

SOCIETY FOR INTEGRATIVE & COMPARATIVE BIOLOGY
Annual Business Meeting
6 January 2009
Westin Boston Waterfront Hotel – Harbor 1
Boston, Massachusetts

The meeting was called to order at 5:15 p.m. by President John Pearse.

The minutes of the 2008 Business Meeting were approved as distributed.

I. Officer Reports

- Secretary Report, Lou Burnett
 - Divisional Best Student Presentation Awards have been streamlined this year to insure a more rapid announcement and awarding of certificates and cash prizes. The SICB thanks Wiley/Blackwell for generously funding the divisional awards.
 - Several SICB bylaws changes will appear on the spring ballot.
 - A member survey is being prepared for distribution sometime during the next year to poll members on a variety of issues.

- Program Officer Report, Eduardo Rosa-Molinar
 - For this meeting 1336 abstracts were submitted; 570 poster presentations, 765 oral presentations (includes 107 symposium speakers and 4 special lectures).
 - There were 105 contributed paper sessions.
 - Student support:
 - 324 students received housing support
 - 71 students received registration support

- Treasurer Report, Ron Dimock
 - Society not immune to market turmoil
Since 2002, the Society has invested a total of \$779,498 with a professional financial management group. On December 31, 2007 that account was worth \$1,160, 976; however, as this report was written on 19 December 2008, the portfolio was worth only \$819,218. While the loss of more than \$300,000 in 12 months is disconcerting, the good news is that the capital gains from 2002 to 2007 resulted in the account still having a net gain of about \$40,000. In addition, the financial advisor is holding substantial cash in the account and is poised to take advantage of what will be excellent buying opportunities when the bottom of the market is reached.
 - SICB remains fiscally solvent
The audited figure for the Society's total assets at the close of fiscal 2008 (June 30, 2008) was \$1,629,163. Even with the subsequent losses in endowments, the overall financial health of the Society remains strong.
 - Balanced budget for 2010 to be proposed by Finance Committee
The budget for fiscal 2010 ,which was presented to the Executive Committee on Saturday, has a projected Net Operations Bottom Line of \$17,189. This has been accomplished by implementing a number of cost-cutting and revenue-generating measures into the Society's

finances, and is the first time in many years that the Society's annual operating budget is projected to finish in the black.

- New schedule of registration fees instituted for the 2009 meeting in Boston
Registration for members was increased by \$75 to \$300; however, Loyal members, those who paid dues for the 3 consecutive previous years, were able to register for \$250. This increase, as well as minor increases in student and other categories, turned out to be especially timely given the tremendous attendance at this meeting in Boston.
- Reimbursement of fees for presenting authors in symposia set at \$100
The former system of providing full reimbursement of registration for primary authors of symposium presentations is now limited to \$100. Assuming that all speakers this year are loyal members, with approximately 100 presenters, the Society will save at least \$15,000 by this change. Authors still enjoy an additional subsidy by receiving up to 12 pages in *ICB* with no page charges, a value of \$1,620, and the possibility of a \$600 color plate, real expenses that are paid for by the Society.
- Wiley-Blackwell generously underwrites best student paper and poster awards
Wiley-Blackwell publisher has provided \$3300 to fully fund the \$300 per Division allocation for a best student paper and a best student poster award. Furthermore, the publisher will provide a free year's subscription to an appropriate one of their journals to each student winner in every Division. This was an unsolicited offer on the part of Wiley-Blackwell and is very much appreciated.
- Other budget highlights
 - Journal income has stabilized
The partnership with Oxford University Press continues to be an excellent relationship for SICB. The net income to the Society for 2010 is projected to be \$166,530, right in line with what was proposed for 2009.
 - Annual meetings increasingly cost-effective
This meeting in Boston was projected to generate about \$24,000 (primarily as a result of a \$50,000 subsidy for audio/visual). However with the marked increase in attendance over recent years, the meeting may be even more solidly in the black. This follows the San Antonio meeting that finished with a net surplus of about \$32,000.
 - Student support continues to be a hallmark of SICB
In addition to providing \$24,000 for GIAR, \$6000 for FGST and \$300 per Division for Best Student Paper/Poster awards, the Society continues waiving registration or providing heavily subsidized housing to student workers. For Boston there are 71 students getting waiver of registration and 320 receiving housing for their nominal co-pay of \$75 for 4 nights. Additionally, the current total of 736 students registered as either student members or student non-members are receiving an effective subsidy of \$108,832 compared to what it would cost for them to register as 'loyal' senior members. Of course no one questions how outstanding this level of participation by students, as well as postdocs, is for the Society at large.

II. Journal Report

President Pearse reported that the SICB journal ICB is doing very well. The relationship with Oxford University Press is excellent. Editor Hal Heatwole has published symposia in a timely way. There is no backlog.

III. Other Business

Grand Challenges. President Pearse reported on the conversations with NSF representative Bill Zamer at the Executive Committee meeting at its first meeting on Saturday. There was discussion on the future of integrative biology and some of its “grand challenges.” Sally Woodin, Past President of SICB, was introduced. Woodin reported that a number of people got together after the Executive Committee meeting and set forth some ideas (distributed as hard copy) and are included below as “Grand Challenges in Organismal Biology.” Sally Woodin proposed this general structure for a timeline to move this issue forward. These ideas will be discussed further at the second Executive Committee meeting and a course of action will be planned.

Grand Challenges In Organismal Biology

NSF has presented SICB with a significant opportunity to initiate the framing of the ‘Grand Challenge’ questions to drive funding in Organismal Biology. The timeline however is short. Several of us have been discussing how to facilitate input from all members of SICB. We suggest the creation of a discussion chat room within the member space on the web where possible articulations of ‘Grand Challenge’ questions can be posted, discussed and honed.

To begin the discussion two such drivers of our science are articulated below.

1. What are the linkages among genotype, phenotype and the function/performance of organisms and what are their mechanisms of operation?

Currently the focus is on descriptive, pattern based, gene/genome sequencing, and single gene responses but not on the mechanistic drivers or the feedback loops at a systems level. These include dynamic feedbacks through evolutionary and environmental responses as well as the plasticity of responses at all levels of organization.

2. Similarly, the physical environment, physiological and developmental processing, and organismal function and responses are clearly linked, but how do those linkages work and how do the responses translate into changes in population, community and ecosystem functions? What are the feedbacks among these levels of organization and what are the modulators and control functions?

Advances have been made in physical biology such that we are better able to predict/model the physical environment and material/mechanical/physical limitations and constraints (or opportunities) for organisms, but we lack mechanistic understanding about how this information is used/sensed/translated at the organismal level, nor do we understand the integration at the organismal level that then translates into function and performance.

We must address such questions if we are to understand and predict any of the following:

- organismal and system responses to climate change
- restoration and resilience of natural resources
- organismal responses to the challenges of increases in emergence of new diseases etc.
- changes in gene expression and phenotypic integration of those changes

NSF Time horizons for SICB input to be effective:

2-4 Weeks – articulate 1-3 basic big, overarching questions. These “leading edges” will be discussed among NSF program officers in Biology. This is when the formulation of ideas for new special programs will take place. Organismal Biology needs to be a unified voice, articulating the needs of this community. All other areas of science will be doing the same – we need our questions to be prominent, and articulate them as the core of all biological questions with organisms as the integrators.

2-3 Months – detailed articulation/ refinement of Grand Challenges. Recommend how NSF could facilitate finding answers to these grand challenges i.e. what is necessary for their resolution. Funds for tool development? Synthesis Center (we have the data, we just need to synthesize it)? Directed calls for interdisciplinary work? What do we need from NSF to solve these Grand Challenges.

2 yrs – further development and discussion and buy in from all of the organismal biology community about what the big questions are and how NSF can help us answer them.

Year of Science 2009. President Pearse introduced Peter deFur, the chair of the SICB Public Affairs Committee (PAC).

Motion. A motion was made by the PAC to approve the following resolution to support the “Year of Science 2009.”

YEAR OF SCIENCE 2009

WHEREAS, January 1, 2009 marks the beginning of the national yearlong 2009 Year of Science celebration established by the Coalition on the Public Understanding of Science (COPUS), a grassroots network of more than 400 scientific organizations nationwide working together to highlight "How We Know What We Know" and engage in a cross disciplinary celebration of the process and nature of science;

WHEREAS, the lack of public understanding and, in some cases, misrepresentation of science is a national crisis and should be a concern to all scientists, science educators, business leaders, and public policy officials;

WHEREAS, an informed understanding of the nature and value of science is necessary if the public is going to support efforts to maintain the scientific enterprise that has been so successful in this country, both in advancing scientific understanding and in promoting economic development;

WHEREAS, direct engagement between scientists and the public has previously been underemphasized;

THEREFORE SICB RESOLVES to actively participate in the Year of Science. We encourage

our members to communicate scientific processes and information to the media, policy makers, and the public at large, and to take part in Year of Science program and events.

The motion passed by acclamation.

Report on DIZ Auction. Janice Voltzow, chair of the Division of Invertebrate Zoology, reported that the DIZ auction raised \$5,455.

Congratulations to newly-elected SICB officers. President Pearse congratulated the newly-elected officers of the Society who will take office at the end of the second Executive Committee meeting.

Ken Sebens – President-Elect
Bob Roer – Treasurer-Elect
Brian Tsukimura – Program Officer-Elect
Adam Summers – Member-At-Large
Bob Podolsky – Chair, Educational Council

IV. Recognition of Lecturers and Awards

Recognition was given to the following individuals.

- Howard Bern Lecture – Peter J. Sharp, PhD, FRSE, Genetics and Genomics Division, The Roslin Institute and Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, University of Edinburgh, Scotland, “Vertebrate Photoperiodic Signaling”

Awards

- George A. Bartholomew Award – Lynn (Marty) Martin, University of South Florida, “Ecological Immunology: An Adaptationist Perspective on the Vertebrate Immune System”
- Dorothy M. Skinner Award – Jessica E. Garb, University of Arizona (presented by Don Mykles).
- 2008 Libbie H. Hyman Scholarship – Dennis Evangelista, UC Berkeley
- A number of SICB Officers whose terms are ending were recognized with plaques.
 - John Long, Member-At-Large
 - George Bakken, Chair, Division of Ecology & Evolution
 - Janice Voltzow, Chair, Division of Invertebrate Zoology
 - Kurt Schwenk, Chair, Division of Vertebrate Morphology
 - Robin Cooper, Chair, Educational Council
- GIAR and FGST Awards. To present these awards, Sherry Tamone, chair of the Student Support Committee was introduced. Tamone acknowledged the 10 committee members representing all SICB divisions who worked hard to select the award recipients. A total of 64 GIAR proposals were received and 24 awards were given. A total of 18 FGST

proposals were received and 3 awards were given. The recipients of these awards were recognized.

Grants in Aid of Research Awards		
Division	Name	University
Comparative Endocrinology	Bobby Fokidis	Arizona State University
Animal Behavior	Michael Butler	Arizona State University
Comparative Endocrinology	Constance O'Connor	Carleton University
Systematic & Evolutionary Biology	Maude Baldwin	Harvard University
Ecology and Evolution	Paul A. Cziko	University of Oregon
Ecology and Evolution	Suzanne Austin-Bythell	Oregon State University
Comparative Physiology & Biochemistry	Sarah E. DuRant	Va. Polytechnic Inst. & State Univ.
Systematic & Evolutionary Biology	Andres Cuervo	Louisiana State University
Animal Behavior	Matthew B. Toomey	Arizona State University
Comparative Endocrinology	Erin H. Strasser	Boise State University
Ecology and Evolution	Jeanine Refsnider	Iowa State University
Comparative Endocrinology	Travis E. Wilcoxon	University of Memphis
Ecology and Evolution	Maya deVries	University of California, Berkeley
Ecology and Evolution	Sujal Phadke	University of Houston-Central
Ecology and Evolution	David Jonathan Gonthier	University of Toledo
Systematic & Evolutionary Biology	Erik Sperling	Yale University
Comparative Physiology & Biochemistry	Justin Perrault	Florida Atlantic University
Animal Behavior	Norman Lee	University of Toronto
Comparative Biomechanics	Brandon Kilbourne	University of Chicago
Ecology and Evolution	Benjamin James Dantzer	Michigan State University
Comparative Physiology & Biochemistry	John Lin O'Keeffe	Boise State University
Vertebrate Morphology	Jason Ramsay	University of Rhode Island
Comparative Endocrinology	Christine A. Duncan	Rutgers University
Ecology and Evolution	David Haak	University of Washington
Fellowship of Graduate Student Travel (FGST)		
Animal Behavior	Yu Zeng	University of California, Berkeley
Animal Behavior	Justin Henningsen	University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Ecology and Evolution	Michal Joey Pakes	University of California, Berkeley

V. New Business

Rich Satterlie, President-Elect, took the podium to make a presentation. Satterlie presented a plaque to President John Pearse in appreciation for his service to the society.

Ed Rosa-Molinar, SICB Program Officer, took the podium to recognize the hard work of the Program Committee in putting together an excellent program for the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15.