

The International Union of Physiological Sciences IUPS Editorial VI

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Since our last IUPS editorial (1), the programme for the 2009 IUPS Congress in Kyoto, Japan has been completely finalized. Registration, abstract submission, and online hotel reservation have been open since 1st September 2008 via the Congress website (<http://www.iups2009.com>). As previously mentioned (1), Yoshihisa Kurachi, with the help of both the Local and International Scientific Program Committees, has done a great job in assembling a very broad programme covering the most exciting areas of current physiological research. There is a substantial number of Invited Lectures and a large number of Symposia, both regular IUPS Symposia as well as Physiological Society of Japan Symposia. The Congress website also contains information about Travel Grants, particularly relevant for young investigators from less affluent countries. The deadline for both abstract submissions and travel grant applications is 10th December 2008. The deadline for early registration (reduced fee) is 17th April 2009. To facilitate the participation of younger active investigators from less affluent countries, the IUPS Executive Committee recently decided to increase the IUPS contribution to the Travel Grant fund from US\$ 50,000 to US\$ 100,000.

Although scientific presentations and discussions are by far the most important aspects of the 2009 IUPS Congress, it will also—as usual for such events—provide an opportunity for dealing with the necessary process of electing a new Council and Executive Committee according to the constitution and by-laws of IUPS (<http://www.iups.org>). This happens at the General Assembly, which precedes the Congress itself. The General Assembly consists of the official delegates nominated by the adhering bodies of IUPS, typically national academies or national physiological societies. The number of delegates from each member country is related to the size of the national physiological community. There are also a number of observers, without voting rights, from countries and organizations that do not pay dues to IUPS. The IUPS Council had, at its meeting in 2007, elected a Nominations Committee (1), which met in September

2008 to consider the many names proposed by the National Societies and Academies to decide on the composition of the slate to be presented to the 2009 General Assembly. The Nominations Committee did not have an easy task. As usual in such matters, there were many factors, including relevant experience, scientific standing, field of research, gender, and nationality that had to be balanced. All members of the Nominations Committee (1) contributed actively to the selection process, and, happily, the final selection was agreed unanimously. The slate, which has been sent out to all IUPS adhering bodies (who—if they wish—have the right to make an alternate suggestion with respect to any proposed candidate) reads as follows.

Executive Committee

Denis Noble (UK), President
Yoshihisa Kurachi (Japan) Vice-President
Xian Wang (China), Vice-President
Malcolm Gordon (USA), Treasurer
Walter Boron (USA), Secretary General

Council

Antonio Campos de Carvalho (Brazil)
Peter Hunter (New Zealand)
Caroline McMillen (Australia)
Penny Moody-Corbett (Canada)
Quentin Pittman (Canada)
Jens Rettig (Germany)
Daniel Ricquier (France)
Marjan Rupnik (Slovenia)
Saeed Semnani (Iran)
Tobias Wang (Denmark)

We are happy to report that these 15 colleagues have all kindly agreed to serve following the 2009 Congress, if approved by the General Assembly in Kyoto.

Although the 2009 Kyoto Congress has—quite rightly—been dominating the thoughts of the IUPS Executive Committee, it is not the only major scientific event in which we have been involved. In October of this year, a joint conference of five major Physiological Societies took place in Beijing. The meeting developed from the original plan of a Joint Meeting between the Chinese Association for Physiological Sciences and The Physiological

Society (UK) and grew into a substantial congress involving also the American Physiological Society, the Australian Physiological Society, and the Canadian Physiological Society. There were 16 symposia, each with 5 invited speakers, several sessions with short communications, and almost 500 posters. We were delighted that IUPS was associated with this meeting as one of the four sponsors (the others were the Federation of Asian and Oceanic Physiological Societies, the National Natural Science Foundation of China, and the China Association for Science and Technology) and that Ole Petersen, as IUPS Secretary General, was invited to present an introductory greeting from IUPS at the Opening Ceremony. The meeting, under the Presidency of Fan Ming and with Xian Wang as Chair and Secretary General, was a great success, also signposting the remarkable progress of Chinese physiological research in recent years. It was particularly gratifying to see the large number of neuroscience posters (>100) at this meeting, with the largest proportion in the increasingly exciting field of systems neuroscience. The neuroscience community in many other parts of the world has regrettably become somewhat separated from the physiological community, which is a great loss for both. The Beijing meeting gave hope that the apparently successful integration of neuroscience with physiology in China may also inspire re-integration worldwide. Major parts of what is now often referred to as neuroscience or neurobiology are clearly part of physiology, and some of the most successful and influential techniques in neurobiology, such as patch-clamp current recording and imaging, are of course main-stream physiological techniques. Neurophysiologists have made great advances in imaging technologies and electrophysiological recordings, applied to behaving and even freely moving animals (2), in this way doing real systems biology under physiological conditions, from which other branches of physiology can learn a great deal. This is the idea behind the symposium on “Mapping of Signaling Networks,” chaired by Arthur Konnerth from Munich, which is included in the program of the 2009 IUPS Congress in Kyoto. In fact, the Kyoto Congress program contains a substantial number of neuro-physiological symposia, and there are no less than 13 Invited Lectures devoted to Neurobiology, including the Wallace Fenn Lecture by Erwin Neher and

the President's Lecture by Akimichi Kaneko. We hope that this will attract a large number of neuroscientists to Japan next year.

IUPS has a major commitment to the teaching of physiology. This is also reflected in the 2009 IUPS Congress program, which contains two education symposia. It is particularly important to provide active help to physiology teachers in countries that have relatively scarce financial

resources. In this context, two members of the IUPS Council, Ann Sefton and Tony Macknight, have recently (with financial support from IUPS) organized an Education Workshop in Kenya as part of the 2008 Congress of the African Association of Physiological Sciences (AAPS). The workshop, which was regarded as very successful, attracted ~80 participants. This event was the first concrete

contact for many years between IUPS and the AAPS, and we hope that this renewed relationship will deepen and develop further. ■

References

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2. Petersen CCH. The functional organization of the barrel cortex. *Neuron* 56: 339–355, 2007.