Team Science Reaches New Frontiers

The ATVB Council is founded on the principle of interdisciplinary science, connecting the fields of arteriosclerosis, vascular biology and thrombosis. I am happy to report that the spirit of team science was alive and well at Scientific Sessions 2016 in New Orleans, perhaps best exemplified by the “Frontiers in Science: Thrombosis Summit.” Organized in partnership between the ATVB, PVD and FGTB Councils, the Thrombosis Summit succeeded in bridging together basic scientists, clinical investigators and clinicians with broad interests in thrombosis and anticoagulation. It was rewarding to see such a great turnout. We had overflow crowds at several sessions. As we had hoped, the frontiers format generated lots of discussion and enthusiasm, and clearly demonstrated that we can achieve more by working together. Many thanks to Xiaoping Du, MD, PhD, and Jose Diaz, MD, for their work in helping organize such a successful program.

Each year at Scientific Sessions, our Council has the honor of recognizing a distinguished lecturer in each of our core scientific areas. This year, Stanley Hazen, MD, PhD, FAHA, delivered the George Lyman Duff Memorial Lecture on “Gut Microbiota and Atherothrombotic Heart Disease.” Ira Tabas, MD, PhD, FAHA, presented the Russell Ross Lectureship in Vascular Biology on “Defective Inflammation Resolution in Atherosclerosis: Mechanisms and Therapeutic Opportunities.” John Griffin, PhD, FAHA, presented the Sol Sherry Distinguished Lecture in Thrombosis on “Neuroprotective Therapy by Recombinant Activated Protein C.” These three outstanding lectures were a highlight of Sessions for me.

Finally, we congratulate Alan Fogelman, MD, FAHA, for receiving the ATVB Distinguished Achievement Award, which recognizes individuals who have made major contributions to the ATVB Council and its professional field over a sustained period of time. Congratulations, Dr. Fogelman. I cannot think of a more deserving recipient of this award.

From the Editor’s Corner

This issue of Connections historically has served as a highlight issue for events from Scientific Sessions. As in previous years, the ATVB Council had a large number of named lectures and awards at Scientific Sessions, with topics ranging from the role of the gut microbiome and inflammation in progression of atherosclerosis to neuroprotection in thrombotic stroke.

This issue is not only coming off the heels of Scientific Sessions, but also after a heated presidential election. Regardless of your political party affiliation, this election cycle highlighted one important issue: Now, more than ever, it is critical for scientists to communicate their findings to the general population, and advocate for the importance of supporting research. The ATVB Council will be starting several new initiatives in 2017 to provide opportunities for Council members to reverse this societal disconnect from investigation in the basic sciences, so stay tuned to future issues of Connections for opportunities to become involved.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Steven R. Lentz, MD, PhD, FAHA
Early Career Corner

Greetings from the ATVB Early Career Corner. First, we would like to thank all of you who attended our early career activities at Scientific Sessions in New Orleans. We kicked off our new partnership with the Council on Basic Cardiovascular Sciences Early Career Committee, and had a fantastic program of content on the Early Career Day. Feedback was positive, and the trainees and junior investigators enjoyed hearing from leaders at the National Institutes of Health, who spoke about navigating the grant process; the editor-in-chief of each of our three major journals, Circulation, Circulation Research, and ATVB; and other prominent figures in our field who shared insights about starting their labs and mistakes to avoid when transitioning to independence.

A highlight of the day included a session in which three “generations” of internationally recognized mentors and their “intellectual offspring” spoke about how to cultivate talent and set yourself up for success. We look forward to continuing this exciting program in the future.

As usual, our ATVB Young Investigator Award competition was a hard-fought battle, where we heard about cutting-edge science from top junior investigators in our field. This year, our finalists included Ying Wang, PhD, from the University of British Columbia, who spoke about smooth muscle cell phenotype switching; Dennis Wolf, MD, from the La Jolla Institute for Allergy and Immunology, who spoke about protective autoimmunity in atherosclerosis; and two finalists from the Houston Methodist Research Institute, Shu Meng, MD, PhD, and Gianfranco Matrone, PhD, who spoke about separate aspects of an exciting new endothelial cell regulator known as LMO2. After much debate, Dr. Wang was named as the recipient of this prestigious award and was recognized at our annual networking reception, which our Early Career Committee hosted. This event was a huge success, and the 70 top-scoring early career abstract submitters were invited to a cocktail reception to discuss their research and to network. Watching the room, it was clear that several people took advantage of this venue to secure interviews for new postdoctoral positions and kindle new collaborations. Special congratulations to Valentin Yakubenko, PhD, who was recognized for producing the overall top-scoring abstract.

Looking forward, we are excited to convene for the ATVB|PVD 2017 Scientific Sessions, May 4-6, in Minneapolis. I suspect we will have all fully recovered from last year’s meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, and be ready for another week of great science and even better camaraderie. In keeping with tradition, our Early Career Committee will host a number of exciting events geared toward trainees, postdocs and junior faculty, including a meet-the-professor luncheon and a new session on how to identify and cultivate one’s leadership strengths, complete with Myers-Briggs consultations. It is going to be a great conference, and we’ve already confirmed that the Minnesota Twins will be in town. Travel grants are available, so be sure to apply.

Women’s Leadership Committee Report

The ATVB Women’s Leadership Committee is committed to fostering fellowship and promoting excellence among women in science and academic medicine. It encourages the advancement of women’s scientific careers at all stages and promotes the visibility and engagement of women in ATVB Council and AHA activities.

In July 2016, I took over as Chair of the WLC, with Isabella Grumbach, MD, PhD, FAHA, serving as the Vice Chair. The outgoing Chair, Daisy Sahoo, PhD, continues to serve on the committee to ensure continuity and seamless transition. Other members of the WLC are Elena Aikawa, MD, PhD; Hong Chen, PhD; Sumitra Miriyala, PhD; Elizabeth Tarling, PhD; Hong Wang, MD, PhD; and Hanrui Zhang, MD, PhD. Cindy St. Hilaire, PhD, is the new liaison on the WLC from the Early Career Committee.

One of the highlights of the WLC is our sponsorship of the networking luncheon at Scientific Sessions. This forum brings together basic and clinical scientists with a wide range of experience and expertise, and forces conversations among junior, mid-career, and established investigators. At Scientific Sessions 2016 in New Orleans, about 75 researchers engaged in a range of discussions, including career opportunities, obtaining funding, time management, collaboration, networking strategies, self-advocacy and learning how to time critical career moves. It was a fabulous and energetic session, which was made possible by the active and whole-hearted participation of our Council discussion leaders: Nancy Webb, PhD, Thomas Vallim, PhD, Lisa Tannock, MD, Jonathan Smith, PhD, Katey Rayner, PhD, Phil Owens, PhD, Jordan Miller, PhD, Nick Leeper, MD, Shobha Ghosh, PhD, Alan Daugherty, PhD, and Kerry-Anne Rye, PhD. On behalf of the WLC, I thank all of the leaders and lunch attendees, and I hope that you spread the word about this networking opportunity especially for junior investigators of both genders.

The next WLC-sponsored event is the networking luncheon at the 2017 ATVB spring meeting. In addition to hosting a high-profile guest speaker, we will recognize and award a senior investigator who has played a prominent role in mentoring women and a junior female investigator for excellence in research. This promises to be an exciting event. I invite you to sign up for the networking luncheon and ask that you urge new attendees to participate. I look forward to seeing you in Minneapolis.