Noble via the IUPS Secretariat in Paris (e-mail: suorsoni@infobiogen.fr) before 15 May 2006.

2) Council also elected a committee to come forward with specific plans for an Africa Initiative. Tony McKnight is chair with Ann Sefton and David Oyebola as members. The Committee is expected to develop a strategy to be presented to a funding agency to culminate in a major workshop in Africa in four years.

Council has allocated seed money to get this potentially important initiative under way.

3) After four years of working with the Commission Structure established by the 2001 Council elected in Christchurch, New Zealand, it was decided to make some adjustments. Based on the experience of planning for the San Diego Congress, it was felt desirable to have a new Commission on Molecular and Cellular Biology. The two Commissions that had previously dealt with various aspects of the neurosciences were merged into one consolidated Neurobiology Commission. The new Commission Chairs are listed on our web site.

Although it may seem early, planning for the 2009 IUPS International Congress of Physiological Sciences is already under way. The 36th International Congress of Physiological Sciences will be held in Kyoto, Japan, from 27 July to 1 August 2009. The IUPS ISPC has already been established. The (international) members elected by IUPS are: Yung Earm, South Korea; Malcolm Gordon, USA; John Hall, USA; Cecilia Hidalgo, Chile; Hans Hoppeler, Switzerland; Peter Hunter, New Zealand; Caroline McMillen, Australia; Ole Petersen, UK; Quentin Pittman, Canada; Irene Schulz, Germany; Ann Sefton, Australia; and Curt Sigmund, USA. Akimichi Kaneko, Japan, as IUPS President, Yoshihisa Kurachi, Japan, as Chair of the Local Scientific Program Committee, and Pierre Magistretti, Switzerland, as 2nd IUPS Vice-President, are Ex Officio members. The first meeting of the new ISPC will take place in Osaka, Japan, on 20 and 21 January 2006. At this meeting we shall establish the fundamental policy for the generation of the scientific program and specifically make a start to the selection of Plenary Lecturers. Some details about the Congress are already available at the IUPS web site.

In association with the 2006 January ISPC Meeting, the IUPS Executive Committee will also get together, and in our next IUPS Editorial we hope to give information about the decisions made at these two meetings. ■