

Report of ASPT representative to AAAS  
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As a member of the Council of AAAS and ASPT representative, I attended the Council meeting of the AAAS in Boston, Feb. 17, 2008. The content of that meeting was framed around issues relevant to AAAS, but I think several points also apply to ASPT.

First, AAAS President David Baltimore noted that in the US there is an increasingly unfriendly climate for Research and Development. Kei Koizumi, of the Science and Policy program of AAAS, noted that non-defense discretionary spending is flat and is declining in real dollars. Not much of an increase - if any - is anticipated at NSF for FY 2009, which begins October 1.

Second, Alan Leshner, Chief Executive of AAAS, noted that membership in AAAS and circulation of *Science* were both up over previous years (i.e. dissemination of scientific information has increased). However, revenue from print subscriptions is down by \$300,000. While site licenses have increased as a portion of revenue, the proportion of revenue coming from advertising has dropped.

Third, Vaughan Turekian, Chief International Officer of AAAS, highlighted the role for science in the international community and its value as a component of so-called "soft diplomacy." He noted the importance of international partnerships and of participation in major international meetings.

None of the above is particularly new or surprising. However, I think it may be useful for systematists to realize that funding struggles are shared by many scientific disciplines, and are not unique to systematics. Likewise, the change in the methods of scientific publishing is affecting even high profile journals such as *Science*. *Systematic Botany* is not going to be immune to these pressures and print subscriptions are likely to go down in the future if they haven't already. Finally continuing to enhance the already-strong international connections of ASPT and the journal is becoming even more important than it has been in the past.