**WSWS Officer and Committee Report (Pre-Conference Meeting, Kona 2010)**



**Office or Committee Name:** CAST Representative

**Officer or Chairperson Name and Committee Members:** Phil Stahlman

**Date of Preparation (include year):** 19 February 2010

**Activities during the Year:** In my reports to the WSWS Board of Directors (BOD) in March and July 2009 and in one Newsletter article, I informed the WSWS BOD and membership that CAST was facing major financial challenges and that fundamental changes in the way CAST operates were forthcoming. Considerable time was spent during the Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 CAST BOD meetings discussing structural changes and a new strategic plan and modified business model. The BOD authorized the Executive committee to develop a proposal for restructuring CAST based in part on outcomes of an Executive Committee retreat. Changes directed by the BOD included (1) eliminating the face-to-face Spring Board of Directors meeting and conducting business periodically throughout the year via audio/video conference calls and email; (2) new proposals for publications must include prospective external funding source(s); and (3) CAST will no longer pay any travel expense for a society’s representative to attend CAST BOD meetings. An increase in membership contributions was not part of the BOD’s charge to the Executive Committee.

In September 2009, the CAST BOD received and subsequently voted to adopt the Executive Committee’s Restructuring Proposal. Significant changes in addition to those mentioned above include redefined membership contributions ($1,500 for professional societies with fewer than 1000 members and $3,000 for societies with 1,000 or more members; previously $750 for WSWS), consolidated and streamlined Work Groups, and creation of a Board of Trustees to replace the National Concerns Committee. The Board of Trustees will be a body of 11 prominent and nationally known individuals who will serve as a review body and make final recommendations to the Executive Committee concerning proposals for publications submitted by the Work Groups. Membership will still contain a mix of professional societies, commercial companies, non-profit and trade organizations, and individual members. Membership contributions can be at any level; however, full membership contribution as listed above for professional societies is required for society representation in Work Groups. Thus, WSWS contribution for full membership is increased from $750 to $1,500. The WSWS already covers travel of its representative to CAST BOD’s meeting when submitted for reimbursement.

Despite difficult times and challenges, CAST’s staff (small in number but high in output) remains dedicated and highly committed to the organizational mission of communicating credible science to policymakers and the public. CAST has developed several excellent relationships with other key organizations that help increase CAST’s reach and impact. One example is partnering with the National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research (NCFAR) in conducting seminars on topics of high interest for Capital Hill staffers and other policy makers in Washington D.C. about the value of public investment in food and agricultural research. Nearly 1,900 Hill staff has attended 40 seminars over the past five years (Figure). Many of the seminars have featured CAST publications with presentations by the authors from over 40 institutions across the nation.

Figure. Number of Hill staff attending NC-FAR’s “Lunch-&-Learn Hill Seminar Series. 10 seminars in 2009; 9 in 2008; 21 in 2005-2007. Source: NC-FAR

**Recommendations for Board Action:**

1. Accept the increased membership contributions from $750 to $1,500 and remain a full society member of CAST.

**Budget Needs:** Reasonable travel costs to annual Board Meeting upon request with appropriate receipt.

**Suggestions for the Future:** **Suggested Changes in Operating Guide:** None

**Name of Person Preparing This Report:** Phil Stahlman