One of the most diverse and inclusive non-conventional USP gatherings produced ideas and suggestions that will carry USP forward to its next five-year convocation in March 2005.

If oral history and living memory are reliable indicators, the United States Pharmacopeia’s (USP) Semi-Hemiquinquennial Meeting (SHQM) was memorable not only for the sesquipedalian grandeur of its title, but more seriously for the scope and inclusiveness of the group that convened 21–23 March 2004 at the Lansdowne Resort in northern Virginia. Aside from USP conventions, this may have been the first time in USP’s storied history that such a diverse and inclusive group of constituents has met. The group included representatives from the:

- USP Convention Members and Resolution 18 (Council of the Convention) Committee Members/Associates
- Board of Trustees
- Council of Experts Executive Committee
- Council of Experts Members
- Stakeholder Forum Representatives
- USP staff members.

On the first full day of the conference, SHQM attendees received updates from CEO Roger L. Williams, MD, and John T. Fowler, chief operating officer, as well as from Judy Boehlert, PhD, Sally Seaver, PhD, James Boylan, PhD, and Alexander Shepherd, MD, PhD, the Council of Experts Division Executive Committee chairpersons, before breaking into parallel discussion groups. These groups were based on the six attendee groups representing USP’s various bodies. Results of these discussions were reported in plenary sessions so all participants could gain insight into the six groups’ activities.

Importantly, a recurring theme of the reports was the need for communication throughout USP, its volunteer community, and the diverse constituencies it serves. To these ends, USP is considering enhancements to its Web site to include work plans and strategies to create electronic communications to disseminate and gather information. The Board of Trustees and senior management are responsible for determining a hierarchy for USP activities and initiatives. The challenge is to ensure that this hierarchy is clearly articulated and broadly publicized. USP’s new Annual Scientific Meeting (27–29 September 2004) may be a useful communications platform for these purposes.

As a possible response to the first question, USP is considering enhancements to its Web site to include work plans and strategies to create electronic communications to disseminate and gather information. The Board of Trustees and senior management are responsible for determining a hierarchy for USP activities and initiatives. The challenge is to ensure that this hierarchy is clearly articulated and broadly publicized. USP’s new Annual Scientific Meeting (27–29 September 2004) may be a useful communications platform for these purposes.

The second concern, shortening cycle times, may evoke differences in perception and reality because of the inherent nature of standards-
setting activities: USP’s review and comment activities are designed to be open, public processes that, by nature, take time (2). However, USP has convened Project Team 19—Compendial Process Improvements, which is investigating a number of possible strategies USP could enact to shorten cycle times. These strategies include developing alternatives for acquiring methods and developing flexible monographs; considering one-cycle publication in Pharmacopeial Forum (PF), incorporation of comments, and publication of the official text in USP-NF (with the goal of avoiding multiple publish-comment cycles in PF); and establishing firm deadlines for comment periods. Such process improvements would certainly necessitate adequate comment-and-review periods for materials published in PF. Project Team 19 is working on this and related issues.

Finally, short-fused projects can challenge any organization, but USP benefits from its unique ability to convene stakeholder forums and project teams to gather input from its Council of Experts, interested and affected parties, volunteer groups (including legal experts), and regulatory bodies. In the spirit of the SHQM, participants agreed that no matter how short-deadline projects are handled, USP needs continually to communicate its approach to the entire USP community.

Call for volunteers—an update
At the 2005 convention, USP will elect volunteer scientists, healthcare practitioners, educators, and others who will serve as chairpersons of the USP Council of Experts and Expert Committees. In late spring 2005, members will be elected to the Expert Committees. To populate these positions, we are working very hard to identify qualified candidates who will serve on the Council of Experts and Expert Committees based on their scientific and professional expertise in specific scientific, medical, and health management areas. An earlier article outlined this process in greater detail (3).

Now we are pleased to report that the USP Web site features a convenient tool that enables pharmaceutical scientists to nominate potential volunteers. To do so, users must log on to www.usp.org and follow the link, “Call for Candidates 2005–2010 USP Council of Experts.” Once a user submits the name of a potential volunteer, both the nominator and the candidate will receive confirmatory e-mails. The process is blinded, however, so that the candidate will not know the name of the person who has recommended him or her. Candidates who wish to be considered for the Council of Experts or Expert Committee membership should visit the USP Web site to complete and submit an application form. The site includes information about the Expert Committees and job descriptions for the chairperson, vice-chairperson, and members so that applicants can easily correlate their own expertise to the committees’ needs. Furthermore, the site has background information about the Nominating Committee, governing bylaws, etc.
**Calendar**

**June 2004**

16–17: Visible Particle Inspections, Philadelphia, PA.
- **Contact:** Barnett Educational Services, tel. 800.856.2556, ext. 2200, fax 610.565.4584, customer.service@parexel.com, www.barnettinternational.com

- **Contact:** Barnett Educational Services, tel. 800.856.2556, ext. 2200, fax 610.565.4584, customer.service@parexel.com, www.barnettinternational.com

23–25: Validation Workshop Series, San Juan, Puerto Rico.
- **Contact:** Institute of Validation Technology, tel. 651.790.2025, fax 651.790.2065, registration@ivthome.com, www.ivhome.com/conferences

- **Contact:** Worldwide Business Research, 420 Lexington Ave., Suite 2533, New York, NY 10017, tel. 212.885.2700, fax 212.885.2798, www.wbresearch.com

- **Contact:** Barnett Educational Services, tel. 800.856.2556, ext. 2200, fax 610.565.4584, customer.service@parexel.com, www.barnettinternational.com

**July 2004**

- **Contact:** Strategic Research Institute, L.P. 333 Seventh Ave., Ninth Fl., New York, NY 10001-5004, tel. 212.967.0095, fax 212.967.7973, info@sriinstitute.com, www.sriinstitute.com

20–22: Pharmaceutical Supply Chain Summit, Washington, DC.
- **Contact:** Institute for International Research, 708 Third Ave., Fourth Fl., New York, NY 10017, tel. 212.661.3500, fax 212.599.2192, register@iirusa.com, www.iirusa.com

**August 2004**

16–19: Laboratory Compliance, Philadelphia, PA.
- **Contact:** Institute of Validation Technology, tel. 561.790.2025, fax 561.790.2065, registration@ivthome.com, www.ivhome.com/conferences

17–19: Risk Management, Philadelphia, PA.
- **Contact:** Institute of Validation Technology, tel. 561.790.2025, fax 561.790.2065, registration@ivthome.com, www.ivhome.com/conferences

**September 2004**

- **Contact:** Institute of Validation Technology, tel. 561.790.2025, fax 561.790.2065, registration@ivthome.com, www.ivhome.com/conferences

- **Contact:** PharmSource Information Services Inc., PO Box 8163, Springfield, VA 22151, tel. 703.914.1203, fax 703.914.1205, info@pharmsource.com, www.pharmsource.com

19–22: Chips to Hits, Boston, MA.
- **Contact:** IBC Life Sciences, One Research Dr., Suite 400A, PO Box 5195, Westborough, MA 01581, tel. 508.616.5550, fax 508.616.5522, custserv@ibcus.com, www.lifesciencesinfo.com

20–23: Cleaning Validation, Brussels, Belgium.
- **Contact:** Institute of Validation Technology, tel. 561.790.2025, fax 561.790.2065, registration@ivthome.com, www.ivhome.com/conferences

27–30: Computer Validation, Dublin, Ireland.
- **Contact:** Institute of Validation Technology, tel. 561.790.2025, fax 561.790.2065, registration@ivthome.com, www.ivhome.com/conferences

**October 2004**

4–7: FDA Inspections, Dublin, Ireland.
- **Contact:** Institute of Validation Technology, tel. 561.790.2025, fax 561.790.2065, registration@ivthome.com, www.ivhome.com/conferences

4–7: Environmental Monitoring, Philadelphia, PA.
- **Contact:** Institute of Validation Technology, tel. 561.790.2025, fax 561.790.2065, registration@ivthome.com, www.ivhome.com/conferences

6–8: BioContact Québec 2004, Quebec, QC.
- **Contact:** 71, rue Saint-Pierre, Suite 710, Québec, Canada G1K 4A4, tel. 418.694.8778, fax 418.694.0614, lysieth@biocontact.qc.ca, www.biocontact.qc.ca

- **Contact:** Regulatory Affairs Professionals Society, 11300 Rockville Pike, Suite 1000 Rockville, MD 20852, tel. 301.770.2920, fax 301.770.2924, raps@raps.org, www.raps.org

USP continued from page 69 and frequently asked questions. A contact link is provided so that specific questions can be e-mailed to USP staff members for personal attention.

**Conclusions**

The open-minded thinking at the SHQM will help the organization as it prepares for the 9–13 M arch 2005 USP convention that will be held in Washington, D.C. The challenges facing USP are considerable, but as the SHQM has helped demonstrate, the volunteers and staff members who make up the organization are united in seeking out the best and most creative solutions to carry USP forward into the next cycle. Despite the unique heritage of an organization that has meetings requiring a sesquipedalian syntax, USP has elected to simplify the name of its next major conclave. This meeting is, of course, the USP Convention in March 2005. The term quinquennium will not be used, giving everyone a much needed rest.

**References**

