

## **Minutes of the Division of Comparative Biomechanics business meeting, January 4, 2013**

Sharon Swartz, Division Chair, called the meeting to order.

**Sharon Swartz:** In case you haven't already figured it out, this is the largest SICB meeting in history.

Facts and figures: Over 1600 abstracts, more than 2100 pre-registrants, nearly 150 oral sessions, 18 symposia. In all of these categories, this has been the largest (and some would say the best) meeting SICB has ever had.

There are a few events this week: tonight at 6:30 is the Bartholomew Award lecture by Allison Sweeney, and the topic is "Animal photonics: an integrative and comparative view from the university of Pennsylvania." Tomorrow at 6:30 will be the Bern Lecture. On Monday, the concluding lecture of the meeting will be the Moore Lecture. Should be a fantastic Moore Lecture.

Tomorrow there are some exciting workshops: Public Affairs workshop on Citizen Science. Jake Socha helped organize it and you can talk to him if there are questions. SICB will obtain video of the event and you can then login and view it later on the website.

You might choose NOT to attend that event live tomorrow because, at the same time, Bill Zamer (NSF) will be giving a workshop titled "Developing proposals and the peer review process." Bill Zamer will be in person sharing his wisdom on the topic.

Tomorrow evening we will be sharing (with DVM, DPCB and DEDB) a desert social, which is always a lot of fun. Lots of other business meetings will also occur tomorrow evening.

On Sunday, the society-wide business meeting, where awards will be announced (other than our own Gans Award, which will be given out momentarily), will be held. There will also be an NSF report by Bill Zamer at the society-wide business meeting. I think that means that NSF might not report to us here.

There will be a workshop regarding "negotiating your first job" on Sunday as well. Some of you already have your first job, but if you haven't (or maybe it will be useful for some of you negotiating your second or third job!), then there will be a workshop on Sunday.

A workshop will also be held on elevator talks. DPCB workshop on comparative methods in R will also be Sunday.

There will be a teaching and learning round table (first one, but will be yearly) – "vision and change in introductory biology" on Monday. The teaching and learning group is soliciting future topics, so contact the committee if you are interested.

I want to talk briefly about our best student prize competition. First, our competition was a tremendous success last year (oral and posters). Great work from our students! Also we owe a huge debt of thanks to our judges for their time and energy, and for the great feedback that we give to our students. We have heard, through the

grapevine, that DCB is known for the detailed and valuable feedback given to students (in comparison to other divisions). We really want to thank the judges!

Along with that, we should all give a big thanks to Jake Socha who, for several years now, has spearheaded the organization and has organized the judging. This is truly worthy of an enormous prize.

We have nearly 80 students competing this year (nearly 40 judges). This is twice the number compared to last year. This is an exciting, but challenging, problem, and so I want to share with you an alternative approach to this "Best Student Presentation" competition that is being tried by the DEE on a trial basis this year. The SICB executive committee has suggested that many or all of the divisions might want to try this, as it might make the competition more manageable and might have many benefits. What the DEE is doing can be read in the fall newsletter. Any student that is entering the DEE competition needed to submit, in addition to the regular abstract, a one-page long abstract.

### **NSF came in....**

Bill Zamer introduced himself and stated that there is a contingent here from NSF. Bill then introduced Steve Ellis. Steve Ellis is a rotating program direction in physiological and structural systems cluster of IOS, and he is going to give this presentation.

Steve Ellis: We just wanted to give some updates so that everyone is on the same page. We will talk about the budget first. We are operating on a continuing resolution. If any of you have been watching CNN, you know as much about the NSF budget as we do. We are operating at an 80% level. We are making awards, but it is at a reduced level compared to previous years until the budget gets sorted out. We are being conservative. Second point – we are looking to invest in forward-looking symposium. We are most interested in funding symposia that move the field forward, rather than be retrospective. The idea is to move the science forward. We do, however, have limited resources.

The other thing is to remind people that we have the research coordination network (RCN) as a source of funding, which is designed to have people center around a question that allows cohesion among a community, whether it's centered on a technology or organism. August 2<sup>nd</sup> is the approximate deadline for the RCNs, which is similar to the full proposals. The solicitation number is 13-520.

A comment regarding REU supplements – it's a bit odd to submit paperwork every year in addition to your existing grant. We suggest including this in the original proposal. The new REU solicitation is 12-569. We expect investigators to include the REU support in the original proposal, rather than adding it after. We want this to be the norm, and encourage people to include this. It is an expectation that you will be training the undergraduates, so you might as well include it.

Finally, Bill will talk about the pre-proposal system on Sunday. We have been collecting data for a year (not a full cycle). We will share the data that we have. With that, I would be happy to answer any questions.

Sharon – do RCN proposals require pre-proposals? Steve – NO. Everyone clapped for NSF!

### **NSF left and Sharon began speaking:**

Sharon went back to discussing the DEE model for student competitions. Students in DEE now submit (to the division chair) an extended abstract. A committee (including chair, chair-elect, secretary, PO, and some past prize winners) meets (electronically) and evaluates the applications. The top 6 oral and poster presentation selections are identified. Only the top six submissions are passed on to the competition to the meeting. The oral presentations are put into a single session during the meeting. The judges can hear every talk in a single session (and anyone else can do the same). This does tremendously reduce the judging burden. In addition to this new judging system, they have also named their best presentation prize after Ray Huey. They are very excited about this. The quality of the oral papers that were entered went up as a consequence of requiring an extended abstract. Some of the student entries that might have been submitted in past years, but that might not have been ready for prime time, were not submitted. The DEE members who had judged the entries did comment that they thought it would be difficult to identify the top 6 candidates. In fact, it was not that difficult. They rapidly reached a consensus. We don't know the results of this experiment. Sharon opened this to discussion as a possibility for the DCB.

**Mark Denny** – it is a fair way of doing it, if nothing else. Everybody (who is judging) sees everybody. It's a level playing field.

**Monica Daley** – Would every student who submits an abstract still receive feedback?

**Mark Denny** – One thought is to have the same rubric as how we judge now. However, it would only be for the written component, rather than the oral presentation.

**Student** – I am a student and, having received feedback, was able to change things for the next year's presentation. My written is very different from my oral. I am very happy with the feedback I received.

**Sharon Swartz** – It is a non-trivial burden to the judges.

**Marianne Porter** – Have you considered having it as an entire session (12 talks), rather than the top 6? That would give more opportunity. That will still give the top presentations.

### **SICB executive committee entered...**

Each member introduced himself or herself. The purpose of the visit is to give a few pieces of information and get any feedback that you wanted to come directly to us.

**Rich Satterlie:** We have a business meeting on Sunday afternoon with a trivia contest. Society business will also be discussed. Please come!

Our next meeting is in Austin, and then Palm Beach (free internet there!). We are looking at venues for the next meeting. Choices are Portland, San Diego, or Phoenix. Portland sent wine to us during the executive committee meeting!

This is our largest meeting ever. We were about 250 higher on abstracts than Charleston, which was the largest meeting before this one. This is a very successful meeting with a lot of positive energy. Membership is also doing really well.

Questions?

The App is good, but can it synch to your personal schedule? Answer = that's been the number one suggestion so far. Also, we are moving to a new website, so that might change things.

**Jon Harrison:** There will be a survey that you will get after the meeting. We would love your feedback. There is a proposal to change talks to 15 minutes, so please give us your feedback.

### **Back to Sharon Swartz, and back to the topic of student competitions:**

Jake Socha: I like the idea of reducing the competition to something leaner and meaner. On the other hand, I like how it is currently democratic and that anyone can throw their hat in if they would like. Perhaps we could add a small filter (small abstract) in order to enter the competition, and maybe also to have a dedicated session for the potential award talks. If we could do something to reduce it to potential award winners, but also let anyone enter, that would be a nice compromise. Getting the feedback is really great for the students. We could also point out that it might not be a good idea to enter if you aren't advanced in your program.

**Sharon Swartz:** I don't think we have a mechanism for this.

**Tim Higham:** Benefit of a small session early on is that we can announce our winner at the meeting.

**Sharon Swartz:** DEE does this.

**Tonia Hsieh:** We had a similar discussion a few years ago. One big concern is whether people would attend a separate session for the competition, and therefore reduce the training opportunity. For me, while I was still a student, that is what made SICB unique (lack of a separate session and student involvement). My concern is whether a separate session would result in decreased attendance.

**Sharon Swartz:** I would be shocked if that happened because everyone in this organization is so committed to the students and the educational goals. I think the student session would actually be the most attended of the sessions.

**Jim Usherwood:** Can the comments and award-giving mechanisms be de-coupled?

**Alice Gibb:** Keep in mind that this is the opposite of the social security problem. We have so many students at these meetings. Our current model is not sustainable. We can't possibly give feedback to every student. We need to think about how are we going to handle this. It's not "if," but "when," are we going to do this?

**Andy Spence:** The new mechanism would involve each judge reading 80 1-page abstracts. Isn't this going to be a lot of work?

**Sharon Swartz:** Once the DEE added the requirement, the applications were reduced by 50%.

**John Bertram:** You don't want to restrict it too much, but perhaps restricting it to 2 opportunities. The logistics of how you would deal with this would be easier.

**Mark Denny:** I would hate to think that the only feedback that students get is from this competition.

**Jake Socha:** Should we try to get a one-page proposal together and send it out to all of DCB?

**Sharon Swartz** – Yes, you, Mark, and I should get something together.

**-End of discussion-**

**Sharon Swartz:** Now the best part of the meeting.

**Emily Carrington** (chair of Gans Award Committee) came up to talk. Emily first shared some details regarding Carl Gans from Ray Huey, David Carrier, and Robert Dudley.

Carl Gans began his research in 1945. He taught the masses at the University of Michigan. He taught comparative anatomy, comparative physiology, and biomechanics. He emphasized integrated and diverse approaches. He is best known for his work on snakes and frogs, and for stating that all animals are interesting.

Emily then stated that there are 2 ways to qualify for the Gans Award. Young investigator or any level of biologist (for the single most significant contribution to comparative biomechanics). All nominations were in the first category (young investigator). We have several excellent nominations. There were 3 of us on the committee and we unanimously decided on Eric Tytell.

Before we give Eric a piece of paper and a check, we wanted to talk about Eric. He got his BA at UNC, his MS at Cambridge, his PhD at Harvard, and a postdoc at the University of Maryland. He has 24 publications, grants from NSF, NIH, ONR, and the Army. He can collaborate with a broad range of scientists. He has a strong commitment to scientific journalism (LA Times and JEB).

Sharon Swartz presented check, on behalf of DCB, for \$1000.

**Sharon Swartz** – before we leave the topic of the Gans Award, I wanted to raise one issue. The regulations state that, in any given year, someone can be nominated for both the Bartholomew and the Gans award, but they can't win them both. There is no way to figure out if people are being nominated for both. This has been a concern for both DCPB and DCB officers. We recently had a meeting and the DCPB and they suggested that they might take biomechanics people out of consideration for the Bart Award. This seems like a bad idea. The solution is that, in any given year, someone can only be nominated for ONE award, not both. The double dipping is not necessary. Any comments?

No comments.

**Other officers can give reports:**

**Program Officer: Laura Miller.**

Symposia. We have 2 excellent society-wide symposia (“Vertebrate land invasions” and “When predators attack”). Next year we will have 2 biomechanics related symposia. First is related to surface tension, and the other will be related to terrestrial locomotion. Austin should be great. For West Palm Beach, please start thinking about symposia and email me with ideas. Proposals are due in August. Also, please give me feedback regarding scheduling. Email me next year with suggestions regarding when you would like to give your talk and I will try to accommodate.

**Secretary: Tim Higham.**

Website: Hoped to make a new one, but ran into issues. SICB might be coming up with a new website. We will talk to the executive committee and see if we can build a new website. There are a couple of things that I was thinking would be a good idea. First, we thought it might be good to have a logo for the division. We could have a logo contest to utilize the artistic talents in our labs. Perhaps a prize for the best logo?

We could then use this logo to make t-shirts (and cups, or anything else). All of your clothing can be DCB! This would also be a good way to make money for regional meetings and social events.

Another idea that I have been considering is to have a video session for the next meeting. A lot of you have video. You might want to share video that is published (or unpublished). We propose to have an area during the poster session that could play during the day (and during the poster session). We will try to have a website where these videos can be submitted. This would not only entertain, but also stimulate discussion. If there is interest, we will arrange to have people submit to a website. We would rather have people submit the videos prior to the meeting. Comments?

**Jake Socha:** APS meetings do this, and they’re great. Mark also commented on how great these sessions are for stimulating conversation.

**Ivo Ros:** Could we also turn that into a Youtube channel? Tim - Yes!

**Laura Miller:** Go to the Archive at Cornell university (google “fluid dynamics”). Here you will find the APS videos from past meetings. Videos were limited to 3 min without sound. All videos over the past 10 years are on the website.

The last thing is elections. If you are nominated, you will hear from me.

**Postdoc and student representative: Marianne Porter.**

The citizen science lunchtime workshop should be really good for students. How to negotiate your first job (for postdocs), but it will also be great for students that are looking for a postdoc position. Student affairs committee – elevator talks. Great for students to practice. Very important for selling yourself! New thing this year is that there is a table in the poster ballroom. Students and postdocs are manning the table. There are topics related to writing CVs, negotiating positions, etc. These little time

spaces would be really useful for students, but hinges on faculty participation. If you want to help students, please come!

Thanks for all of the judging this year! I think that's it. Also, faculty should encourage their students to come to the business meeting! Adam always said that we had to come!

**Sharon Swartz:** Marianne is stepping down after 3 years of service. Round of applause. New representative is Dr. Nick Gidmark.

**Sharon Swartz gave concluding remarks:**

Thank you to everyone to who participated in elections last year. Even though Mark Denny will be the next chair (next week), we have elected his successor already! Melina Hale will take over for Mark. Patricia Hernandez, Dianne Kelly, and Miriam Ashley-Ross formed the nominating committee for that election. We now need a new committee! Tim and Laura will be stepping down next year. We need to elect a new secretary and program officer. Please see Mark Denny if you would like to be on the committee or run for a position.

If you would like to share something with the division, please submit information to the chair or secretary to be included in the newsletter.

**Adam Summers:** Abstract site is now up for the ICVM meeting in Barcelona. There are 19 symposia, and more than half are comparative biomechanics driven. This is the right group for the ICVM. I apologize for the inconvenient system!

**Mark Denny with a final note** – Sharon is stepping down as chair. Applause!

Meeting is adjourned.