



# American Chemical Society

## Division of Biological Chemistry

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### Minutes of the Fall 2011 Business Meeting of the Division of Biological Chemistry - Monday, August 29, 2011, 11:45 – 1:30 pm Denver Convention Center, Room 405

**Attended by:** Martin Bollinger, Cynthia Burrows, Sheila David, Hung-wen Liu, Dewey McCafferty, Frank Raushel, Nigel Richards, Scott Silverman, James Stivers, JoAnne Stubbe and Tom Wandless.

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#### (1) Chair's Report presented by JoAnne Stubbe

The Chair welcomed the Division of Biological Chemistry (DBC) officers and committee members who were attending the business meeting. She thanked Scott Silverman for all of his contributions over the past three years as Treasurer, especially his re-structuring of the investment portfolio. The Chair then announced the 2012 award winners. **Angela Gronenborn** (Pittsburgh) was selected as the winner of *Biochemistry's* Gordon Hammes award and lectureship, and she will deliver her lecture at the Spring ACS meeting in New Orleans in April 2013. **Carolyn Bertozzi** (Berkeley) was chosen to be the 2012 winner of *ACS Chemical Biology's* lectureship, and she will present her talk at the Spring ACS meeting in San Diego in March 2012. **Christopher Chang** (Berkeley) was named the winner of the Eli Lilly Award in Biological Chemistry, **Jin Zhang** (Johns Hopkins) received the Pfizer Award in Enzyme Chemistry, and **Carol Fierke** (Michigan) was announced as the winner of the Repligen Award in the Chemistry of Biological Processes. The Lilly, Pfizer and Repligen award lectures and symposia will all take place at the Fall ACS meeting that will be held in Philadelphia in 2012. Finally, she congratulated Dewey McCafferty for his efforts in putting together an outstanding technical program at the Denver ACS National Meeting. She then introduced Nancy Jackson (ACS President) and Steven Meyers who were present to inform the Division about new opportunities for ACS involvement in international meetings (see below).

#### (2) Report of the Secretary presented by Nigel Richards.

The minutes of the Spring 2011 business meeting were approved, and will be posted on the web site. The secretary noted that the redesigned DBC web site is being regularly updated to reflect upcoming meetings of interest and information about DBC award winners. Anyone with ideas for content or who finds incorrect information on the site should contact the secretary.

The election of DBC officers will be performed by electronic balloting as in 2010. It was resolved that the secretary will work with the same company to hold the 2011 election and organize the nomination packets into the appropriate form for inclusion on the web site. The web site will remain open for voting by the DBC membership from November 5-20, 2011. Discussion ensued as to the role of the nominating committee in identifying and contacting potential candidates for this election and whether these procedures could be improved. In particular, concerns were expressed over the diversity of nominees and their "home" institutions. It was resolved that the initial candidate list generated by the nominating committee would be circulated for comment to all Executive committee members, and

additional nominees could be added. On completion of the list, members of the nominating committee would then call each of the candidates, describe the duties associated with a specific position, and arrange for the submission of a biographical sketch for inclusion on the election web site if the candidate is willing to stand for election. Names of these individuals will then be provided to the DBC secretary.

### **(3) Report of the Treasurer presented by Scott Silverman.**

Detailed information concerning the current fiscal position of the DBC was provided by the treasurer. The reorganization of Division monies to mutual funds is complete and the financial condition of the DBC is strong.

The Treasurer also reported that the DBC had received a request for annual support from the Pan-American Association for Biochemistry & Molecular Biology (PABMB), including funding for several prior years that had not been provided, primarily due to a lack of communication between the two organizations. None of the existing Executive committee had been involved in the negotiations that had resulted in any financial arrangement between the DBC and the PABMB, and so there was considerable discussion about the merits of the PABMB request. There are clearly arguments to support the use of DBC funds for the improvement of biological chemistry in developing countries but there was consensus that the use of the requested money needed to be more clearly articulated. It was therefore resolved that the DBC treasurer should contact the PABMB representative to obtain a report on the future usage of any funds that will be provided from the DBC. This report will be discussed at the Spring 2012 business meeting in San Diego and a decision made at that time as to whether monies will be provided.

Finally, there was discussion about the allocation of student travel awards. In particular, there was concern about whether all recipients were presenting lectures or posters in DBC-sponsored programming. Funding has, in the past, been provided to students who were presenting in the MEDI and ORGN divisions on presentation of evidence of meeting attendance. It was resolved that our procedures for advertising these awards and obtaining applications should be reviewed. In addition, it was decided that applications from students/postdocs making presentations in divisions other than BIOL would be considered for support but that those making presentations in the DBC program would receive preference for travel awards. This stipulation will be added to the web site ([www.dibiolchem.org/awards/nominations](http://www.dibiolchem.org/awards/nominations)).

### **(4) ACS meeting issues presented by Dewey McCafferty.**

As the new chair of the Program Committee, Dewey McCafferty discussed the program for the 2011 Fall ACS National Meeting in Denver, CO. Several new programming ideas had been introduced in the expanded program for this meeting and these were briefly reviewed. First, it was agreed that the symposium for student/postdoc lecture presentations had been excellent. Concern was expressed, however, about the relatively poor attendance, which might have been related to the timing of the event on the first morning (Sunday) of the ACS National Meeting. After discussion, it was resolved that a number of the presenters in this event would be invited to attend the awards banquet in recognition of their outstanding efforts. Second, it was concluded that the poster sessions had worked very well at the Denver meeting, especially the session adjacent to the room where the symposium was held. Attendance was very good and the changes in timing and the provision of refreshments had the desired effect. Dewey

McCafferty was thanked for his work in improving the poster experience for both presenters and participants alike.

The Chair then discussed the difficulties in getting a number of award winners to attend the Awards banquet, which is always held during the Fall ACS National Meeting. There was some feeling that this event had lost some "luster" in recent years and several suggestions were made to revive interest in banquet attendance. It was resolved that awardees would receive their medals and financial awards at the banquet, beginning in Fall 2012 at the Philadelphia meeting, so that these individuals could interact with DBC members. Efforts to broaden participation in the event will also be undertaken, including invitations to selected students and postdoc presenters (as discussed above).

Finally, the Executive committee was reminded that award symposium participants would be chosen from submitted abstracts by the DBC Program Chair after consultation with the award recipient, starting at the 2012 Spring ACS National Meeting in San Diego, CA.

#### **(5) Funding requests presented by Dewey McCafferty.**

Funding requests received prior to August 1, 2011 were reviewed by the officers and committee members present at the meeting. Support was provided for the following meetings:

2011 Fall Scientific Meeting, Midland Local Section of the ACS, October 22, 2011, Alma, MI, Organizer: Joel Dopke: \$250

2011 Midwest Enzyme Chemistry Conference. October 15, 2011, Chicago, IL, Organizer, George Garcia. \$750

2011 Western Regional Meeting of the ACS (WRM). November 10-12, 2011, Pasadena, CA, Organizer, Jim Kilgore. \$750

4<sup>th</sup> Biannual Texas Enzyme Mechanisms Meeting. January 6-7, 2012, Austin, TX, Organizer: Chris Whitman. \$750

2012 Isotopes in the Biochemical and Chemical Sciences GRC, February 5-10, 2012, Galveston Island, TX, Organizers: Vern Anderson & Amnon Kohen. \$1500

2012 Bioorganic Chemistry GRC, June 10-15 2012, Andover, NH, Organizers, Mary Kay Pflum & Russell Petter. \$3000 (with possible \$1000 supplement in 2012)

#### **(6) Nominations and Awards, Presented by Nigel Richards**

The secretary reported on the nominations and elections of the Repligen, Pfizer and Lilly Awards winners for 2012. A request for nominations was sent to Division members and posted on the DBC web site, resulting in the receipt of several packets for each of these awards by the June 1, 2011 deadline. These packets were then forwarded to the election committee members appointed by the chair and winners selected in early-August. All award winners will be contacted personally by JoAnne Stubbe. It was generally felt that the guidelines for the Lilly and Pfizer Awards need to be modernized to reflect the fact that more people are taking up academic positions at a later age than was the case when the

awards were created. As a result, the age limits need to be increased. The Chair was requested to prepare a re-worded set of guidelines for presentation to the relevant company representatives. Raising the age limits is likely to increase the number, diversity and quality of applicants for these prestigious awards. Another option that was discussed was to change the stipulation to reflect a maximum number of years elapsed since the Ph.D. degree. Such a change would not only reflect the reality that people are taking academic positions at a later age but also permit the inclusion of productive researchers who might have taken time off before or during their graduate studies.

As in previous years, the selection of the Hammes lecturer was primarily overseen by Richard Armstrong, the Editor of Biochemistry, with input from the DBC Chair. This year, Laura Kiessling, the Editor of ACS Chemical Biology, the DBC Chair and Secretary played a significant role in obtaining nominations for the ACS Chemical Biology lectureship. An excellent group of nominees was obtained through this process which is likely to be continued in 2012.

The secretary announced that the status of the Molecular BioSystems lectureship, sponsored with the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC), was unclear and that there will be no lecturer in 2012. He was instructed to contact Michael Smith at the RSC and find out the long-term plans for this lectureship.

### **(7) Other Business, Presented by JoAnne Stubbe.**

Nancy Jackson (ACS President) gave a brief presentation at the beginning of the business meeting to discuss ACS plans for an expanded involvement in international activities, and suggested that the DBC consider appointing representatives who could liaise with the international activities office. The ACS has expertise in dealing with visa problems for overseas participants and can suggest sources of funding for international meetings held under the auspices of the DBC or its members. No money, however, is available from this office for meeting administration or travel support. Nikki Pohl and James Stivers offered to serve as "points of contact" between the Division and international activities office. The secretary was asked to identify the extent to which DBC membership is composed of researchers located outside the USA.

The Chair reported that she had obtained a copy of the existing DBC by-laws, which she had circulated to Nigel Richards and Scott Silverman for comment. It is apparent that there are some differences between the procedures outlined in this document and those that are being used to run the Division in practice. Indeed, the expansion of DBC activities in recent years will necessitate a number of modifications. As part of expediting the revision process, the Secretary was asked to develop an updated set of by-laws to remove all of the content that is irrelevant to the Division as it is run today. Most importantly, the roles of the officers will be more clearly defined and key information made more transparent. It was hoped that these changes would be made by February 2012 and a draft set of revised by-laws circulated to all members of the Executive Committee for comment and general discussion at the next business meeting, which will be held in San Diego at the ACS National Meeting.

The Chair briefly described the ACS Fellows program, which was created by the ACS Board of Directors in December 2008 to recognize ACS members for "outstanding achievements in, and contributions to, science, profession and society". It was resolved that the Division Chair participate in the nomination process, which is scheduled to take place next in 2012. After discussion, three nominees were selected and JoAnne Stubbe will organize and submit their nomination packets.