Public Statements on Key Issues

AAAS increased awareness about science and technology issues of crucial importance to our health and well-being through enlightening op-eds, presentations, official letters of protest, commendations, and testimony before Congress. The statements tackled such hot topics as stem cell research, evolution, and climate change, inserting the rational voice of science into public debate.

EVI LUTION IN THE NEWS

- 23 March. “Texas Case Threatens Education and Competitiveness Nationally,” San Antonio Express-News, by AAAS President (2009-2010) Peter C. Agre, director of the Malaria Research Institute at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, with the AAAS CEO.

GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

- 21 October. AAAS and 17 other scientific organizations sent a letter to members of the U.S. Senate, asserting that “rigorous scientific research” and “multiple independent lines of evidence” clearly support the reality of global climate change tied to human activities. “The severity of climate change impacts is expected to increase substantially in coming decades,” the letter concluded.
- 4 December. AAAS reaffirmed the position of its Board of Directors and leaders of other scientific organizations, noting that “global climate change is real, it is caused largely by human activities, and the need to take action is urgent.” While noting that investigations are appropriate whenever questions are raised regarding the transparency or rigor of science, isolated questions cannot overturn a century of robust evidence, AAAS asserted.
- 9 December. “Don’t let the climate doubters fool you,” op-ed, Washington Post, by AAAS CEO Alan I. Leshner, executive publisher, Science and related journals. “Climate-change science is clear,” Leshner wrote in a pointed response to an essay by former Alaska Governor Sarah Palin. “Major health and economic impacts are likely unless we act now to slow greenhouse gas emissions.”
- 11 December. The Guardian of the United Kingdom.
- 12 December. Los Angeles Times.
- 12 December. Daily News Tribune of Waltham, Massachusetts.
- 12 December. The MetroWest Daily News of Framingham, Massachusetts.
- 14 December. Atlanta Journal Constitution of Georgia.
- 14 December. The Juneau Empire of Alaska.
- 16 December. Bucks County Courier Times of Pennsylvania.
- 17 December. The Providence Journal of Rhode Island.

SCIENCE DIPLOMACY

- 24 March. Norman P. Neureiter, senior advisor to the AAAS Center for Science, Technology, and Security Policy, testified before a U.S. House subcommittee regarding the value of U.S. international scientific cooperation as a cornerstone of constructive foreign policy.
SCIENCE EDUCATION
- 10 June. “Adopt National Standards to Help Children Compete,” op-ed, Houston Chronicle, by the AAAS CEO and Jo Ellen Roseman, director, Project 2061. AAAS applauded a proposal to set uniform K-12 learning goals in reading and mathematics for all U.S. students, but called for shared science standards, too. This piece was republished by other media outlets, as follows:
  - 23 June. St. Louis Post-Dispatch of Missouri.
  - 22 June. Greenville News of South Carolina.

- 12 March. Artificial organisms, the meld between mind and machine, and the ethics of doing research in online communities such as Second Life should be part of the agenda for the successor body to the U.S. President's Council on Bioethics, AAAS expert Mark S. Frankel said in a special presentation. Frankel directs the AAAS Scientific Freedom, Responsibility, and the Law program.

STEM CELL RESEARCH
- 9 March. Letter to U.S. President Barack Obama, by the AAAS CEO, commending an executive order on federal support for human embryonic stem cell research and applauding the decision to issue guidance on scientific integrity.

- 20 May. AAAS commented on draft U.S. National Institutes of Health guidelines on human stem cell research. While applauding fast action toward issuing guidelines, AAAS raised several concerns related to informed consent rules, a federal registry of stem cell lines, and the challenges of conducting public and private research within the same facility.

U.S. VISA APPLICATIONS
- 10 June. “Visa Problems Harming America's Scientific, Economic, and Security Interests,” statement by a coalition of 31 science and higher-education organizations led by AAAS, urging steps to improve the processing of U.S. visas for visiting scientists, engineers, and scholars.

WOMEN IN SCIENCE
- 23 June. “Science Benefits from 37 Years of Title IX Anti-Discrimination Law,” White House roundtable presentation by Shirley Malcom, director, AAAS Education and Human Resources. Title IX has supported significant educational strides for U.S. women, Malcom said, but financial and cultural support still are needed to promote women in science and math to “positions of power.”

- 21 July. In testimony before a U.S. House subcommittee, the AAAS CEO reported that women have made substantial gains in science and engineering fields during the past four decades. Yet, he said, the progress has been uneven and, in some cases, ground is being lost.

SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT