

Minutes of the DEE Business Meeting, Jan. 4, 2010, Seattle, WA

The meeting was called to order at 17:00 local time with 9 attendees, including Michele Nishiguchi (chair), Art Woods (chair-elect), Michael Finkler (secretary) and Michael Sears (program officer).

The chair began with an overview from the divisional chairs meeting. She reported that the financial health of SICB was quite good, and that large increase in registration seen in last year's meeting in Boston had been sustained this year. The chair noted that there were discussions on how to better accommodate the surge in the number of presentations in future meetings while limiting the meeting length to 3.5 days. Possibilities such as reducing presentation times from 20 min to 15 min, or limiting the oral presentations to more junior members of the Society were noted.

The chair also noted that there has been some discussion of revamping guidelines for the best student presentation program to make the bylaws among divisions more uniform. Some restrictions on the participation of students in the competition program (for example, ensuring students participate in only one division for the competition in a given year, and that students who win in one year should not compete in subsequent years) were discussed. The chair also noted that the awards are open to both undergraduate and graduate students, and that the awards (best student paper and best student poster) include a \$150 cash award and a subscription to an Oxford Univ. Pr. Journal (*Ecology Letters* in DEE's case).

The chair discussed the "Grand Challenges in Organismal Biology" initiative being spearheaded by the society and the need for DEE to identify its particular "Grand Challenges". She also noted some initiatives in enhancing undergraduate education in areas of the biological sciences related to ecology and evolution, including programs for enhancing minority involvement.

The chair concluded with an observation that some of the endowments sponsored by the Society was running critically low on funds, and noted that any contributions from the membership would be most appreciated.

The secretary, who directs the DEE's best student presentation program, provided an update on the competition. Participation in this year's competition is the highest to date, with 58 student talks and 29 student posters up for consideration. Despite the high number of competitors, the development of an online system for assigning volunteer judges and enabling those judges to submit their ratings and comments online has made managing the competition far smoother than in previous years.

The secretary also noted that this spring the division will run an election for secretary-elect. He provided description of the responsibilities for the position and asked any and all interested to consider their candidacy.

The chair-elect made a brief comment on issues of fund spending inflexibility, and noted that the Division may be able to conduct more outreach to its membership and develop more activity participation if less restricted in how it can use its funds.

Bill Zamer, our liaison with NSF, provided an update on developments in the foundation that should be considered by members seeking funding. First, the NSF will no longer accept two page updates on proposals prior to panel submission, as the policy office sees it as a means of circumventing the 15 p. maximum for proposals, and it elevates the workload of records management. Second, as there are no more stimulus funds available, success rates for funding, which have been high recently, will probably go back to historical norms. Third, the NSF has increased its portfolio in climate change-related research. Finally, Bill recommends members sign up for NSF alerts to keep abreast of new developments.

The program officer noted that although DEE has co-sponsored numerous symposia, no one has initially submitted symposia for sponsorship through DEE in recent times. Encourage DEE membership to submit symposia to the division. He also encouraged development of a seminar on grand challenges.

The meeting was adjourned at 18:00 local time.