Coalition For Education in the Life Sciences

In 1991 individuals from thirty life science organizations, representing over 250,000 professional scientists and science educators, called for a coordinated effort of national organizations working together to improve life science education. They established a national life science education network called the Coalition for Education in the Life Sciences (CELS). The mission of the Coalition is to bring the expertise and resources of the life science professional societies to bear upon critical issues relating to life science education in America and to enhance every citizen's knowledge of the complexity and interdependency of living systems from ecosystems to molecules.

The goals of the Coalition are to enhance the ability of the life science community to speak with a unified voice regarding life science education and to promote public understanding of important life science concepts.

The objectives of the Coalition are to develop a framework for life science education that clearly identifies the important principles and concepts that are relevant to every citizen, establish a common language “the Language of Life” among life science disciplines to effectively communicate key ideas to the public, private and government sectors, and increase the role of individual life scientists in 1) influencing the public’s image of science and the scientific process, 2) recruiting members of underrepresented groups into the sciences, 3) using alternative teaching and learning methods, and 4) providing teacher enhancement activities.

The activities of the Coalition are guided by a six-member Executive Committee. This Committee comprises educational leaders from a broad and balanced range of life science and science education communities.

CELS's activities are supported by sponsoring organizations and foundations, membership fees, and conferences. CELS offers two membership categories: sponsors and regular members. Both categories offer leadership in the life sciences and linkages to other science, math, and engineering disciplines and the public. Sponsors of CELS contribute $1000 annually and receive appropriate recognition. They are entitled to one complimentary registration for all CELS-sponsored conferences and 10 complimentary copies of all reports. Regular members of CELS contribute $250 annually and are entitled to one complimentary copy of all reports. Both sponsorship and membership of CELS are available to any life science or science education organization that has an interest in life science education.

CELS is a catalyst, a powerful force that coalesces the life science education community in assuming a leadership role which rivals that of the mathematics community. It offers connections to other life science organizations for the purpose of improving life science education and literacy. It provides 1) national visibility of your Society's commitment to life science education and literacy, 2) continued dialogue between your Society, the life science education community and the public, 3) interface between the life science disciplines and other math, science and engineering disciplines, 4) priority listing of your Society's educational activities in the proposed network, and 5) complimentary registration at the upcoming National Life Science Education Conference II and 10 copies of the Conference II Report.
AMCBT AT CELS

The Association of Midwestern College Biology Teachers was represented at both the first and second meeting of the Coalition for Education in the Life Sciences (CELS) which were both held at Wingspread in Racine, Wisconsin, by John R. Jungck as President and then as Past-President of AMCBT. The potential for CELS is great if enough professional biological societies join forces. Unlike chemists who have the American Chemical Society, the physicists and mathematicians who mostly belong to one of two major societies in their respective discipline, the geologists who even the collegiate members belong to and are represented by the National Association of Geology Teachers, we biologists have hundreds of societies none of which can claim even a simple majority of all biologists. Therefore, if we want to have a national voice, we need to select and support some individual or organization with sufficient stature to draw the attention that biologists richly deserve. CELS already has support from three of the largest biological research organizations: AIBS, FASEB, and, in particular, ASM. At this point, NABT and ABLE were not at the second meeting, BSCS was represented by an adjunct staff person (a botanist very committed to collegiate education on leave from a university), thus, AMCBT is in a position to speak for the teaching side at the collegiate level. The option to formally support CELS will be on the agenda at the fall executive committee. If you have questions please contact John Jungck at the general fall meeting.