Recap of BCVS Program From Scientific Sessions 2012

Looking back on Scientific Sessions 2012, we can highlight specific BCVS events and look ahead to more success in 2013. The largest American Heart Association scientific meeting took place Nov. 3-7 at the Los Angeles Convention Center – the first meeting for Sessions three. The conference was well attended, and each of the five days was heavily populated with BCVS programming. Many of you were able to take advantage of this outstanding forum of the latest and greatest in the field of cardiovascular biology and medicine.

A highlight of the first day of the meeting was the Early Career Investigator Program, which continues to be well attended. It provides a great opportunity for trainees and junior faculty to hear about the latest trends in extramural funding and pick up key pointers to writing successful manuscripts and grants. This should be a “can’t miss” event for any young cardiovascular investigator, and within this event there are specific talks for BCVS members. Our Early Career Committee is chaired by Aas Gustafson, PhD, who continues to do an excellent job. If you have suggestions for next year, contact either Gustafson or me.

Every year, the BCVS sponsors two separate scientific competitions: the Louis N. and Arnold M. Katz Basic Research Prize and the Melvin Marcus Young Investigator Award. After submission of manuscripts over the summer, five finalists are named to present their work for each competition at Scientific Sessions. Congratulations to Merkentin and Bers for these honors and for the recognition of the BCVS Council. Shaun Coughlin, MD, PhD, from UCSF, presented the Distinguished Scientist Lecture at Scientific Sessions 2012.

Our Council also recognizes a Distinguished Scientist every year at our annual business meeting and banquet. This year, the award went to Joan Hiler Brown, PhD, from University of California, San Diego. Finally, Robert J. Lefkowitz, MD, who happens to be my mentor and the mentor of more than 200 scientists, won the 2012 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for his work on G protein-coupled receptors. Lefkowitz from Duke University, Durham, N.C., shared this year’s prize with his former trainee, Brian Kobilka, MD, from Stanford University, Palo Alto, Calif. Congratulations to Lefkowitz on this pinnacle of honors.

A highlight of any Scientific Sessions is the BCVS Dinner. Held at the historic Biltmore Hotel in downtown Los Angeles, the evening had an electric air. Since the celebration was at the Biltmore Hotel, the home of the first Academy Awards, we had an Oscar theme, complete with red carpet, paparazzi and our own “Oscar-worthy”othy awards. During my State-of-the-Council Address, I was able to report that our membership is the highest it has ever been, and we once again inducted a host of new FAHAs. BCVS has been a leader at increasing the ranks of FAHAs. Overall, it was a fun night, and I welcome you to attend next year to find out firsthand how basic scientists relax.

I would like to remind everyone that the abstract submitter is active and open for the summer BCVS meeting to be held July 22-26 in Las Vegas. This meeting has become the go-to meeting for basic and translational cardiovascular scientists. Chairied by Elizabeth McNally, MD, PhD, and Eric Olson, PhD, FAHA, this meeting will have “Pathways to Cardiovascular Therapeutics” as a theme. This meeting will feature outstanding speakers with the latest data, so you won’t want to miss it.

Louis N. and Arnold M. Katz Award Finalists

- Sumylation Regulates Nuclear Localization and Function of Zinc Finger Transcription Factor ZIC3
  Li-Chen, MD, PhD, Texas Heart Institute, Houston

- Transcription Factor-Driven Conversion of Quiescent Cardiomyocytes to Recruiter Cells
  Hou-Chen Cho, PhD, Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute, Los Angeles

- A Nuclear Receptor-missRNA Circuit Links Control of Muscle Fiber Type to Energy Metabolism
  Ziang Gan, PhD, Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute, Orlando

- Mammalian Cardiac Renewal by Pre-existing Cardiomyocytes
  Samuel E. Senyo, PhD, Brigham & Women’s Hospital/Harvard Medical School, Boston

- Numb and Numb Like Are Required forRenewing Cardiomyogenic Cell Fate
  Lefkowitz, M.D., NIH, Bethesda, Md.

- Chimeric GPCR Induces Vascular Remodeling
  Arlow, M.D., University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

- A New Signaling Pathway in Adipocytes Regulates Adipocyte Differentiation
  Pak, M.D., University of California, Los Angeles

A highlight of any Scientific Sessions is the BCVS Dinner. Held at the historic Biltmore Hotel in downtown Los Angeles, the evening had an electric air. Since the celebration was at the Biltmore Hotel, the home of the first Academy Awards, we had an Oscar theme, complete with red carpet, paparazzi and our own “Oscar-worthy”othy awards. During my State-of-the-Council Address, I was able to report that our membership is the highest it has ever been, and we once again inducted a host of new FAHAs. BCVS has been a leader at increasing the ranks of FAHAs. Overall, it was a fun night, and I welcome you to attend next year to find out firsthand how basic scientists relax.

I would like to remind everyone that the abstract submitter is active and open for the summer BCVS meeting to be held July 22-26 in Las Vegas. This meeting has become the go-to meeting for basic and translational cardiovascular scientists. Chairied by Elizabeth McNally, MD, PhD, and Eric Olson, PhD, FAHA, this meeting will have “Pathways to Cardiovascular Therapeutics” as a theme. This meeting will feature outstanding speakers with the latest data, so you won’t want to miss it.

By John W. Calvert, PhD

Summary of 2012 BCVS Scientific Sessions

The annual BCVS Scientific Sessions has become one of the most informative and worthwhile conferences for scientists and healthcare professionals in the field of cardiovascular science. Last year’s conference, held July 23-25 at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside in New Orleans, was the largest conference to date with more than 350 attendees. The organizing committee directed by Roger Hajjar, MD, FAHA, Ammaras Leri, MD, FAHA, and Yihun Wang, PhD, arranged an outstanding program with the theme of “Frontiers in Cardiovascular Science and Novel Therapy.”

Over the course of four days, attendees were treated to presentations ranging from basic discoveries in molecular biology and proteomics to translational advances in cell-based therapies. The conference also featured three poster sessions, which allowed more than 150 students, fellows and other trainees to network and discuss their latest findings.

Two true giants in the field of cardiology delivered the keynote lectures. Eugene Braunwald, MD, of Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Boston, turned entertaining the audience during the opening session by highlighting major achievements of his career that have affected the field of cardiology with his presentation, titled “Adventures in Cardiovascular Research.” Valentine Fuster, MD, PhD, of Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York, delivered the second keynote lecture. His lecture focused on his early work investigating high-risk plaque and highlighted his recent efforts to raise awareness about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.

Three exceptional candidates participated in the Outstanding Early Career Investigator Award competition. All of the presentations were excellent, and each of the finalists should be congratulated for this achievement. Reza Ardehali, MD, PhD, from Stanford University, Palo Alto, Calif., won the competition.

Two career development workshops that were organized by the Early Career Committee of the BCVS were also popular. Topics ranged from insights into how to find a postdoctoral position in the U.S. to transitioning from academia to industry. I strongly encourage all students, fellows and early career investigators to attend future sessions provided by the Early Career Committee. Not only are they insightful and provide a wealth of information, they will help you navigate the early years of a career in cardiovascular research.

Visit my.americanheart.org/bcvscouncil for more information about the 2012 AHA BCVS Scientific Sessions, including select presentations.

Also, mark your calendars for this year’s conference and be sure to mark July 22-25 in Las Vegas.

By John W. Calvert, PhD

If you have suggestions for next year, contact either Gustafson or me.