

Division of Ecology and Evolution Business Meeting Minutes January 2009

The meeting was called to order. There were ~20 attendees, including George Bakken (Chair), Michelle Nishiguchi (Chair-Elect), Michael Finkler (Secretary), Michael O'Connor (Program Officer), and Sarah Berke (Student/Postdoctoral Affairs Committee Representative).

The chair began the meeting with brief acknowledgements of the winners of the DEE best student presentation program for 2008. He followed with an introduction of the current officers and the two individuals recently elected to office—Michael Sears (Program Officer) and Art Woods (President-elect). The chair also noted the recent death of our recent former program officer Jennifer Elwood.

The chair provided a synopsis of Bill Zamer's presentation on the Society's role in helping to resurrect the importance of organismal biology in NSF funding, and the development of a strategic plan to integrate organismal biology with the priorities outlined by the new administration. He chair also commented on the 2009 Year of Science initiative that the Society is engaged in, and urged our membership to participate through a variety of public outreach activities.

NSF Program Officer Alan Savitsky discussed some of the new funding opportunities and procedural changes for programs of interest to DEE members. He outlined the new Life in Transition (LIT) program, noted the replacement of the SGER program with the RAPID and EAGER programs, and announced that a new edition of the Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures guide has been released. Finally, he stressed that there are new provisions requiring that proposals that include funding for postdoctoral researchers must include a separate section describing the mentoring plan for the researcher.

The secretary noted that DEE had 79 entries for the 2009 Best Student Presentation program (compared to 48 in 2008). He discussed the new online system for allowing judges to select their presentations (both the initial success of the system and ideas for improvement) and the challenges faced with having so many student participants in terms of recruiting and scheduling judges, collecting evaluations from the judges in a timely-enough manner to have the results compiled and winners identified within two weeks of the close of the meeting, and ensuring an objective comparison of presentations who were evaluated by different sets judges.

The program officer noted the unexpected surge in attendance this year (>1800 attendees), the logistical problems created with scheduling such a large number of presentations (particularly talks) in the limited time of the meeting, and possible solutions for mitigating these issues should the increase in attendance continue in future years (e.g., placing a cap on the number of talks, extending the last day of the meeting to a full day, etc.). He also emphasized the importance of carefully selecting the primary topic heading for presentations during abstract submission in order to appropriately schedule talks to relevant sessions.