

Minutes from the Division of Ecology and Evolution Business Meeting, 4 January 2014

The meeting was called to order at 5:46pm with 18 members in attendance.

Chair Angilletta began with an introduction of current officers and officers-elect:

Current Officers – Donald Miles (Program Officer); Aaron Krochmal (Secretary)
Officers-Elect – Michael W. Sears (Chair-elect); Michael Dillion (Secretary-elect)

Chair Angilletta then began a discussion of the venues for forthcoming SICB meetings by announcing the locations for the 2015 (West Palm Beach, FL) and 2016 (Portland, OR), and 2017 (New Orleans, LA). Chair Angilletta then announced and that the host location for the 2017 meeting has offered the society a 10% discount on the 2018 if the society is to book the venue four years in advance. After announcing that the proposed (*i.e.* discounted) location for the 2018 is an on-site Disney venue in Orlando, FL, Chair Angilletta then directed a lengthy and spirited discussion regarding the location so as to gauge the divisional opinion on the matter. Opinions on the matter were very mixed, with some supporting the family-friendly destination and discounted rate and others voicing concern for high prices of food and lodging (\$145/night) and “being trapped” at the venue. Several in attendance were concerned that the high prices associated with Disney properties would be prohibitive to graduate students. Concerns over duplicating the 2005 meeting experience (which several in attendance noted as costly, difficulty to navigate, and generally less-than-ideal meeting) were voiced many members in attendance. Once all opinions were shared, Chair Angilletta took a straw poll of the members in attendance so as to have an official consensus to provide to the society-wide officers. The poll came out in favor of the venue (by a single vote) and Chair Angilletta agreed to share the results of the poll as well as divisional concerns with the society-wide officers.

The society-wide officers then arrived, and after brief introductions, summarized the meeting attendance (~1800 pre-registrants) and participation (~1500 abstracts). They noted that both attendance and participation were down from the previous year, and blamed ongoing federal and institutional budget issues. The Society-Wide officers then appealed for participation in a post-meeting survey (to be done online). Information from this survey will be used to plan future meetings, and to revamp and meeting structure (*e.g.* length of talks, number of concurrent sessions, evaluation of submitted abstracts) in light of continued growth in membership and attendance at meetings. Finally, the Society-Wide officers had high praise for the Raymond B. Huey Award for the Best Student Presentations, citing logistics, ease of scoring, and most of all, honor to the elite students of the division. They noted that other divisions would adopt similar models for their student competitions, voiced hope that the remaining divisions would soon follow suit.

Chair Angilletta then summarized the 2nd Annual Raymond B. Huey Best Student Presentation Competition. All in attendance offered enthusiastic support for the competition, and noted with the exceedingly high quality of the presentations. Chair Angilletta highlighted the very high attendance at the Annual Raymond B. Huey Best Student

Presentation Competition session, an observation noted by several in attendance. Several in attendance voiced concern about the scheduling of the Huey Award session and complained of substantial conflicts with other "important" sessions. Program Officer Miles and Chair Angilletta both agreed to implement a refined scheduling paradigm (one linked to the registration process) to avoid conflicting with DEE-sponsored symposia, but noted that completely avoiding scheduling conflicts would not be possible.

Discussion then turned to the forthcoming *Beer and Brains* student-faculty mixer. This new program centers on providing DEE students and postdocs the opportunity to interact with symposium speakers and other prominent figures in the fields of ecology and evolution so as to gain insight not only into their work, but more importantly, into the nature of their career paths, training, etc. Researcher participation in "Beer and Brains" was solicited from symposia participants and prominent members of the DEE, and Chair Angilletta noted the efforts to balance the gender and expertise of the researchers present. Student participation was capped at 65 so as to keep the student:"brain" ratio ~3:1. Secretary Krochmal reported on the online registration process, noting that it went without flaw, but that the spots filled up within 45 minutes of the opening of registration. Discussion then turned to ways in which the division might maximize student participation in *Beer and Brains*, including. The divisional officers agreed to discuss these and other options for maximizing student participation in *Beer and Brains* and announce their decisions in Fall DEE newsletter.

A representative from NSF then visited the meeting to deliver some comments and updates. He noted that there was as-of-yet (4 January) no firm NSF budget, and accordingly, NSF would be working on a contingency based on 90% of the 2013 budget, which was based on 90% of the 2012 budget. Members asked many specific questions regarding submitting preliminary proposals (particularly, to IOS), doctoral dissertation improvement grants (DDIG) and mid-career / retraining grants.

Chair Angilletta then asked for additional questions and comments, and hearing none, he adjourned the meeting at 6:22pm.