Message from the Chair
L. Gabriel Navar, PhD, FAHA

As we go to press for this newsletter, I am pleased to report that there has been a great deal of activity on the part of your Leadership Committee and the Fall Conference Program Committee. The Fall Conference Program Committee has been busy reviewing abstracts and planning for the Fall Conference to be held in Tucson, Ariz., Sept. 26–29. Under the able leadership of Clinton Webb, the abstracts were graded and scheduled for posters and oral sessions. A unique aspect of the Fall Meeting is that it is driven primarily by the abstracts submitted by you and the rest of the constituency of the Council on High Blood Pressure Research. About 300 abstracts will be selected for presentation as oral communications or posters. We will also have select state-of-the-art lectures and the presentations by the recipients of the Novartis Award, Corcoran Award, Dahl Award and Lifetime Achievement Award, plus the three Goldblatt New Investigator Award finalists. Award recipients and finalists were selected by the Awards Committee chaired by Clinton Webb. From now on, the Dahl Lecture will be presented at our Fall Conference rather than at Scientific Sessions. This change was made at the request of many Council members.

At the Experimental Biology Meeting in Washington, D.C., the Council co-sponsored a session on “Hypertension: Integrated Mechanisms and Sequelae” with the Water and Electrolyte Section of the American Physiological Society, which was chaired by J oey Granger and Gabe Navar. The session included a state-of-the-art lecture by Mark Chappell from Wake Forrest University and five free communications on hypertension-related topics. This outreach effort allowed us to highlight the activities of our Council and encourage interested members of the American Physiological Society to join the Council on High Blood Pressure Research.

This spring our Council also supported the very successful meeting of the InterAmerican Society of Hypertension (IASH). As most of you know, our Council is closely associated with the IASH, which was founded to encourage greater interactions among scientists in hypertension research from the Americas. The 2007 IASH meeting was held in Miami Beach, Fla., and was chaired by Carlos Ferrario and Leopoldo Raj. A more detailed report is provided in this newsletter. The 2009 IASH Meeting will be held in Brazil so make plans now to attend.

The Spring Leadership Committee Meeting was held in Miami Beach right after the IASH Meeting. We discussed many topics of importance to our Council members. An important area of emphasis is the need to markedly increase our membership numbers. Under the able leadership of David Calhoun, we are making a major effort to recruit new members and, above all, we need your support. Make a pledge now to recruit at least one new member to our Council. The Leadership Committee heard reports on the many activities going on with AHA. J. R. Haywood represented our Council at Lobby Day and is providing a separate report. This year, we elected two new members to the Leadership Committee: Kathryn Sandberg from Georgetown University and Tom Coffman from Duke University. In view of our Council’s growing international presence, we decided to have at least one designated international member on the Leadership Committee. We elected Toshiro Fujita from Tokyo, Japan, to fill this position.

The Awards Committee reported on the designated recipients of awards made by our Council. This year’s awardees are:

- **Corcoran Lectureship Award**: Curt Sigmund, University of Iowa, Iowa;
- **Dahl Lectureship Award**: Debra Diz, Wake Forest University, North Carolina;
- **Irvine Page-Alva Bradley Lifetime Achievement Award**: Ernesto Schiffrin, Jewish General Hospital and McGill University, Montreal, Canada.

The winner of the Novartis Award will be announced at a special press conference at a later date. These awards will be presented at the Fall Conference in Tucson.

The Research Committee reported that the National Office approved funding of 91 Scientist Development Grants and 25 Established Investigator Awards for next year. There was considerable discussion about how to increase the amount of AHA funds allocated for research grants. We are pleased to report that the High Blood Pressure Council has benefited greatly from the production of the Hypertension Primer. We thank editors J oey Izzo and Henry Black for their diligent work in keeping the primer updated. The revenue it generated will help ensure that our special programs and meetings are properly supported.

In summary, I am very pleased to report to our membership that your Council is financially sound and very actively involved in numerous exciting projects and ventures. Most importantly, we are very excited about our upcoming Fall Conference in Tucson, Ariz. We encourage you to make plans now to attend the workshop and conference. Please feel free to contact me by e-mail (navar@tulane.edu) with your ideas and suggestions as to how your Leadership Committee can be more responsive to your needs. Thank you for your loyalty and continuing support.
Lobby Day

On Lobby Day (April 24, 2007), thousands of volunteers, survivors and scientists blanketed Capitol Hill to advocate for help from Congress to reduce the occurrence of cardiovascular disease. After a day of preparation, AHA volunteers met with and encouraged members of Congress and their staff to: 1) significantly increase NIH funding, 2) significantly increase funding for the CDC’s Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program, 3) co-sponsor the HEART for Women Act aimed at improving the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cardiovascular disease in women, and 4) co-sponsor the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act.

A Lobby Day highlight was the Heart for Women rally on the National Mall. Several hundred supporters looked on as American Heart Association volunteers presented a Red Dress Paper Doll chain of 20,000 paper dolls to Congressional sponsors, to show support for the HEART for Women Act. Sens. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Rep. Lois Capps (D-CA) informed the gathering that all the women in the House and Senate had signed on as co-sponsors of the bill.

High Blood Pressure Research Council Fellows J.R. Haywood and Dan Lackland, as well as AHA President and HBPR Fellow Dan Jones, helped garner support for a “Dear Colleague” letter circulated by Rep. Edward Markey (D-MA) requesting a 6.7 percent increase in NIH funding. The initiative is part of a three-year campaign to get NIH appropriations “Back on Track” to where funding was after the doubling of the NIH budget in 2003. A record 176 members of the House of Representatives have signed the letter already. A similar letter has been introduced in the Senate. The scientific community must keep pressure on their representatives in both the House and Senate about the importance of returning the NIH budget to its critically needed level.

National Research Program New Award Commitments Approved for 2006-07

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<th>Program</th>
<th>Number Funded</th>
<th>Percentile Rank</th>
<th>Dollar Amount</th>
<th>Success Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SDG</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>28.18</td>
<td>23.6 million</td>
<td>24.01%</td>
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<tr>
<td>EIA</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6.16</td>
<td>12.5 million</td>
<td>17.86%</td>
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**November 2006**

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<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Number Funded</th>
<th>Percentile Rank</th>
<th>Dollar Amount</th>
<th>Success Rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SDG</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>23.21</td>
<td>23.01 million</td>
<td>21.14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>FTF</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.75</td>
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Funding to underrepresented minorities equaled 5 percent of national unrestricted research allocations for the year (goal rate is 6 percent).

The Research Committee also advocated an increase in the National Research Program budget as critical for developing the new strategic research initiatives.

AHA Research Committee Report

The Research Strategic Plan, in development since 2005, has been finalized for submission to SACC and the Board. Major plan components are highlighted in the Research Vision Statement: The American Heart Association will be the premiere cardiovascular and stroke influencing agent for developing and funding early career investigators, including high school and undergraduate students. The Association will endorse and support multidisciplinary and collaborative models; undertake high-risk, high-reward research; actively balance basic, clinical, population, and translational research; and expand its international scope.

A recent funds allocation exercise yielded a research balance target of 56 percent basic and 44 percent clinical/population by 2010. Currently, the distribution is about 66/34 percent. Increased clinical and population research funding will be achieved through the development and implementation of new programs, including the newly approved Clinical Research Program and potential outcomes research programs.

Other proposals included:

- Striving to more effectively communicate our support of increased clinical, population and translational research and
- Better targeting of grants to appropriate review committees, including new mechanisms to classify applications as basic, clinical, population and translational.
IASH-COSEHC Scientific Sessions held in Miami, Fla., May 6–10, 2007

Following in the fine tradition of previous biennial meetings, the XVIIth Meeting of the Inter-American Society of Hypertension (IASH) was held May 6–10, 2007, in Miami, Fla. The meeting provided a forum for the presentation of scientific work related to hypertension, atherosclerosis, the metabolic syndrome and obesity. Participants presented both basic and clinically related work in the form of posters, oral presentations, and invited lectures and symposia.

The IASH was founded by the Council on High Blood Pressure Research in association with scientists from Latin America to promote collaboration and interaction among scientists involved in hypertension-related research throughout the Americas. Since then, IASH has held meetings every two years. With 503 registrants — including experts in hypertension, vascular disease and related areas, and 156 faculty — the Miami gathering was one of the most successful to date.

Special clinical symposia focused on updating clinical guidelines for management of global risk factors, epidemiology of hypertension in Latin American countries, and new insights into the role of hypertension in diabetes, dyslipidemia, the metabolic syndrome and obesity. Complementary sessions addressed new aspects of clinical hypertension research on genetics, the role of prostanoids in the inflammatory processes associated with hypertensive vascular disease and atherosclerosis, and newer insights into the role of the renin angiotensin system in the pathogenesis of hypertension and vascular disease. Additional research symposia focused on the emerging role of renin inhibitors in the management of hypertension, renal disease, and heart failure. Sessions on hypertension-related target organ damage provided an update on aspects of the problem throughout the Americas.

This year’s meeting was unique in that it was co-sponsored by COSEHC (The Consortium for Southeastern Hypertension Control), a nonprofit organization formed in 1992. COSEHC’s mission is to reduce hypertension and hypertension-related risk factors through education, research, publication and quality improvement. The Association for the Study of Risk Factors for Cardiovascular Disease provided in-kind funding in program development and CME accreditation. The winners of the IASH Young Investigator Awards were Vera de Moura Azevedo Farah and Katie DeAngelis, both from Sao Paulo, Brazil. The IASH Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Alberto Nasjletti, MD, from New York.

Other corporate sponsors include Merck, Daiichi-Sankyo, Pfizer (Platinum sponsors); Abbott Cardiovascular (Gold sponsors); Boehringer-Ingelheim, Forest Laboratories, and Takeda (Silver sponsors); and Astellas Pharma, Astra Zeneca, Bristol Myers Squibb, CardioDynamics, Eli Lilly, National Lipid Association, Sanofi Aventis, and Schering Plough (Bronze sponsors). We thank all sponsors for their generous support.

Abstracts submitted: 336 (Poster Presentations, 293; Oral Presentations, 43)

Vacancies at National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI)

Vascular Biology/Hypertension

The Vascular Biology and Hypertension Branch (VBHB) in the Division of Cardiovascular Diseases of the NHLBI, at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), is seeking two biomedical scientists to administer extramural programs of basic, translational and clinical research. The VBHB supports and manages integrated basic and clinical extramural research programs in vascular biology, hypertension, and peripheral vascular diseases.

Branch Chief

The Branch Chief, with the assistance of the Deputy Branch Chief, would provide leadership and strategic vision in designing, implementing and managing a national research agenda on basic, translational, and clinical aspects of vascular disease and hypertension. This individual is expected to be a physician scientist with experience in clinical trials and clinical studies, and expertise in either hypertension or vascular diseases.

Program Director

The Program Director would work closely with the scientific community and Institute staff to identify new directions for vascular biology and hypertension research for the nation, and to manage the NHLBI’s research portfolio in these areas. Expertise is desired in one or more of the following areas as they relate to vascular biology and hypertension: inflammation, oxidative stress, angiogenesis, endothelial and smooth muscle biology, flow mechanics, signal transduction, molecular genetics, genomics and proteomics. Research experience with systems or integrative physiological approaches is also desirable.

Both positions provide excellent health, life, investment, and personal leave benefits.

For more information, please contact Eser Tolunay, Acting Branch Chief, Vascular Biology and Hypertension Branch, by email (tolunaye@nhlbi.nih.gov) or call (301-435-0560).
2007–08 LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

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