

## ASHG Spring 2018 Board Meeting Update

The ASHG Board of Directors met in Bethesda, MD, April 16-17, 2018. The Board provided feedback on and approved many program topics, and reviewed and approved the FY19 budget. The Board also discussed governance best practices, approved the launch of a strategic planning window for the Society, and established a set of advisory groups to inform staff on several emerging topics.

### Annual Meeting and Journal Remain Strong

The Board discussed emerging directions of *The American Journal of Human Genetics* with Editor-in-Chief Bruce Korf. Korf is focused on maintaining overall research quality and an excellent author experience, along with expanding the journal's breadth of topics, including new commentaries. Program Committee Chair Heather Mefford discussed the **2018 Annual Meeting** scientific program and other preparations for a successful meeting. The Board also reviewed and discussed a new statement regarding professional conduct at the Annual Meeting that was approved by the Executive Committee and released over the winter, and will be refining ASHG's approach to address any cases on site. The Board also provided input and authorization for staff to select future meeting locations for years 2027-2031.

### Policy and Education Discussions Focus on Importance, Impact, Member Engagement

As **policy and advocacy** is a high priority for the Society, the Board reviewed the previously-approved policy agenda and agreed on a proposed prioritization across a diverse set of topics relevant to research, medicine, and society. They also discussed emerging directions for greater member engagement in policy and advocacy. Additionally, to strengthen and speed the Society's ability to monitor the policy environment and produce policy statements for Board approval, the Board created a new *Public Policy and Advocacy Advisory Group* to guide implementation of legislative activities and other key advocacy efforts. Comprised of two Board members and five additional ASHG members to be identified, the group will operate for a two-year trial period and meet for the first time in San Diego.

The Board welcomed Information & Education (I&E) Committee Chair Jannine Cody by phone to discuss potential future ASHG **education** activity. Education is a key element of ASHG's mission and, given a wide array of possible options for educational focus, the Board expressed interest in exploring how to ensure ASHG programs have broadest reach and significant impact with available resources. The Board heard and provided very positive feedback on I&E Committee discussions thus far and reaffirmed the committee's current core mission and audiences: informing students, building awareness among the general public, and educating human genetics professionals. The board validated the committee's proposed program "principles" including ensuring programs are scalable and able to serve more people; data-driven; and mindful of the great diversity of the ASHG membership, from racial, ethnic, career-stage and geographic diversity to diversity of research interest and medical/scientific specialty. Given larger Society goals to increase member value, the Board also encouraged the I&E Committee to ensure education programming engages and serves ASHG members.

### Board to Begin Strategic Planning Period, Seeks Member Input

Given rapid changes in the field, the roles of scientific societies, and ways they can serve their communities, the Board agreed it should revisit the current ASHG strategic plan, which was last updated in 2014. The Board will meet in early 2019 for a special session to discuss how ASHG can best serve its

membership and broader community within its resources, and will explore areas of unique strength, member priorities, and field needs.

To inform that session, the Society will actively seek and integrate feedback from members, as well as other allied groups and partners. The Board stressed the importance of ASHG seeking strong participation in its upcoming member survey and directed staff to ensure that ASHG provides opportunities for input at the Member Business Meeting and other Annual Meeting sessions. To support discussion of **membership** overall, the Board approved a Board-level *Membership Advisory Group* to inform staff as they analyze membership trends and data and develop strategies to better engage and serve members.

#### *Affirming the Importance of Committee Service, Charters, and Communication*

To sustain the Society's strong momentum, the Board discussed the importance of reinforcing and clarifying the vital roles committees play to achieve the mission of the Society and to engage members in shaping ASHG directions. The Board reviewed progress over the last six months to organize and broaden the committee nominations process, which was a priority out of the fall meeting, and created a 1-year Board-led *Advisory Group on Committees* that will have additional representation from the Nominating Committee. Its initial focus will be to: improve communication both directly and through clearer, more standard charges, charters, terms and compositions; review the Society's current committee structure, nominations process and bylaws language; and continue to encourage new participation and diversity of all kinds on committees.

#### *Budget & Operations*

Upon the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Board discussed and approved the FY19 annual budget for the period July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019. This new fiscal year reflects a Board vote last year and will better align with the Society's revenue and expense cycles. The approved budget keeps expenses largely consistent with the previous year, and anticipates additional revenue with modest increases in meeting registration and membership fees that help keep pace with inflation, while minimizing the impact on members. The Board also approved several strategic investments including funds necessary to address deferred maintenance in a range of technology and data systems; support the strategic planning session; and improve communications through a thoroughly revamped website planned for 2019. As a best practice, the Board met with the new ASHG audit firm and reviewed and voted to accept the [2017 Audited Financial Statements](#). As the Society is moving from its long-time location on the campus of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology, the Board also briefly discussed move plans and continued some investment in move-related operations and technology needs.