



NEWS FROM THE SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR, NIEHS

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SOT FELLOWSHIP -- Dr. Skip Matthews, Head of the Chemistry Section of the Laboratory of Pharmacology and Chemistry in the Environmental Toxicology Program at the NIEHS, has been named the Society of Toxicology Congressional Fellow for the year 2000.

The SOT Congressional Fellowship provides experienced scientists the opportunity to focus on scientific issues that are currently being debated in Congress and to contribute scientific and technical input to the process of developing public policy. Dr. Matthews will be integrated into the staff of one or more Congressional committees as a special assistant in which capacity he will serve as a scientific resource, applying his technical knowledge and the scientific method to a variety of public policy concerns. As an SOT Congressional Fellow, Dr. Matthews will interact with members of Congress, other staffers, lobbyists, regulatory agency representatives, and citizens. Communications can be in the form of background papers written for members of Congress or staffers, critiques of reports submitted by federal agencies or by lobbying groups, and presentations made to the staffs of other committees.

Dr. Matthews is scheduled to begin his one-year term as an SOT Congressional Fellow in January 2000, at which time he will take a leave of absence from the NIEHS. The SOT's advocacy group, Capitol Associates, is currently working with the SOT and Dr. Matthews to find an appropriate placement on Capitol Hill.

SCIENCE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS -- This is a reminder as to the policy that the DIR Council established in October, 1996 regarding Science Society Memberships. The Government may purchase memberships in a Government organization's name or name of an office. This would be similar to the mechanism used for the memberships under the Spa contract. A Laboratory/Branch may buy a reasonable and justifiable number of memberships in their specific office name. The Lab/Branch Chief can then assign each membership by its specific number to employees who warrant such membership (must be to someone whose

membership can be justified as a direct benefit to the Government). As soon as someone leaves NIEHS, they lose the membership. The DIR Council agreed that this mechanism could be used if desired for permanent and tenure track staff. The funding will come out of the laboratory's discretionary budget.

ENVIRONMENTAL GENOME PROJECT --The Interagency agreement with Dr. Harvey Mohrenweiser at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory has been renewed for a second year. We are re-sequencing environmental response genes as part of the Environmental Genome Program. DNA's from 72 normal individuals are being searched for Single Nucleotide Polymorphisms (SNP's). The goal is to determine the normal background SNP's as a prelude to determining disease related polymorphisms. Ten genes have been completely sequenced in the 72 DNA's during the first year, and their SNP's cataloged. Currently there are 24 genes in the queue, and DIR scientists are encouraged to submit genes into the program. If you are interested in this program, contact Dr. James Selkirk at extension 1-2548.

Y2K -- The NIEHS Y2K Working Group will be sending an all hands announcement about what to do the evening of 31-December-1999 and what to do if you feel there are problems when you next return to work. The e-mail will include details on what steps to take and who to contact for problem solutions. Contingency plans have been reviewed and no problems are anticipated.

DIR RETREAT -- The DIR Retreat of the PIs/Group Leaders, January 5-7, 2000 in Pinehurst, NC will begin Wednesday, January 5 with registration from 4:30 pm - 6:30 pm, dinner from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm and opening remarks and talks from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm. The retreat will conclude on Friday, January 7 immediately following lunch at 1:00 pm. A detailed agenda will be mailed to participants soon.

FELLOWSHIPS -- 2000-01 AAAS Environmental Science and Engineering Fellowship applications are due January 15, 2000. AAAS administers eight different fellowship programs which provide postdoctoral to midcareer scientists and engineers a unique opportunity to spend a year in Washington, DC, learning about and contributing to the public policymaking process. Applications are currently being accepted for the 2000-01 fellowships.

AAAS Fellows are placed in congressional offices or executive branch agencies, where they contribute technical expertise and external perspectives, while learning how government works. A comprehensive orientation program helps prepare the Fellows for their fellowship year. An application booklet is available in the Scientific Director's Office.