2008 AAAS GOLDEN FUND UPDATE

A generous, historic gift from the late William T. Golden, AAAS's treasurer emeritus, stimulates programmatic innovation by funding activities not normally supported by the general budget. AAAS has continued to celebrate Mr. Golden's extraordinary legacy, following his death in October 2007, through initiatives made possible by the William T. Golden Endowment Fund for Program Innovation. The following summaries offer highlights of the Association's 2008 Golden Fund activities.

1. AAAS Meeting Newsroom Goes Multimedia
   The AAAS Office of Public Programs launched a new initiative to provide remote access to reporters unable to attend the 2009 Annual Meeting. With support from the Golden Fund, AAAS staff members were able to record all news briefings, and they posted audio to the Virtual Newsroom on the EurekAlert! Web site. Additionally, an outside contractor, in collaboration with AAAS staff, produced advance podcasts featuring six news briefing speakers. During the meeting, the contractor produced five additional short video interviews for posting to the Virtual Newsroom as well as EurekaTube! Reporters on-site at the meeting also were able to improve story accuracy by checking multimedia files.

2. Student Communicators and Science Podcasts
   Building on next-generation “Web 2.0” strategies — for which online users create content — one new Golden Fund project will engage students in learning by discovering how to tell stories about science. Specifically, students will report on Science Express papers for the Science Magazine Podcast. The student reports will be created after research papers are first published online and before the papers appear in the print magazine. Students will be learning about science through a newly created course — scheduled to be piloted at George Washington University in fall 2009 — and also about audio reporting through a Web portal adapted from the world of public radio. AAAS Mass Media Science and Engineering Fellows will work with the students to craft audio reports via the Web portal, with top edits and podcast publishing decisions made by the online editors at Science.

3. Using Multimedia to Enrich Online Research Content
   A new Golden Fund project for the Science Web sites explores online video's potential to enhance the accessibility of the complex techniques that underlie groundbreaking new research. Under the project, Science and Science Signaling editors are selecting certain papers that have a strong lab-methods component. Then, working with the papers' authors, Science and a third-party partner are creating step-by-step videos depicting the laboratory procedures and methods relevant to the article and the research in question. The resulting videos will be embedded directly into the online version of the articles alongside the written description of the methods. Even the best-written methods or protocols section of a traditional paper can be difficult to follow or reproduce exactly. By showing, as well as telling, how the work was accomplished, Science hopes that these videos will improve the transparency, accessibility, and reproducibility of research findings.

4. Senior Scientists and Engineers Promote Learning
   The AAAS Senior Scientists and Engineers (SSE) and Education and Human Resources (EHR) programs will re-design and expand the Web site — www.seniorscientist.org — to become a resource for others seeking to set up or enhance a volunteer project. In this way, SSE and AAAS are working to help mobilize retired science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) professionals in the United States to assist K-12 teachers and others. The Web site will be a “toolkit” of resources that builds on the work of EHR, the SSE, and other volunteer programs around the United States. The site will support the creation, sustenance, evaluation, and networking of these partnerships and provide a template for new networks that are created.
5. Supporting Rwanda's Education Plan

In the nearly 15 years since genocide devastated their nation, Rwanda’s leadership has been actively working to build for the future. As he outlined in his invited address at the 2008 AAAS Annual Meeting in Boston, Rwandan President Paul Kagame has committed his country to a development plan that places science and technology as its highest priority, and human resource development as its critical centerpiece. As part of AAAS’s continuing relationship with Rwanda, the International Office, Education and Human Resources program, and Project 2061 were funded to assemble a delegation of experts to assist in training key elements of Rwanda’s science and education leadership. In 2009, six experts will travel to Rwanda to meet with counterparts and provide training in areas including education policy, science communication, curriculum instruction, and assessment development. This delegation will develop critical links to experts in Rwanda to facilitate ongoing collaboration for years to come.

6. Training for Scientists at State and Local Levels

The AAAS Center for Science, Technology, and Congress (CSTC), the Center for Public Engagement with Science and Technology, and the Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion (DoSER) held a one-day workshop in Tulsa, Oklahoma, that brought together representatives from various U.S. state science academies, state citizens for science groups, and state science teacher associations. AAAS staff and invited speakers, including Eugenie Scott of the National Center for Science Education, provided more than 30 scientist and science educator attendees with tools to enhance their communication and political engagement on the state and local level. The workshop used recent and pending local and state science education legislation, including bills that seek to hamper the teaching of evolution, as prominent examples. A video of the workshop will be packaged into a new resource that will be available on AAAS’s Web site and promoted to attendees, as well as others who expressed interest in the content but were unable to attend.