



# American Chemical Society

## Division of Biological Chemistry

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### Minutes of the Fall 2004 Business Meeting of the Division of Biological Chemistry - August 23, 2004

**Attended by:** Vernon Anderson, Richard Armstrong, Cynthia Burrows, Shelley Copley, Felicia Etzkorn, John Gerlt, John Katzenbellenbogen, George Kenyon, Susan Miller, Frank Raushel, John Richard, Steve Rokita, Vern Schramm and Chris Whitman

**(1) Spring Meeting Minutes:** The minutes of the Spring meeting of the Executive Committee at the Anaheim ACS meeting were read and approved, subject to the following correction of item 6.

**(6) Council Issues and Division Funding:** *The Chair reminded the committee that the ACS contribution of members dues to the division will double over a period of three years beginning in 2004.*

**(2) Report of the Executive Committee presented by Vern Schramm:** The Chair briefly presented the 2003 Reviewer's Form of the 2003 Technical Division Annual Report. The report was generally favorable, but two minor deficiencies were noted: (a) The Division's failure to use the standard form for the Treasurer's report. (b) A criticism of the lack of outreach programs within the division. The Chair pointed out that the division has been working hard over the last couple of years to increase our outreach activities by supporting symposia at Regional ACS meetings and supporting events such as the Midwest Enzyme Chemistry Conference. He expects that these improvements will be noted in the 2004 Reviewer's Form.

The Chair has taken the lead in developing an operations manual for our Division. This will include sections prepared by the Secretary and Treasurer describing the responsibilities of these officers, along with a recommended schedule for the completion of their assigned tasks during the course of the calendar year. This manual will be presented to the incoming Chair when he assumes office in January 2005.

Members of the Executive Committee were given a copy of the minutes of the summer 2004 meeting of the US National Committee for the International Union of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (IUBMB). There was a discussion of the nature of the interactions between our organization and IUBMB, and how these might be improved.

**(3) Report of the Secretary presented by John Richard:** The Secretary touched on his efforts to increase the Division's participation in Regional meetings. The division will provide support (\$1500/symposia) for three symposia at Regional meetings during the summer/fall of 2004 and is considering a request for support of symposia at a fourth meeting. He encouraged members of the executive committee to make their colleagues aware that the division is very interested in serving our members by helping to facilitate the presentation of their work at Regional meetings.

The Secretary noted that Martha Oakley was both a member of our Nominating Committee, and the Chair of this years Bioorganic Gordon Conference. Unfortunately, she never thought to contact the DBC to request our support for this Gordon conference. The Secretary has encouraged her to inform future Chairs of the Bioorganic Gordon Conference that we welcome such requests. Richard Armstrong noted that there are a number of other Gordon Conferences with themes that overlap with the interests of our members that the DBC might chose to support.

The Secretary touched upon the difficulties experienced this year in identifying candidates to stand for election to the open offices in the division for 2005. He suggested that the division work to identify candidates for office well before the summer election. He will encourage the members of the nominating committee to attend the Spring meeting of the Executive Committee.

**(4) Report of the Treasurer presented by Vern Schramm:** The division is in very good financial shape. There has been a significant increase in revenue due to the recent increase in dues and support from the ACS. There has been no change in investment strategy or sources of income since the last Annual Report filed in March of 2004.

To maintain its non-private foundation and public charity status the Division "*must normally receive more than 33.3% of its support from contributions, membership fees, and gross receipts from activities related to its exempt functions and not more than 33.3% of its support from gross investment income.*" In past years gross investment has risen to slightly above 33.3% of the division's total support from all sources. However, this level has dropped to 23.71 % in 2003 and to 22.42 % in 2004, so that the Division's non-private foundation and public charity status is secure.

**(5) Programs at ACS meetings.**

**228th ACS National Meeting, August 22 – 26, 2004, Philadelphia, PA - Program Chair, Cynthia Burrows.** The Program Chair noted how much she appreciated the Division's decision last year to increase their level of support at the ACS National Meeting. The Chair and other committee members noted the high quality of this program and the superb organizational skills of the Program Chair.

The poster sessions were discussed with the aim of developing a more focused and thematic presentation of the greater than 200 poster presentations in the Division program at the ACS national meeting. The idea of presenting posters at the same time and in the same rooms as the relevant oral presentations was considered and discarded, due to lack of support by the organizers of the ACS national meeting. Posters were presented for the first time this year in several thematic sessions. It was agreed that this was an improvement over past years where posters were presented together in one large session. The program Chair for 2005 was encouraged to continue and refine this practice. The ACS asks the division to select 10% of its roughly 200 posters for presentation at the Sci Mix. This is roughly equal to the number (20) of the Division's travel awards. Cynthia Burrows noted that she featured posters by the recipients of our travel awards at the Sci Mix. There was agreement that this practice should be continued.

Cynthia Burrows suggested that one session of the Division's program at future ACS meeting be organized by graduate students. There was agreement that it was a good idea to increase the participation of the Division's younger members at our National meeting, but no consensus on how this might best be accomplished.

Cynthia Burrows aired concerns about the possibility of poor attendance at the Division's Thursday morning session. Another committee member mentioned that the past attendance at these sessions has been poor. It was suggested that the Thursday morning session be dispensed with for future meetings. There was no support for continuing the Thursday morning session, but it was pointed out that the Program Chair has the final say about scheduling.

About 30 applications were received for the Division's 20 travel awards to attend the Philadelphia ACS meeting. Some deserving applications were not funded. A motion to increase the number of travel awards from twenty to twenty-five was approved unanimously. It was suggested that C&E News should be asked to publish information about these awards. The Secretary will look into this.

The ACS requires publication of all abstracts of papers presented at the ACS National Meeting. In order to save the Division the cost of printing and mailing these abstracts, the Program Chair has sometimes arranged for the publication of abstracts in *Biochemistry*. The practice was discontinued this year, and abstracts for the ACS National meeting will henceforth be published on the Division's website. Richard Armstrong explained that some members of the Editorial Board of *Biochemistry* expressed concerns about the publication of abstracts in *Biochemistry* without formal review of the type which our abstracts for oral and poster presentations have not received in past years. There was general agreement that Web publication was appropriate, provided our members are sent an EMAIL message announcing the appearance of these abstracts on the Web.

**229th ACS National Meeting, March 13 - 17, 2005, San Diego CA.** Alan Fersht will receive the Alfred Bader Award in Bioorganic Chemistry at this meeting. The Division has been charged with organizing an award symposium. There is no requirement that this symposium be held at the same meeting where the award is granted (San Diego). Since the division would not otherwise hold a program at the San Diego meeting, there is interest in including this Award symposium as part of the program for the Washington DC meeting in the late summer of 2005. Richard Armstrong has contacted Alan Fersht to see if he has a preference for the site of his Award symposium. Vernon Anderson, the Program Chair for the 2005 Washington ACS meeting will also inquire about Fersht's interest in holding the Award symposium at the latter meeting.

**230th ACS National Meeting, August 28 - September 1, 2005, Washington, DC - Program Chair, Vernon Anderson.** Vernon Anderson announced that three symposia at this meeting will be held to honor the Division's three award recipients for 2005: Dewey McCafferty (Lilly); Nicole Sampson (Pfizer); and, David Cane (Repligen).

**Other Meetings.** The Division has received requests to support the 2004 MECC (Midwest Enzyme Chemistry Conference) which is scheduled to be held at Chicago, Illinois on October 9, 2004 and the 19th Enzyme Mechanisms Conference, which is scheduled to be held at Asilomar, California from January 5 - 9, 2005. There was general agreement that the Division should honor these requests for support.

(6) **Council Issues and Division Funding:** The Chair informed the committee that the ACS contribution of members dues to the division is expected to double over the next three years. This will allow an expansion of the Division's outreach activities.

(7) **Bylaws Changes.** The division's bylaws have been revised and will be presented to our members for approval in the fall election. These bylaws will be available for review by our members on the Division's Website and the election ballot has been included with the Summer Newsletter.

(8) **Awards Status for the Division of Biological Chemistry.** The Chair made the following announcements: (1) The Repligen corporation will continue to support their award in the "Chemistry of Biological Processes" for the foreseeable future. (2) A benefactor has made provisions in his will to institute a new award for the Division of Biological Chemistry.

The Secretary mentioned that only one new nomination for the Lilly award was received this year. He encouraged committee members to send names of scientists of under age 38 who would be worthy recipients of this award. Richard Armstrong explained that many divisions appoint formal canvassing committees to solicit nominations for their awards and suggested that our Division do the same. The President and Secretary currently serve as an informal canvassing committee. Vern Schramm suggested that these duties might be passed onto the revamped Nominations Committee.

The question of age restrictions on the Lilly Award [under age 38] and the Pfizer Award [under age 40] was discussed. The intent of these age restrictions is to ensure that the awards go to scientists in the early stages of their careers. It was pointed out that rigid age restrictions exclude those scientists in the early stages of their careers as independent investigators, who did not assume independent positions until after age 30. The point was made that the average age of the starting independent investigator has risen over the years, and that this may be an important cause for the small number of applications for the Lilly award. George Kenyon explained that in the past award donors have been reluctant to relax these age restrictions. Richard Armstrong was encouraged to renew the Division's request to Lilly that age restrictions be relaxed. Shelley Copley and Felicia Etzkorn suggested that the eligibility "clock" for these awards should start at the time a scientist assumes a position as an independent investigator.

(9) **Newsletter and Mailings.** The Secretary expressed his satisfaction with the Division's current practice of mailing hard copies of the Newsletter to our members. There is a move within the ACS towards holding elections of Division officers over the Web. It is not clear whether the transition from mail to electronic ballots would cause our division any problems.

(10) **Website:** The Secretary explained that the electronic distribution of the Summer Newsletter and amended bylaws has been delayed by a 'glitch' in the Division's website. Our Webmaster Darrell Davis is trying to correct this glitch. It is unclear how much longer Darrell Davis will be willing to serve as an unpaid volunteer in maintaining this Website. Vern Schramm suggested that the Division could afford ca. \$2000/year to pay a professional to revamp and then maintain this website. John Richard and Felicia Etzkorn suggested people whom the division might pay to maintain its website.