From the Chair
Richard Kitsis, MD, FAHA

I want to take this opportunity to update you on new activities and events in the Council on Basic Cardiovascular Sciences (BCVS). BCVS continues to thrive. I find it remarkable that we, as a basic science group, actually constitute the AHA’s second largest Council with a membership that now tops 5,000. Our finances remain strong, which permits us to sustain commitments to a variety of short- and long-term projects. Each AHA Council is reviewed every three years by the Council Operations Committee, and BCVS did very well in its review this past September. Credit for this goes to our recent chairs Roberto Bolli and Eduardo Marban.

The most important mission of our Council is to provide an effective and user-friendly forum for the dissemination and discussion of scientific information and ideas. These activities take place primarily at Scientific Sessions and the BCVS Summer Research Conferences:

• Scientific Sessions 2006 was held in Chicago. BCVS was prominently represented on the program: We sponsored a plenary session (for the second consecutive year), six Sunday Morning Sessions, 15 Cardiovascular Seminars (up from 13 in 2005), four “How-to Sessions” (up from two in 2005), and two Frontiers in Cardiovascular Science sessions. We are grateful to Bill Chilian and Annarosa Leri for their dedicated service on the Council’s Program Committee.

Even serious scientists need to kick back. The Art Institute of Chicago provided an elegant venue for the BCVS Council Dinner at Scientific Sessions 2006. Egyptian artifacts and suits of armor, intermixed with baroque music, provided a unique backdrop for cocktails and dinner. After the awards ceremony (discussed elsewhere in this letter), we were treated to an inspiring after-dinner speech by Robert Lefkowitz, who shared insights into mentoring that he had gained over the course of working with more than 200 trainees in his lab.

• The BCVS Summer Research Conference is considered by many to be the premier event anywhere for basic cardiovascular science. Last summer’s conference, organized by Roberto Bolli, Eric Olson, Ryozo Nagai, and Nadia Rosenthal, took place July 31–Aug. 3, 2006 at the Keystone Resort in Colorado. The scientific program was of exceptional quality. In addition, the conversion to a shorter three-day format was well received. This summer’s conference is entitled “Cardiovascular Repair and Regeneration: Structural and Molecular Approaches in the Cellular Era.” Organized by Mark Sussman, Sumanth Prabhu, Keiichi Fukuda and Maurizio Capogrossi, it will be held July 30–Aug. 2, 2007 at the Keystone Resort. This promises to be a particularly exciting meeting that touches on many important areas.

Another aspect of BCVS is advocacy for health and science. As you know, NIH funding is in a severe slump. Those of us who have been around long enough remember previous troughs and recognize that they eventually end. Nevertheless, the current situation threatens the research — and in some cases careers — of scientists at multiple career levels. Although the underlying causes may be beyond our control, there are steps we can take. We have learned from legislators that even seemingly small efforts can influence important decisions. I urge you to join other BCVS members for AHA Lobby Day in Washington, D.C., on April 24, 2007. This event is being organized by Tom Hintze, our advocacy ambassador.

As always, I am interested in your comments and suggestions! Please contact me at: kitsis@aeecom.yu.edu or call (718) 430-2609.

Council Dinner — Another Outstanding Evening

The BCVS dinner continues to be one of the highlights of Scientific Sessions. Tickets for this year’s dinner at the Art Institute of Chicago were sold out in weeks. Dr. Robert Lefkowitz received a standing ovation for his delightful after-dinner talk on his philosophy on mentoring and science. The following Council awardees were also recognized:

• Dr. Arnold W. Strauss received the Basic Research Prize, which recognizes an individual who is making outstanding contributions to the advancement of cardiovascular science.

• Dr. Joseph Loscalzo was the recipient of the Research Achievement Award, which recognizes lifetime scientific achievements and/or educational efforts in the field of cardiovascular research.

• Dr. Roberto Bolli received the Scientific Council Distinguished Achievement Award, which recognizes individuals who have made major contributions to the affairs of a Scientific Council over a continuing period of time, and who have made substantial professional contributions to the field represented by the Council.

• Dr. Garret Gross was recognized as a Distinguished Scientist, the highest designation of AHA membership. Dr. Gross also delivered the George E. Brown Lecture, entitled “The CYP450 Pathway and Cardioprotection,” on Nov. 14.

• Dr. Robert Lefkowitz was awarded the Eugene Braunwald Academic Mentorship Award.

• Dr. Silvia Priori of Pavia, Italy, presented the Thomas W. Smith Memorial Lecture on Nov. 14, 2006. Her presentation was entitled “From a Girl to a Mouse: A Journey in the Rhythm of the Heart.”

Congratulations to all our Council awardees.
Young Investigator Awards Presented — Congratulations to all the finalists!

Dr. Xiongwen Chen — 2006 Marcus Award recipient
Dr. Xiongwen of Temple University in Philadelphia received the Melvin L. Marcus Award at the Council dinner. The five finalists, Drs. Chen, Ming-He Huang, Hiroto Iwasaki, Hiromichi Hamada and Anastasios Lymeropoulos presented their outstanding work at the competition on Sunday afternoon. Dr. Chen's presentation was entitled “New Ventricular Myocytes with Distinct Electrophysiological Properties are Formed During Adolescent Cardiac Growth.”

Dr. Ivan Moskowitz — 2006 Katz Award recipient
Dr. Ivan Moskowitz was presented with the Louis N. and Arnold M. Katz Award at the Council dinner for his presentation entitled “A Genetic Pathway Including Id2, Tbx5, and Nkx2-5 Required for Cardiac Conduction System Development.” Dr. Katz and the other finalists, Drs. Abhinav Diwan, Yu Liu, Yasuhiro Izumiya, and Roger Foo were recognized for their outstanding presentations on Sunday afternoon. The Katz Prize has been presented since 1969 and is the oldest of the Young Investigator Awards.

Save the Date
July 30–Aug. 2, 2007
The 4th Annual BCVS Summer Symposium on “Cardiovascular Repair and Regeneration: Structural and Molecular Approaches in the Cellular Era,” will be held in Keystone, Colo., July 30–Aug. 2, 2007. Drs. Mark Sussman, Sumanth Prabhu, Keiichi Fukuda and Maurizio Capogrossi will co-chair the meeting. The abstract submission period opens Jan. 16, 2007; the deadline for submission is April 16, 2007. Abstract & non-abstract driven awards will be available by application. New Investigator, Early Career Investigator, and Cardiovascular Outreach Awards are awarded at this symposium. Early registration opens March 5, 2007. For more information, visit my.americanheart.org and click on the “Conferences and Education” tab for more information.

New Fellows of the American Heart Association
Please see page 32 for the new BCVS Fellows that were recognized during the BCVS Council Dinner on Nov. 14.