

Report of the Committee on Regions for the Year Ending June 30, 1999

The 1997-98 e-mail distribution list and committee meetings in conjunction with the Sigma Xi annual meeting, and, most importantly, the first "retreat" specifically for the Regional Directors in over a decade provided opportunities for the Committee on Regions to discuss regional perspectives related to issues before the Board which impacted the regions, shared successful strategies concerning chapter and regional activities, discussed how to make the chapters and regions more vibrant in the context of Sigma Xi, and, to discuss solutions to issues within and across the regions

Meetings

The Committee met in person on November 12 and 15, 1998 during the Sigma Annual Meeting in Vancouver, B.C. and on September 18-20, 1998 in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. The Virtual Committee meetings - first used last year to disseminate ideas, suggestions and solutions to all Committee members via an electronic mail list serve, and provide a subsequent discussion forum - have continued to be a valuable means of discussion at low cost in terms of dollars and member's time.

Governance

The Committee has had extensive discussions over the past several years on Regional alignment. These discussions have been melded into an extensive reorganization of the overall governance of the Society that was presented to the Assembly as a separate issue and ultimately resulted in a changes to the Constitution and Bylaws to reduce the number of Regional Directors on the Board from 2 per region to 1 per region and the addition of 6 constituency groups, representing: Area Groups, Industries, State & Federal Laboratories; Baccalaureate Colleges; Canadian/International; Comprehensive Colleges & Universities; Research & Doctoral Universities; and the Membership-at-Large.

After many years of thoughtful and often lively debates in various regions, the membership seems to be remarkably consistent in its support for the proposed governance changes. This year the Committee was extensively involved in developing responsibilities for the Regional Directors and new Associate Directors. The process is well underway, but will be a continuing process. The following was developed at the Regional Director's retreat and approved by the full Committee:

Mission Statement for Regional Directors:

As representatives of their regional constituencies, the Regional Directors communicate with, and actively participate within, all levels of the Society to establish and promote Sigma Xi's goals. Regional Directors are liaisons between chapters in their region and other elements of the Society such as the Board of Directors, committees of the Board, Societal staff, and programs. The Directors encourage, nurture and support chapters within their regions. As members of the Board of Directors, they provide leadership for the Society. Responsibilities include:

- Mentoring and promoting excellence
- Recognizing and promoting excellence
- Participating in Society governance
- Facilitating activities within the region

Regional Director Job Description

1. **Serve as link between chapters, board of directors and international headquarters.**
 - o Nurture and support chapters and members in the region
 - o Work with headquarters to identify and assist chapters in need of revitalization and to identify exemplary chapters and chapter programs
 - o Build a sense of community among Sigma Xi members at the chapter and regional level
 - o Bring issues raised at Regional Assemblies to the attention of the board or the appropriate officer, staff, or committee chair, and explain issues discussed by Board and board decisions to the Regional Assemblies and delegates.
 - o Lead e-mail discussions of issues between Board meetings, among chapter officers and delegates (and anyone else interested in being on the listserve?)
 - o Facilitate activities among sub-regional groupings (state, interests, etc.); these subgroupings may be of long or short duration, depending on interests and needs of the chapters.
 - o Facilitate
 - a. Nomination of individuals for Sigma Xi awards
 - b. Chapter mentoring programs
 - c. Spread of exemplary programs, including those of individual chapters and those organized by headquarters
 - o Identify
 - a. Regional Young Investigator Awardee
 - b. Committee members and future leaders
 - c. Exemplary chapter programs in the region
 - d. Chapters to receive Certificates of Excellence
 - e. Other forms of excellence which could foster the goals of Sigma Xi at the local, regional, national, or international level.

2. Society-Level Functions (Board of Directors)

- o Chair Regional Assembly of Delegates at Annual Meeting
- o Serve on Committee on Regions
- o Assist with issues that cross committee lines
- o Serve on other committees as requested, either as a member or as chair
- o Mentor incoming Regional Directors and Associate Directors
- o Provide information to committees as directed
- o Assist headquarters as requested with plans for the annual meeting, to ensure needs at the chapter and regional level are served

Young Investigator Award

The Young Investigator Award was initiated 3 years ago and recognizes scientific achievement, preferably in interdisciplinary research, within ten years of the awardee's highest earned degree. The Award alternates between recognizing physical scientists and life scientists. Last time awards in the biological sciences were evaluated. This year, for the second time, Directors of each Region are evaluating a number of highly qualified nominations for the 2000 Award in the physical sciences, and will forward their Regional selectees to the Committee on Awards. Each regional nominee will be designated as the Regional Young Investigator and will receive a letter and Certificate of Recognition, but there will only be the one Young Investigator Award for the Society each year.

In this chair's view, it has been a major improvement over the first round to have all applications go to headquarters for distribution to the Regional Chairs—this significantly reduces the probability of something falling between the cracks as regional director terms begin and end on different cycles from the nomination and selection cycle. The Committee thanks the staff for taking on this additional responsibility.

New Chair, Committee on Regions

At its meeting in Vancouver, the Committee elected a Chair and Vice-Chair for the Committee for next year since both Dr. Weiler and Dr. Padgett would leave the Committee on 1 July 1999. Dr. Bieber was elected Chair and Dr. Trefny Vice-Chair of the Committee for the year beginning 1 July 1999. New Regional Directors include Howard Ceri (Northwest), Christopher Lange (Northeast,) and Art Geller (Southeast). We hope you enjoy your term as much as we have ours!

Appreciation

The Sigma Xi staff has continued their outstanding support to the Committee as well as the Society as a whole. I extend the thanks of the Committee to Penny Padgett, George Hillyer, and Ginny Lyons as they complete their terms. They have been extremely thoughtful and active members. As I rotate off the Board myself this year I want to express my sincere appreciation to staff and the other Committee members who have made my job so enjoyable, and so easy due to all their hard work. In my opinion Sigma Xi is seriously understaffed. It is remarkable that so few individuals are able to do so much, for so many. Thank you!

Respectfully submitted,
C. Susan Weiler, Chair

Regional Directors

Penelope J. Padgett	David Campbell
Cathryn A. Manduca	Loran L. Bieber
Zachary Jacobson	Virginia V. Lyons
John U. Trefny	C. Susan Weiler
Ruth L. Hays	George V. Hillyer
Antonio Pita	William R. Klemm

Region

Mid Atlantic
North Central
Northeast
Northwest
Southeast
Southwest