

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE OCTOBER 2008



It is with great pleasure that the ASGT Board of Directors announces that they have approved a motion to change the name of the Society to **The American Society of Gene & Cell Therapy**. This announcement can also be seen in the current issue of *Molecular Therapy*, the official journal of the Society. The name change was suggested to the Board of Directors by at least three different committees. In addition, adding "Cell" to the name of the Society has long been a goal of many individual members of the Society. Everyone involved agreed that adding "Cell" to the name of our Society would have at least two beneficial effects. First, since Cell Therapy is an integral part of almost all of the therapeutic approaches practiced by the members of the Society, adding "Cell" to the name would more accurately reflect the interests and activities of Society members. Second, the addition of "Cell" to the Society's name would promote the

inclusive nature of the Society and its Annual Meeting and would encourage investigators practicing Cell Therapy to attend the Annual Meeting and integrate their skills and interests with the current Society members.

In order for the change in the name of the Society from **The American Society of Gene Therapy** to **The American Society of Gene & Cell Therapy** to become effective, it must now be approved by the membership. All Active Members will be contacted in April 2009 with information on how to cast their votes on the name change. I'll spare you the legal complexities, because you'll receive those in April; however, it is important for all members to participate in the vote on this referendum in order for it to pass.

The Board of Directors also approved a motion to add "manufacturing technologies for gene and cell delivery" to the description of activities participated in by Society members. Like the name change, this action was designed to make the Society more inclusive and attractive to potential members. This motion will also require approval by the members and will be a separate item on the April voting initiative.

The ASGT Program Committee is dedicated to providing an outstanding Annual Meeting program for the members of the Society. This year the Program Committee has developed a theme of *Cancer Gene and Cell Therapy*, which will also be the theme of the Presidential Symposium. Confirmed highlights of the program include special lectures by Dr. Brian Druker of Oregon Health Sciences University who will give the George Stamatoyannopoulos Lecture, and the Outstanding Achievement Award winner. Special Scientific Symposia devoted to cell based therapies for cancer as well as inherited diseases have also been planned. As the program is solidified, a much longer list of invited speakers will be communicated to the members. In addition to voting in April, I would like to ask the members of the Society to take an active role in promoting the upcoming Annual Meeting of the society in late May in San Diego, CA. All members are encouraged to make plans to attend, to begin planning abstracts to submit to the Annual Meeting and to encourage their colleagues who are not members to do the same.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "DM Bodine".

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ASGT President

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