



PROFILE

Agre: A New Era of Science Outreach at Home and Abroad

In the middle years of his career, long before he had won the Nobel Prize for solving a central mystery of cell biology, Peter Agre figured that it would be natural to make a career shift at about the time he turned 50. He would spend more time outside the lab, and he would devote more energy to public service.

Since following through on that plan, Agre has helped found Scientists and Engineers for America, which promotes researchers' involvement in politics and public policy. He briefly—and very publicly—considered running for the U.S. Senate. He served as an adviser to a presidential candidate. He even did a late-night TV turn on *The Colbert Report*.

Agre is planning to expand his role as an ambassador for science when he becomes president of AAAS in February. Because climate change and the financial crisis open the door to an era of innovation and transformation, he sees an opportune moment for researchers to reach out to schoolchildren and their teachers, local and national policy-makers, and S&T colleagues overseas.

“Scientists have been so worried about getting funded that they probably have not invested as much as they should in terms of public awareness,” Agre said in a recent interview. “But it seems to me that every tenured faculty in America owes something, and my idea would be tithing 10% of your time for the public good.... I think being part of the public debate is very important—and that’s where we’re overdue.”

It’s impossible to understand Agre’s work without understanding his youth in Minnesota. His father, a chemist, brought his children to the lab on weekends and set up simple experiments for them. Agre, with his brother Jim, became an Eagle Scout. He did get a D in chemistry during his senior year of high school—an anomaly he attributes to the distractions and rebellion of late adolescence.

Now 60, his medical experience and research give him enormous credibility in the policy world, and that’s enhanced by his easy-going, self-effacing manner. In 1970, he graduated from Augsburg College in Minneapolis with a degree in chemistry. Four years later, he received his M.D. from Johns Hopkins; it was



Peter Agre

there, he says, that he became committed to biomedical research. After clinical training at Case Western University Hospitals in Cleveland and postgraduate medical training at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, he returned to Hopkins.

In 2003, Agre won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for his team’s 1991 discovery of aquaporins—channels that allow water molecules to pass through cell membranes, a process essential to life. (He shared the prize with Roderick MacKinnon of Rockefeller University.)

Heartland values still echo in his outlook. Public service is crucial, he says. Science must respect people’s religious beliefs, even when they question scientific findings. He has deep admiration for teachers—and he insists they deserve better salaries.

Science teachers “are the ones who make science interesting,” he said. “I remember in my Nobel banquet speech reciting a line that I realized really resonated with the audience: ‘Early in the life of every scientist, a child’s first interest in science was sparked by a teacher.’”

Agre was a science adviser to the campaign of Barack Obama, and the new president’s

respect for science “gives me great confidence,” he said. “Until this economic recession or fear of depression is remedied, there may not be increased budgets... But if the government is listening, great things can happen.”

Agre will become AAAS president on 17 February, at the end of the AAAS Annual Meeting in Chicago. He succeeds Harvard climate and ocean researcher James J. McCarthy, who will become chair of the AAAS Board of Directors. Already, Agre has had an extensive interview with the *New York Times*.

Though he is a strong public advocate for science, he’s not ready to quit the lab. After a stint as vice chancellor for science and technology at Duke University Medical Center, he returned to Hopkins last year to head its Malaria Research Institute.

“Science is about new adventures,” Agre said. “I still have a few years ahead of me, and I don’t want to just rest on the past.”

SCIENCE POLICY

Obama Taps Past AAAS Leaders for Key S&T Posts

U.S. President Barack Obama has chosen 2006 AAAS President John P. Holdren to serve as his top science adviser and has selected three other distinguished researchers with ties to AAAS for key positions in his administration.

Holdren, a climate and energy scholar at Harvard and director of the Woods Hole Research Center, has been appointed assistant to the president for science and technology and director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

Oregon State University marine ecologist Jane Lubchenco has been appointed administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Lubchenco served as AAAS president in 1997 and received the 2005 AAAS Award for Public Understanding of Science and Technology.

Eric Lander and Harold Varmus, both AAAS Fellows, will join Holdren on the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology. Lander, who received the 2004 AAAS Public Understanding award, is a principal leader of the Human Genome Project and founding director of the Broad Institute. Varmus is president and CEO of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and a former director of the National Institutes of Health.

—Becky Ham

Call for Nomination of 2009 AAAS Fellows

AAAS Fellows who are current members of the association are invited to nominate members for election as Fellows. A Fellow is defined as a member “whose efforts on behalf of the advancement of science or its applications

are scientifically or socially distinguished.” A nomination must be sponsored by three AAAS Fellows, two of whom must have no affiliation with the nominee’s institution.

Nominations undergo review by the steering groups of the association’s sections (the chair, chair-elect, retiring chair, secretary, and four members-at-large of each section). Each steering group reviews only those nominations designated for its section. Names of Fellow nominees who are approved by the steering groups are

presented to the AAAS Council for election.

Nominations with complete documentation must be received by 11 May 2009. Nominations received after that date will be held for the following year. The nomination form and a list of current AAAS Fellows can be found at www.aaas.org/aboutaaas/fellows. To request a hard copy of the nomination form, please contact the AAAS Executive Office, 1200 New York Avenue N.W., Washington, DC 20005, USA; at 202-326-6635; or at jarias@aaas.org.

Results of the 2008 Election of AAAS Officers

Following are the results of the 2008 election. Terms begin on 17 February 2009.

General Offices

President-Elect: Alice S. Huang

Board of Directors: Julia M. Phillips, David S. Sabatini
Committee on Nominations: Steven Chu, Susan Hackwood, Sallie Keller-McNulty, Jack Dixon

Section on Agriculture, Food, and Renewable Resources

Chair-Elect: Brian A. Larkins

Member-at-Large: Barbara Valent

Electorate Nominating Committee: Ann M. Hirsch, Mark E. Sorrells

Council Delegate: Daniel J. Cosgrove

Section on Anthropology

Chair-Elect: Clark Spencer-Larsen

Member-at-Large: Carol V. Ward

Electorate Nominating Committee: Anne C. Stone, Dolores R. Piperno

Section on Astronomy

Chair-Elect: Alan P. Boss

Member-at-Large: Donald Campbell

Electorate Nominating Committee: Michael Werner, Giovanni G. Fazio

Section on Atmospheric and Hydrospheric Sciences

Chair-Elect: Alan Robock

Member-at-Large: Kevin E. Trenberth

Electorate Nominating Committee: Margaret (Peggy) LeMone, Jim Coakley

Section on Biological Sciences

Chair-Elect: Trudy Mackay

Member-at-Large: Margaret Werner-Washburne

Electorate Nominating Committee: Joan W. Bennett, Eric Ursell Selker

Section on Chemistry

Chair-Elect: Charles P. Casey

Member-at-Large: Ronald W. Woodard

Electorate Nominating Committee: Brian M. Stoltz, Jonathan A. Ellman

Section on Dentistry and Oral Health Sciences

Chair-Elect: Margarita Zeichner-David

Member-at-Large: Ira B. Lamster

Electorate Nominating Committee: Laurie K. McCauley, Frank A. Scannapieco

Section on Education

Chair-Elect: Joseph Krajcik

Member-at-Large: Jay B. Labov

Electorate Nominating Committee: Suzanne

O’Connell, Mary Monroe Atwater

Section on Engineering

Chair-Elect: Duncan T. Moore

Member-at-Large: Christine M. Maziar

Electorate Nominating Committee: Kristen Fichthorn, Pradeep K. Khosla

Council Delegate: Gail H. Marcus, James L. Merz

Section on General Interest in Science and Engineering

Chair-Elect: Kathryn D. Sullivan

Member-at-Large: Sharon M. Friedman

Electorate Nominating Committee: Gloria J. Takahashi, Robert J. Griffin

Section on Geology and Geography

Chair-Elect: Malcolm Hughes

Member-at-Large: Jean Lynch-Stieglitz

Electorate Nominating Committee: Timothy Gordon Fisher, Elizabeth A. Canuel

Section on History and Philosophy of Science

Chair-Elect: Richard Creath

Member-at-Large: Heather E. Douglas

Electorate Nominating Committee: Nancy J. Nersessian, Alain Touwaide

Council Delegate: Virginia Trimble

Section on Industrial Science and Technology

Chair-Elect: Jennie C. Hunter-Cevera

Member-at-Large: Harry S. Hertz

Electorate Nominating Committee: Qinghuang Lin, Robert Boily

Council Delegate: Steven W. Popper

Section on Information, Computing, and Communication

Chair-Elect: Bart Selman

Member-at-Large: Julia Gelfand

Electorate Nominating Committee: Christine L. Borgman, Bonnie C. Carol

Section on Linguistics and Language Science

Chair-Elect: David W. Lightfoot

Member-at-Large: Suzanne Flynn

Electorate Nominating Committee: Elizabeth C. Traugott, Douglas H. Whalen

Section on Mathematics

Chair-Elect: Kenneth C. Millett

Member-at-Large: Tony F. Chan

Electorate Nominating Committee: Douglas M. Arnold, Robert M. Fossum

Section on Medical Sciences

Chair-Elect: Judy Lieberman

Member-at-Large: Robert Doms

Electorate Nominating Committee: Beverly Davidson, Wendy C. Brown

Council Delegate: Jennifer M. Puck, James H. Hughes, Ety (Tika) Benveniste, Reed E. Pyeritz, Terence S. Dermody

Section on Neuroscience

Chair-Elect: Michael T. Shipley

Member-at-Large: Gail Mandel

Electorate Nominating Committee: Michael S. Wolfe, Erik D. Herzog

Section on Pharmaceutical Sciences

Chair-Elect: Gary M. Pollack

Member-at-Large: William T. Beck

Electorate Nominating Committee: Craig K. Svensson, Per Artursson

Section on Physics

Chair-Elect: Charles W. Clark

Member-at-Large: Alexander L. Fetter

Electorate Nominating Committee: Elizabeth H. Simmons, Ali Yazdani

Section on Psychology

Chair-Elect: Stephen J. Suomi

Member-at-Large: Jenny Saffran

Electorate Nominating Committee: Denise Park, David Shapiro

Council Delegate: John Gabrieli

Section on Social, Economic, and Political Sciences

Chair-Elect: Eugene A. Rosa

Member-at-Large: Wendy Baldwin

Electorate Nominating Committee: Robert F. Rich, Anil B. Deolalikar

Council Delegate: Nicholas Christakis

Section on Societal Impacts of Science and Engineering

Chair-Elect: Bruce V. Lewenstein

Member-at-Large: Melanie Leitner

Electorate Nominating Committee: Robert M. Simon, Michael L. Telson

Section on Statistics

Chair-Elect: Joel B. Greenhouse

Member-at-Large: Kenneth W. Wachter

Electorate Nominating Committee: Nancy Reid, Mary A. Foulkes

Science

AAAS News and Notes

Science **323** (5914), 596-597.
DOI: 10.1126/science.323.5914.596

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Science (print ISSN 0036-8075; online ISSN 1095-9203) is published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1200 New York Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20005. The title *Science* is a registered trademark of AAAS.

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