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Dear RSA Members,

I have been President of RSA for about 6 months and thought it might be good to provide some information. The Executive Committee [Dr. Peter Monti (Vice President), Dr. Ken Leonard (Treasurer), Dr. Mary Larimer (Secretary) and Dr. Kathy Grant (Immediate Past President)] has met monthly, and on an ad hoc basis, to discuss and address issues of importance to our Society

I started my year by taking an inventory of the Society by talking with all committee chairpersons. An attempt was made to identify the activities of their committees, the people involved, and their goals for this year. We discussed ways that the RSA infrastructure could assist them in their work. This was a very gratifying experience for me personally. It reminded me once again about the dedication, and spirit, of RSA members as well as the amount of personal effort that many people expend in the functioning of the Society. We owe each and every one of them a big THANK YOU for all that they do.

While all committees are very active, I wanted to highlight some important activities. Space and time limitations preclude me from documenting everything here, so I will address things of importance to the Society.

The Program Committee, which consists of US and International members, met at the annual meeting in Chicago. The committee co-chairs, Drs. Adron Harris, Peter Miller, and Rajita Sinha hit the ground running! Two exemplary plenary speakers were chosen and a third added by ISBRA for the upcoming meeting. Currently, the committee is hard at work reviewing the 96 symposia and over 1000 abstracts submitted by RSA and ISBRA members (and non-members) for the joint RSA/ISBRA meeting in Washington DC this June. Dr. Ed Riley did a remarkable job in submitting a grant to NIAAA to provide funding to some non-US scientists to attend this meeting.

The Education Committee, under the lead of Dr. Jennifer Thomas, and with help from Susan Barron and others, submitted a grant to NIAAA to help support a lecture series (teaching day) on the Saturday prior to the start of the conference. RSA has also committed to support a substantial part of this activity. The intent is to digitalize the presentations and make them available on the RSA website. The hope is that well over 100 attendees (including students and lay organizations) might attend this event.

The Nominations Committee, chaired by Dr. Kathy Grant, will need the active support of the membership in identifying excellent candidates for RSA Vice-President and RSA Treasurer. These are the only two elected offices on the upcoming ballot and both offices are of obvious importance to the Executive functions of the RSA. Instructions for the nominations process have been e-mailed to you directly by the RSA office and the nominations are due by February 15, 2008 to DebbyRSA@sbcglobal.net.

The Government Affairs and Advocacy Committee (GAAC) has been slightly reorganized and energized in a number of directions. Dr. Sara Jo Nixon has done a remarkable job over many years keeping the RSA goals and ideas in front of various groups, including our US Congress. This year Dr. Steve Treistman is taking on more of a role as co-chair and I have personally tried to spend more time working with Williams and Jensen, our representatives in Washington DC. This committee has been tracking the action on the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Parity Legislation and has sent letters of support of this legislation to various members of Congress. The GAAC with the help of George Olsen of Williams and Jensen has produced a "white paper" of alcohol facts that we will use as an educational tool for Congress, various interest groups, national organizations, and others. We will be sending out a final draft to membership shortly. I will represent RSA at a "Friends of NIAAA" meeting to be held in Washington DC in late January, which will bring together a number of advocacy groups to discuss ways of supporting more educational efforts on the causes, prevention and intervention of Alcohol Use Disorders. Dr. Carlton Erickson, chair of the National Advocacy and Public Education Committee (NAPE) has joined the GAAC with my expressed interest in closing the gap between government advocacy and public advocacy. The GAAC has also developed a list of all RSA members and their associated Senate and House representatives that could be used for future purposes as needed to support common efforts on alcohol and drug legislation. The goal of the GAAC is to communicate more thoroughly and frequently with the RSA membership and hopes that the RSA membership will stay informed and assist in various ways.

The Research Priorities Committee, chaired by Michael Charness, has assembled three subcommittees (chaired by Drs. Deborah Hasin, Sarah Mattson, and Kari Buck) to provide a list of research priorities that could inform the strategic plan and priorities for future NIAAA initiatives and funding. Dr. Charness would like the RSA membership to provide feedback, by February 15 so the committee can finalize its work by March 1. Please send feedback to the subcommittee chair that most closely identifies with your suggestions and field of interest (Hasin: dsh2@columbia.edu; Mattson: smattson@sunstroke.sdsu.edu; Buck: buckk@ohsu.edu) or miscellaneous comments to mcharness@hms.harvard.edu.

With Board approval, I have asked Dr. Mark Goldman to head up a special Task Force to collect data and disseminate information on new ideas and policy in regards to the NIH grant review process. This Task Force with representation from many experienced RSA members is working hard on this mission. We will be seeing more communications from them in the near future. They are also open to thoughts and comments from the RSA membership.

Dr. Mary Larimer, our Secretary, has taken on the arduous, but important task, of revamping the RSA website. RSA committee chairs expressed wide spread interest in up-scaling our website. There is a clear need for change in form, some change in content, and the need for a greater interational component. Mary has been working with Debby Sharp to identify needs and solicit feedback from the Board and Committee Chairs. The goal is to make our RSA website an attractive and user-friendly "go-to" site for all RSA members. We envision posting of committee reports, special notices, educational material, and links to our cousin organizations. The goal is to achieve an online functioning version of a new website within the first six months after this year's annual meeting.

At the request of the Board, and with input from the Executive Committee, our Treasurer, Dr. Ken Leonard, will be sending out an RFA for an investment advisor with the goal of investing some of RSA's considerable funds with a goal of greater future returns. This will be a conservative approach that targets achievable steady returns with a minimal of risk.

Dr. Darin Knapp and the Membership Committee has been working hard to expand new members, especially among early career alcohol investigators. He is also working with the Education Committee to welcome and support new people coming to the RSA meeting for the first time.

Dr. Henry Kranzler and the Fundraising Committee have been working very hard and expansively in a very tough environment to secure support for our annual meeting. To achieve this, the committee is going beyond our normal avenues of support. We wish them well.

Dr. Cindy Ehlers and the Awards Committee would like as many nominations for the Distinguished Investigator and Young Investigator awards as possible. Please get nominations in to her by the January 31st deadline for consideration of presentations at this year's annual meeting.

The RSA/ISBRA journal Alcohol Clinical and Experimental Research continues to be very successful under the watchful eyes of Drs. Ivan Diamond and Harriet De Wit. Dr. Jan Hoek and the Publications Committee continue to seek novel ideas for distribution, advertising, and publication. There was some discussion regarding publishing some aspects of the RSA Lecture Series at the annual meeting in the journal or possibly even a monograph or book. The field might benefit from an up to date overview of alcohol research every few years.

Very importantly, Debby Sharp, in her expanded role, has visited future meeting sites. We have signed contracts for several future annual meeting sites. In 2010 the meeting will be in San Antonio, TX, in 2011 it will be in Atlanta, GA and in 2012 it will be in San Francisco, CA. Through Debby's hard work, and in consultation with Anna and Ken Taylor, we have secured favorable space, rooms and rates for these future meetings. In addition, Debby has been hard at work with the Program Committee, GAAC, Executive Committee, and others to maintain the RSA office in tip-top shape. The added strain of this year's International Meeting is alleviated somewhat by the able assistance of Michelyn Lintz at the ISBRA office in Colorado. I and my ISBRA colleague Dr. Toshi Saito thank all those who are working very hard to make the upcoming meeting a success. We encourage attendance at what is shaping up to be a wonderful meeting in Washington DC. The opening reception will be held at the National Museum of the American Indian, an inspiring and fitting venue to celebrate an important part of our American Heritage.

It has been my privilege to serve my fellow RSA members in capacity of President but it is all of you that have significant impact by your work, and in your advocacy. I am continuously encouraged by the dedication of the many scientists of our Society, and the progress being made to understand, prevent, and treat the many Americans and World Citizens with Alcohol Use Disorders. Keep up the good work, and your elected officials as well as volunteer committees will continue to work for you!

Thank you,



Raymond F. Anton, MD
President of the Research Society on Alcoholism