



American Chemical Society

Division of Biological Chemistry

Minutes of the Spring 2008 Business Meeting of the Division of Biological Chemistry - Wednesday, April 9, 2008, 12:00 pm 232 E. Morial Convention Center, New Orleans, LA

Attended by: Tadhg Begley, John Blanchard, Martin Bollinger, Squire Booker, Christine Chow, Kevin Dalby, Sheila David, Matt Disney Felicia Etzkorn, Carol Fierke, Thomas Harris, Neil Kelleher, Eugene Mueller, John Richard, Jim Stivers and Suzanne Walker.

(1) Reading of minutes. The minutes of the August 20, 2007 Boston Business meeting were read and approved.

(2) Report of the Secretary Presented by John Richard.

(a) **Dues Increase.** The secretary announced that the increase in the Divisions Dues from \$10.00 to \$12.50, which was formally approved at the previous spring meeting, will take effect beginning in 2009.

(b) **Founders Travel Award.** The secretary announced that approximately \$25,000 had been raised to support a Travel Award, administered by the division, to attend the Winter Enzyme Mechanism conference. Eugene Mueller added that the exact amount was \$23,140, which with 3% returns each year will give \$1,409.23 in income. John Richard summarized a recent message from Karen Allen, that there would be a \$375 registration and a 4 x \$150 (\$975 total) hotel rate for the coming conference. He suggested that the first Travel Award cover registration, room and travel expenses, with a cap of \$2,000. While this exceeds the income for a 3% return, the fund in all probability would continue to grow and a rate of return higher than 3% was likely. Carol Fierke suggested that the endowment be used to cover \$1500 and that the Division cover the remainder of the award, up to the \$2000 cap. The Executive Committee approved a motion to this effect unanimously.

(c) **Hammes Lectureship.** The secretary distributed a document prepared by Richard Armstrong, the editor of Biochemistry, which described the "The Gordon Hammes ACS Biochemistry Lectureship." He then presented several issues for resolution. Carol Fierke (our Chair), agreed to wording in the document that the selection committee will include "one ACS member chosen by the Division of Biological Chemistry, who will be designated by the Division's Chair". There was extensive discussion about whether the Lectureship should be part of a larger award symposium to honor the recipient. A consensus developed that the fall Program at the ACS meeting has reached the saturation point with regard to award symposia, and that a commitment to support the expenses of speakers to attend an additional symposium would strain the Division's resources. There was some support for the suggestion that the Hammes Lecture be presented at a symposium that features the best work of our young members. It was emphasized that the Program Chair makes such programming decisions. It was suggested that this Lecture be presented at the Spring ACS meeting. The lack of an Awards Dinner at the spring meeting was cited as a major impediment that will only be removed if the Division is able to obtain support for several additional awards or lectureships.

(d) **Web-Based Election.** The secretary thanked Sheila David for putting him into contact with William Buhro, the secretary of the ACS Division of Inorganic Chemistry. This Division has successfully implemented web-based elections, and may be willing to provide the DBC with the software that was used to validate voter identity and to tally the votes. John Richard promised to place an amendment to the division's bylaws to allow a electronic format to these elections on the ballot for the Division's fall election.

(e) **Web-Site.** The secretary noted the large demands that maintaining and updating the Division's website placed on his time. He suggested that the Division appoint one of its members to the voluntary position of web-master. Thomas Harris, who currently holds the office of alternate councilor in the Division, offered to assume the additional responsibilities of web-master.

(3) Report of the Treasurer Presented by Eugene Mueller. The treasurer reported that "the fiscal restraints instituted for 2007 produced results beyond expectations in reversing a trend of deficit spending by the division". This resulted in roughly a \$30,000 surplus for 2007. The treasurer noted the uncertainties in the reimbursements claimed by officers and symposia speakers to attend ACS national meetings, and in the size of the divisional allotment from the ACS. A substantial increase in the divisional allotment from national ACS (\$37,474 for 2007 *versus* \$24,802 for 2006) accounted for roughly one third of the 2007 surplus.

(4) Financial Issues Presented by Eugene Mueller. No reduction in the divisional allotment from the ACS is expected, and the size of this allotment may increase because of the Division's decision to institute a program at the Spring ACS national meeting. Christy Chow mentioned that a change in the formula used for this allotment was discussed at the New Orleans Council meeting, but that the final decision was deferred until a later Council meeting. It is unclear how these changes might affect the division's allotment.

(5) ACS Meetings Issues Presented by Tadgh Begley and Jim Stivers. The Division's officers complimented Tadgh Begley on the excellent job done in organizing the spring program and noted the enthusiasm expressed for this program by young faculty appreciative of this new forum in which to present their work. There was enthusiasm in building upon Tadgh Begley's successful inaugural program. Jim Stivers agreed to organize the program for the 2009 spring meeting in Salt Lake City. It was agreed that the spring program for the 2009 meeting should be expanded from one-half day to a full day on Monday, and that the 4-half-day oral sessions held on Tuesday and Wednesday should continue

It was agreed that the responsibility of the Division's future program Chairs should be expanded to include both the fall ASC meeting of their year as Chair of the program committee, and the Spring ACS meeting of the following year. Thus, Suzanne Walker agreed to organize the programming for the 2010 spring ACS meeting in San Francisco, and Martin Bollinger agreed, tentatively, to handle the programming for the 2011 Anaheim spring ACS meeting. This is conditional upon the Division's approval to extend the spring program beyond the initial 3-year trial period.

Jim Stivers presented the Executive Committee with the full program for the Fall ACS meeting in Philadelphia. The excellent quality of this program was noted. Jim also reported that he has identified an excellent Greek restaurant in which to hold the Award's Dinner.

(5) Funding and Co-sponsorship Requests for Other Meetings Presented by Suzanne Walker.

A decision was made to award support for the following meetings.

(1) 2008 Gordon Research Conference on Enzymes, Coenzymes and Metabolic Pathways.

Organizers Lizbeth Hedstrom and Nicole Sampson

Amount funded: \$1,500

(2) 2008 Gordon Research Conference on Bioorganic Chemistry

Organizers Wilfred van der Donk and Paul Richardson

Amount funded: \$1,500

Several requests for blanket support of ACS Regional meetings were received. The secretary emphasized that his intent when implementing a program to support regional ACS meetings was to make the award directly to organizers of individual symposia, in order to generate new programming at these meetings. It was suggested that these requests for funding might be the result of ambiguous wording on the Division's website. The secretary agreed to check on this. He has since added the following to the website to clarify the Division's policy. *"These awards are intended to provide our members with new forums in which to present their work, and to support focused conferences on biochemistry/chemical biology. Proposals judged not meet these objectives, such as requests for blanket support of regional ACS meetings, are unlikely to be funded."*

(6) Nominations and Awards Presented by John Richard. The members of the executive committee were encouraged to identify nominees for the Divisions awards, and to assist the nominations committee in identifying candidates for the Division's offices. John Blanchard stressed the importance of identifying strong candidates for the open positions of secretary and treasurer.

John Blanchard briefly described his efforts to obtain industrial support for a new award in Biological Chemistry. This is intended to recognize the achievements of members who are in the middle of their careers. It would fill a gap between the Lily and Pfizer awards which recognize the achievements of scientists in the early stages of their careers, and the Repligen Award, which recognizes substantial "lifetime" achievements of senior scientists.

(9) Other Business Presented by Carol Fierke.

Membership Committee. Mark Distefano presented data, which showed that the number of new members joining the Division each year is at an all time high. Tadhg Begley announced that *ACS Chemical Biology* has agreed to provide our student members with a reduced subscription price of \$40 for this *Journal*.

Strategic Planning. Carol Fierke briefly described the Strategic Planning Services available through the Department of Division Advancement (DDA). The DDA recommends that from 10 to 15 persons be invited to serve on the planning team, with 12 being ideal. A division requesting a strategic planning session in conjunction with a national meeting will incur travel and lodging expenses for two ACS staff members who will facilitate and manage a shared screen display throughout the planning session. A stand-alone strategic planning session might cost the division up to \$10,000. Various opinions were expressed about the value of this session, and the effectiveness of ACS at organizing such events.