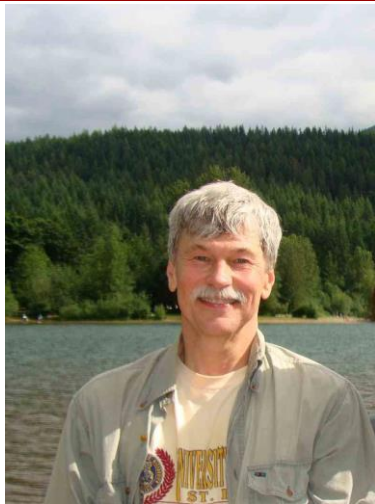


Message From The President August 2017



Dear All:

I look forward to serving as your president and to helping to make the 2018 meeting June 6-9 in Miami one of the best ever. I hope that you as a member of this organization will not only attend the Miami meeting, but will give me input and feedback on how you want your organization run. My email is at the end of this message.

The Galveston meeting was a great success and judging from the survey feedback was the best meeting in the last year for many of us. As president, Susan Lugendorf did a fantastic job of organizing the meeting along with the local organizers Annemieke Kavalaars (also Susan's past president), Cobi Heijnen, and Robert Dantzer. I learned a lot from Susan, who will now act as my past president, and I will call upon her knowledge and experience along with that of Annemieke's and also Mark Opp's, who organized the 2015 meeting here in Seattle. The members of the local organizing committee (Andy Miller, Jennifer Felger, and Ebrahim Haroon) and of the 2018 program committee (Susan Lugendorf, Lisa Christian, Cobi Heijnen, Suzi Hong, Jeff Woods, Ning Quan, Shelly Erickson, Wolfgang Langhans, and our student members Catherine Walsh and Laura Lueckemann) are outstanding. In short, I'm left without excuses to make Miami a great meeting.

And the 2018 meeting is shaping up to be great. Peter Grace will be our Ader award speaker and Rodney Johnson our Cousin's award winner. Michael Irwin will be our Solomon Lecturer.

As past president/incoming president, I met with all of our standing committees, many of our members, and read all the comments of the post meeting survey. From this, the executive and program committees will introduce several innovations that we will try this year. I'd like to update you on these and sincerely want your input and feedback about these or any other topic you find relevant.

First, for the Miami meeting and retroactive to the Galveston meeting, we are offering 18 mo of free membership to those invited speakers who are nonmembers. We hope this will further encourage those invited speakers to attend the meeting after the one to which they are invited as they can register at the membership rate.

Second, we will have in Miami two Member Sponsored Symposia as per usual. However, we want to reduce the burden of applying for these. Historically, members have had to put in a lot of effort to organize such a symposium. Selection has been competitive and organizers become frustrated if submissions are not chosen after a few rounds. Yet it is important to have a variety of symposia from which to choose as we must pick not only great science, but also must have in the end a balanced meeting representing all of the aspects of PNI. To encourage novel submissions and reduce work load on the symposium organizer, we will this year try a two phase process. We will request submissions of Ideas (symposium title, sentence or two of general scope or topics, perhaps the names of potential speakers). From this, we will choose 3-4 proposals for full submission. Thus, both phases are competitive, but the 2nd phase, the phase requiring all the work, comes with at least a 50% success rate.

Third, we will have a free afternoon in Miami. Our meetings are jam-packed with great sessions and speakers, but we should remember that the real Science gets done during the coffee breaks and free time. The hotel location should serve well for free time with options for beach, shopping, dining, and imbibing of fruit juices or other fortifying liquids.

Fourth, we plan to have parallel Oral Sessions, going from 4 single sessions to 3 parallel sessions (total of 6 Oral Sessions). This will provide more opportunity for junior folks to present, increase the topic options for the audience, and reduce total seat time for the audience.

Fifth, the Miami meeting is the 25th PNIRS meeting, the first being hosted in Boulder in 1993. We are looking for opportunities to celebrate this aspect of the meeting and welcome your ideas!

We hope the above innovations will help to keep our meetings fresh and flexible, in the face of transitions and challenges. The biggest of these are:

Transition of leadership at our journal Brain Behavior and Immunity: After an incredible stewardship that makes all of us editors of other journals envious, Keith Kelley is stepping down as editor of BBI. As of this writing, Elsevier has not announced the new editor, but the candidates of whom we are aware are exciting and worthy successors to our Prometheus, Keith, who brought Inflammation (a kind of fire) to Elsevier.

The two major challenges that I perceive facing PNIRS are both related to balance and both stem from the success of the field. First, our meetings have striven to have a balance of clinical vs basic science, animal vs human vs in vitro, and senior vs junior presenters. Fields grow unevenly and the unevenness is often perceived to be greater than real as the fashionable interests of science shift. Bench science in neuroimmunology is booming, but so are the insights of psychoimmunology. The current mantra is we must keep the “P” in PNI, but the challenge is even greater than that: to continue to integrate the “P” and the “I” and the “N” as has been the legacy of our Society. Who knows, we may even have to add more letters soon*.

The second big challenge I see is again one of balance. To maintain the advantages of the collegiality of a small meeting without becoming insular or ossified, while at the same time that our field is increasingly recognized as central to some of the biggest diseases facing our world, not to mention every day physiology; To having meetings financially accessible to all while providing exciting locations for those meetings and the best speakers we can acquire; To highlight in those meetings the incredible talent of our diverse membership while recruiting great speakers from the nonmember universe; To maintain high scientific content, while giving lots of opportunity for one-on-one interactions, dialogue, discussion, conversation, and socialization. As president, I can highlight these challenges, but it is up to the membership to make sure that we continue to be successful as our field booms in maintaining our track record of balance and progression.

Enough Formality: I look forward to see all of you I know and meeting all of you whom I have yet to meet in Miami!!
Don't forget to pack shorts!

*Me, I like E for Endocrinology and G for Gut/Gastroenterology

William A Banks, MD FACE

AKA: Bill

PNIRS President

wabanks1@uw.edu