

A Busy, Innovative Year for AIBS

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BioScience

American Institute of Biological Sciences

A Busy, Innovative Year for AIBS

As we embark on a new year in which science continues to hold the key to success in many major ventures in public policy, AIBS has plans for helping to establish national scientific goals. Our program of activities for 2005 is somewhat different from that for recent years, but we trust it will further the goals of AIBS and its member societies and organizations (MSOs), as well as those of science in general.

First, we will hold AIBS board and council meetings in the spring. At the opening of the council meeting—at a banquet with a distinguished invited speaker—we will present our yearly awards: the Distinguished Scientist Award, the Outstanding Service Award, and the Education and Media Awards. We will also issue the AIBS 2005 Presidential Citation.

In addition, we will sponsor a major public policy forum, which will follow the council meeting, on the controversial topic of open access in research and publication. The occasion will give scientists the opportunity to discuss the effects of open access on research, professional societies, journals, libraries, and publishers. The event will also allow us to present information and suggest strategies to policymakers in Congress and in various agencies.

In the fall, we will present a symposium at the annual meeting of the National Association of Biology Teachers (NABT). The symposium on evolution that AIBS sponsored at the November 2004 NABT meeting was a resounding success that led to NABT's request for our participation again this year.

Another major event in the planning stages is a leadership summit. As AIBS's constituency expands (see the editorial and *AIBSnews* in the November 2004 issue of *BioScience*), it makes sense for the heads of our MSOs to meet each other, AIBS officers and other biologists, and representatives from federal agencies and other arms of government. Together we will discuss how to bring about a broad understanding of the vital role organismal biology plays in the nation's scientific enterprise. Participants in our first summit, held five years ago, developed a set of goals that have largely been met, so this ambitious plan for a summit of even broader scope has enormous potential for advancing the biology that AIBS encompasses.

Understandably, this full schedule of AIBS activities means that we must forgo our standard annual spring meeting with a symposium and discussion groups. However, we believe that this year's focus on special events concerning issues of pressing importance to our membership will give us not only a chance to make our voices heard in federal policymaking circles but also the opportunity to generate new ideas that will make future annual meetings lively and inspiring for everyone. We are not abandoning annual meetings; we are devoting this year to other important meetings that will enhance the value of future annual meetings.

To make these innovative meetings work, so that AIBS can better serve its constituency as well as science, we need your input. We want to hear from you. Both societies and individuals can and should tell us what you think about our plans and ideas and what we are doing; most important, we want to hear what you think we should be doing for you and for our science. Please be constructively critical, but please—especially—be creative. We want to represent our collective endeavor effectively and persuasively, but that can't happen unless you, individually and through your societies and institutions, are real contributors to our plans and activities. We need you, and we appreciate your efforts.

MARVALEE H. WAKE
President, AIBS