It is an honour and a pleasure to report on the activities of the Academy of Pharmaceutical Sciences since the PSSA AGM in 2016.

The Academy of Pharmaceutical Sciences of the Pharmaceutical Society of South Africa (APSSA) held their 37th Annual Conference and 38th Annual General Meeting at the All African Congress on Pharmacology and Pharmacy. The conference was jointly organised by the Academy of Pharmaceutical Sciences of South Africa (APSSA), the South African Society for Basic and Clinical Pharmacology (SASBCP) on behalf of Pharmacology for Africa (Pharfá) and the Toxicology Society of South Africa (ToxSA). The annual APSSA conference was hosted by the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Tshwane University of Technology under the leadership of Dr Ilze Vermaak and was held from 5-8 October 2016 at Misty Hills Conference Centre, situated close to the Cradle of Humankind.

The 38th Academy AGM was held during conference 2016 during which a new Executive Committee was elected.

The Academy Executive Committee for the 2016-2018 term of office is:

Chairman: Roderick B Walker (Rhodes)
Vice Chairman: Gareth Kilian (NMMU)
Past Chairman: Sandra van Dyk (NWU)
Treasurer: Deanne Johnstone (Wits)
Portfolios: Kim Ward (UWC)
Ilse Cukrowski
PSSA Liaison: Nitsa Manolis

We are reliant on sponsorships for a number of awards in which the Academy acknowledges excellence in research by awarding prizes at the annual conference. The Academy is grateful to Boehringer Ingelheim for continued sponsorship of the ‘Young Scientist’ and ‘Best Publication’ awards. The ‘Young Scientist’ award is competed for in two categories, namely ‘Pharmaceutical Sciences’ and ‘Pharmaceutical Practice.’ The Academy is grateful to Johnson and Johnson who sponsor the ‘Pharmacy Teacher of the Year’ award.

To nurture excellence in undergraduate Teaching-Learning programmes the Academy continues to award, at each Institution presenting the BPharm, an engraved Academy medallion to the top Academic student in each year of the B.Pharm degree. The names of the winners are engraved on the Academy Award Board at each Institution.

As a further contribution to encouraging and supporting research in the pharmaceutical sciences the Academy will once again sponsor two FPE postgraduate bursaries.

The use of an electronic newsletter is a useful communication link with members and the Academy is grateful to PSSA for facilitating the publication of the electronic newsletter.

A key initiative of the Academy is to grow membership and ensure that future meetings provide agendas that have diverse appeal to the profession so as to contribute to the sustainability of the organisation. In this respect membership matters continue to be monitored.

In conclusion, it would be remiss of me not to remind the profession of the challenges facing Academic Pharmacy. We have been through some difficult times with #feesmustfall protest and more recently calls for transformation of all aspects of higher education. We are in for some tough financial times at our universities as funding for higher education becomes an issue. In this respect some institutions are under less pressure than others but we are all feeling the pinch. What this means for Pharmacy at institutions is yet to be elucidated. On a positive note the announcement that universities may become sites for CSP in 2018 is welcomed.

I would like to thank all members of the Executive, particularly the Vice-Chair for picking up the reins, and keeping the Academy afloat whilst I have been unavailable. Finally the Academy executive committee members would like to voice their appreciation to PSSA and especially to Nitsa Manolis for continued assistance with administrative matters.