

Society for Molecular Biology and Evolution (SMBE) Council and Business Meetings, 2007, Halifax, Canada

Council Meeting

1. *Call to order.*—President Deborah Charlesworth called the meeting to order at 9:40 AM on 24 June 2007. In attendance were President Deborah Charlesworth, President-Elect Paul Sharp, Past-President Montserrat Aguadé, secretary George Zhang, treasurer Marta Wayne, editor Bill Martin, and Councillors Michael Lynch, Chip Aquadro, and Laura Landweber. In attendance was also *Molecular Biology and Evolution (MBE)* prospective editor Marcy Uyenoyama. Society for Molecular Biology and Evolution (SMBE) 2008 conference organizer Carmen Segarra attended part of the meeting. The meeting began with introductions. Midway through, the Council was joined by *MBE* editorial assistant Elizabeth Raffaele and Oxford University Press (OUP) representative Cathy Kennedy.

2. *Approval of minutes.*—The Council unanimously approved the minutes of the 2006 Council and Business meetings, published in the December 2006 issue of *MBE*, and also available at <http://www.smbc.org/archive.php> online.

3. *Editor's report.*—The editor gave a report on the health of the journal, including the impact factor (IF), the geographical distribution of the authors, acceptance rates, and other associated statistics (see detailed editor's report). It was noted that the IF of *MBE* reached its historical height this year at 6.726. Dr Martin will retire from the office of editor when Volume 24 of *MBE* is filled up in October 2007. The Council thanked Dr Martin for a job well done. Dr Uyenoyama will start handling manuscripts for Volume 25 in October 2007.

4. *Treasurer's report.*—Treasurer Marta Wayne summarized the financial state of the Society. Records indicate that the Society is in excellent financial health. (See detailed treasurer's report.)

5. *Secretary's report.*—Secretary George Zhang reviewed the Council actions over the preceding year. These notes, along with the meeting minutes, are summarized here:

Bylaws amendment: Past-President Montserrat Aguadé appointed a Bylaws Committee in mid-2006 to revise the bylaws of SMBE. Members of the Bylaws Committee included Masatoshi Nei (chair), Jeffery Powell, and George Zhang. The committee-proposed amendments were approved by the Council at the end of 2006 and were approved by SMBE members by a majority of those voted (181 out of 185) in March 2007. The new bylaws are posted on the SMBE Web site.

Election of SMBE officers: Past-President Montserrat Aguadé appointed a Nominations Committee to select candidates for the offices of President-Elect and Councillor. Members of the nominations committee included Andy Clark (chair), Claudia Kappen, Julio Rozas, and George Zhang (ex officio). The candidates were Takashi Gojobori (National Institute of Genetics, Japan) and Michael Lynch (Indiana University) for the President-Elect and Manolo Gouy (French National Center for Scientific Research)

and Ziheng Yang (University College London) for Councillor. The elections were conducted online for the third time at the OUP member-subscription site, where short biographies of each candidate were made available. This was also the first time that ballots were sent to members by emails only, as permitted by the new bylaws. In the final tally, Drs Lynch and Yang were elected to hold the offices of President-Elect (2008) and Councillor (2008–2010), respectively.

Report on 2007 SMBE annual meeting: The 15th annual meeting of SMBE was held from 24 to 28 June 2007 at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. The meeting attracted ~700 delegates from more than 25 countries and included more than 500 scientific presentations over a 4-day period. The meeting was cohosted by the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research (CIFAR) and held in conjunction with the 20th annual meeting of the CIFAR Evolutionary Biology Program. In addition to SMBE and CIFAR, OUP provided significant financial and in-kind support for the meeting. Additional financial support was received from the National Evolutionary Synthesis Centre, USA, Sinauer Associates, Inc., Blackwell Publishing, Harvard University Press, Cambridge University Press, and Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press. The conference organizers report a net expenditure of \$185,000 CDN to run the meeting, not including in-kind contributions from Dalhousie University's Computer Science Department.

In addition to 35 contributed sessions, 13 symposia were held on a range of topics, including 2 symposia that were sponsored by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Astrobiology Institute, and the Atlantic Association for Research in the Mathematical Sciences. Student participation at this year's meeting was very encouraging. Graduate/undergraduate students and postdoctoral fellows made up 40% and 20% of conference delegates, respectively. In aid of student attendance, the Society awarded 10 Graduate Student Travel Awards (US \$1,000 domestic or \$1,500 international) and sponsored the inaugural Undergraduate Diversity Mentoring Program Awards. This program, organized by Laura Katz and John Archibald, provided support for 10 undergraduates from underrepresented groups to travel to the meeting, present a poster on their research, and attend a reception in their honor, sponsored by OUP and Sinauer Associates, Inc. Each student was paired with 2 mentors to answer questions and to introduce them to potential supervisors.

A total of 138 graduate students and postdoctoral fellows submitted abstracts to be considered for participation in the annual Walter M. Fitch Student Prize competition. Eight students were chosen to give platform presentations with David Des Marais of Duke University chosen as winner. Members of the Fitch Prize Committee included Montserrat Aguadé (chair), Brandon Gaut, and Yoko Satta. Two poster sessions were held on consecutive evenings, and a total of 12 poster prizes were awarded, 6 for graduate students and 6 for postdoctoral fellows. Prizes were handed out at the SMBE Awards Banquet held on the penultimate evening of the meeting. A full list of prizewinners can be found at <https://smbc2007.dal.ca/Awards/>. The conference

organizers gratefully acknowledge the support and hard work of Society Council members, previous conference organizers, the 2007 External Scientific Program Committee, judges, mentors, sponsors, and volunteers for making SMBE 2007 a success.

Future annual meetings: The presentation of the proposal for SMBE 2008 (5–8 June 2008) in Barcelona, Spain, was given by Carmen Segarra of University of Barcelona. Facilities as well as organizational plans were presented, along with maps of the site, general information about the locale, and the organizers' ideas for generating sponsorships for invited symposia presentations. The Council provided suggestions on registration fees, scientific programs, and other potential sources of financial aid for the meeting, which will be required because registration will be costly owing to the need to hire a convention center. President Deborah Charlesworth informed the Council about the proposal by John Logsdon of the 2009 meeting in Iowa City, Iowa, USA, and the Council approved it unanimously. President-Elect Paul Sharp presented on behalf of Manolo Gouy a proposal for 2010 Society meeting in Lyon, France. The Council approved this proposal, subject to checking that the organizers are aware that more than 500 participants are likely and can be accommodated for the plenary talks in nearby rooms with a video or other link.

Financial support for attending Society annual meetings: Based on the current financial status of the Society, the Council approved the motion of providing up to US \$1,000 for each associate editor of *MBE* to attend the 2007 annual meeting and US \$1,000 to attend the 2008 annual meeting. The Council also approved the motion to provide up to \$1,000 per individual for 10 postdoctoral fellows to attend the 2008 annual meeting. The support for 10 graduate students and 8 Fitch prize contestants to attend the annual conference will continue. The Society supported 10 undergraduate students to attend the 2007 meeting, and this is likely to continue in 2008.

SMBE journal and membership: A motion of an increase of 3%, 1%, and 0% (dollar, sterling, and euro) in membership fee (with print and online journal subscription) for regular members and 3%, 0%, and 0% for student/postdoctoral members was approved by the Council. To encourage the use of color figures in *MBE* while ensuring the income for the Society, the Council approved a motion to modify the page charge to a flat rate of \$50 per page and the color charge to \$450 per color figure, effective Volume 25, Issue 1.

Cathy Kennedy proposed that the editor and associate editors of *MBE* sign a conflict-of-interest document related to manuscript handling in *MBE*. The Council asked Cathy Kennedy and Marcy Uyenoyama to develop this document. The Council also discussed proper channels for authors to make formal complaints of misconduct of editors and asked Paul Sharp to develop a form that will be linked online to *MBE* for authors to make such complaints. The Council discussed the role of the Editorial Advisory Board and concluded that the necessity and composition of the Board be decided by the editor. The Council discussed the policy on accepting manuscripts that extensively use publicly available yet unpublished genomic data and asked Chip Aquadro, Laura Landweber, and Marta Wayne to develop this policy. The Council discussed the possibility of having

a contract between the editor and SMBE and asked Marcy Uyenoyama to develop the contract. It is anticipated that the proposed contract will then be examined by a lawyer with experience of the publishing world.

Prospective editor Marcy Uyenoyama suggested that Council approve a resolution supporting the development of a digital repository of data as worded below, and Council approved it.

The SMBE and its Journal exist to promote molecular evolution. Among the fundamental responsibilities of journal publication is to ensure that sufficient information is provided to permit replication and verification of results. Further, facilitating data preservation and accessibility to data constitute a service to the molecular evolution community. We support the development of a digital repository of data as a means of promoting both objectives.

Second SMBE journal: Bill Martin presented on behalf of the second journal committee a report on the necessity and possibility of publishing a second journal by SMBE, including reporting the results of a survey by OUP that was completed by more than 2,000 submitting authors of *MBE*. Dr Martin proposed the possibility of publishing a new journal in the area of "evolutionary genomics." Suggested titles included "MBE Genomics" or "Genome Biology and Evolution." The Council discussed this possibility extensively but did not reach consensus on whether SMBE should publish an "evolutionary genomics" journal. It was suggested that the OUP survey results be provided to all associate editors of *MBE* to seek their opinions.

1. *Adjournment.*—The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 PM.

Business Meeting

1. *Call to order.*—President Deborah Charlesworth called to order the annual SMBE business meeting on 27 June 2007. About 25 SMBE members were in attendance. The President summarized the discussion at the Council meeting. Marta Wayne delivered the treasurer's report. She said that SMBE would continue and possibly expand the graduate student travel awards and the Undergraduate Diversity Mentoring Program. Bill Martin delivered the *MBE* editor's report and noted that personal subscriptions rose by about 40 in the last year. The President thanked Dr Martin for his report and for his efforts throughout his term as *MBE* editor. The President noted that Marcy Uyenoyama will be taking over as the new *MBE* editor over the coming months. The President offered the Society's profound thanks to John Archibald and his colleagues for their efforts in organizing this splendid SMBE 2007 meeting and announced the locations of the SMBE meetings for the next 3 years.

2. *New business.*—Bill Martin presented discussion of a proposal for SMBE to start a second journal, publishing papers in the area of evolutionary genomics.

Addendum: Upon receiving overwhelming support from associate editors of *MBE* to publish a second SMBE journal that focuses on evolutionary genomics, the Council approved a motion to enter into negotiation with OUP for draft of a contract, to formulate scope and aims, and to put together the editorial board.