

Minutes of the DIZ Business Meeting

Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology
Friday, Jan 5, 2018, 5:45 – 6:30 pm
Marriott Marquis Hotel, San Francisco, CA, Salons 3-4

List of Officers:

John Zardus - Chair

Sarah Berke – Secretary

Linda Walters – Program Officer

Sammi Smoot – Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Representative

The chair called the meeting to order at 5:46 pm

Minutes of the 2017 DIZ Business Meeting were unanimously approved by voice vote of those present.

DIZ officer reports

Secretary - Sarah Berke – send pictures for the newsletter!

Program Officer – Linda Walters – At the 2018 meeting there are 2000 abstracts and 11 symposia, of which DIZ contributed funding for 4. For the 2019 Tampa meeting, there were 16 symposium applications, 12 of which funded. In general, there are two reasons that symposia are rejected – if the application is not complete or is very poor quality, or if people repeat symposia, repeat speakers, etc. DIZ members are encouraged to continue proposing symposia!

Next year, DIZ is involved in the following symposia:

Integrative plant biology – a society wide symposium

Biological Materials

Developmental Allometry

Mitochondrial Ecology

It was noted that the health of the society is directly related to the health of the symposia, because they determine how good the journal is. Encourage your postdocs to think about organizing them, we can help pair them up with a mentor to guide them.

Student awards – John Zardus (on behalf of Anne Boettger)

In 2017, DIZ had 22 students competing for the oral presentation award, 25 competing for the poster award, and 53 judges. There are at least 3 judges for each presentation.

Libbie Hyman award – Jennifer Burnaford

In recent years the committee has received numerous applications from students who already have substantial field station experience. This is automatically disqualifying, because the purpose of the award is to support a *first* field experience. This year we received 8 qualified applications, of which 3 were funded. The Hyman fund has \$141k, yielding \$3600 available to distribute. This year two awards were fully funded and one was partially funded. One student wound up not being able to take the course they had planned on, so that money was returned to the fund, they can apply again in another year. When this happens, it is too late in the process to give the award to someone else.

Two questions were asked from the floor: 1) can we identify a runner up? Response: No, it is impractical in terms of the length of time it takes to make things happen. 2) Has the committee considered giving a

smaller number of larger awards? Response: yes, the committee always considers that, but there has never been a year when a single high-ranking request exceeded the funds available.

Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Representative – Victoria Bogantes standing in for Sammi Smoot– There is not much to report this year, but Sammi hopes to be more active next year.

DIZ finances and announcements– John Zardus

Finances – We have \$2000 for symposia, \$300 for awards, and \$800 for socials. That is “use it or lose it” money. We also have access to a separate pot of money for the Wenner awards (shared with 3 other divisions). That fund has about \$12000, and Wenner stipulated that only he can give money to it. So we are going to draw down the money slowly and when the fund is empty the award will no longer be given. A question from the floor was raised as to whether Wenner is still alive, and whether we could ask him to provide more funding. The award is nice and helps people who win it, it is more prestigious than BSP because not given every year. At this point the Executive committee had joined us, and Lou Burnett explained that SICB has talked with him in the last few years, and he had not changed his mind about how the fund should operate nor does he have interest in giving more money. But 12k will last a very long time, even if we give 3 \$!50 awards every year it will last another 20 years.

This year we have about \$7000 left over from our operating budget, we will put it into the Libbie Hyman fund.

There are plans to create a new plant division – we need ideas for names that include algae

We need nominees for secretary, for spring elections. The chair will put together an ad-hoc nominating committee.

Next year we will run a Libbie Hyman auction in Tampa. An ad hoc committee will be formed to run it.

The division thanks John Zardus for his service, and welcomes Ken Halanych as the new divisional chair.

Report from the Executive Officers

Venues for next 5 years: Tampa, Austin, Washington DC, Phoenix, Austin (again)

A website revamp is planned for this year

Symposia are being actively encouraged – want to have some perks for organizers in the future
SICB is launching a new open access journal, which will feature cutting edge ways of engaging with the public and the scientific community after publication. Adam Summers is the founding editor, and requests suggestions for a name. He would also like us to think about nominations for the editorial board. There will also be social media positions for postdocs and advance grad students to help ensure that pubs are promoted widely. We plan a soft launch this year, with a hard launch at the 2019 meeting. Adam will be soliciting articles for the inaugural issue.

Report from NSF (Emily Carrington)

Like every year, NSF's budget has not been set. NSF is in a holding pattern until congress approves a budget. NSF is no longer accepting pre-proposals, and instead is going to a rolling deadline model for full

proposals. Details of the revised call will be out mid-summer. Wait for a dear colleague letter with more details.

In the new system, review panels will be flexible – the program officer can call a panel whenever they feel it would be most useful. The anticipated timeline will still be about 6 months from submission to notification.

There are some current opportunities at NSF – see the recent dear colleague letters for details. These mostly pertain to the big NSF-wide theme “The Rules of Life”

Please remember that data management plans are important – take these seriously, and think about how data will be archived and made available when writing your proposals.

NSF is open to proposals for Symposia – these should especially emphasize diversity of speakers – gender, ethnicity, geography, and career stage are all important.

Thank you to everyone who agrees to review and serve on panels.

items from the floor

The Public Affairs committee asks all members to please share their stories at the Story Booth.

Discussion: DIZ best student presentation awards & mentoring program

motions from DIZ Executive Committee

1. Hold a vote on BSP proposal in spring
2. Naming of BSP oral and poster competitions

The outline of Podolsky’s proposal was presented. It has three prongs:

- 1) To enter the BSP for an oral presentation, students must submit an extended abstract. A short list of competitors will be selected from this pool, and their presentations will be given in a single DIZ award session.
- 2) Introduction of a new mentoring program, in which students can ask to be paired with a DIZ mentor who will give them feedback on their presentation at the meeting.
- 3) Naming the best talk award after Mary Rice, and the best poster award after Alan Kohn

The following points were made from the floor:

- We currently judge approximately 25 talks each year, give or take
- This system makes it difficult to schedule those talks that don’t make the cut – because everyone who does not make the cut gets kicked back into the pool 1-2 weeks after program development has begun. So ALL students miss out on the opportunity to be in a session that fits their topic, even those not chosen for the competition.
- The purpose of the BSP is to recognize excellent communication skills, not excellent abstract writing skills. The proposed system rewards an extended written abstract, which has nothing to do with oral communication per se.
- Students who get cool data between September and January will be eliminated from competition, even if their talk winds up being better than talks in the judged session.
- Students enjoy talking in a session with the big-wigs, not in the “student ghetto”. Under the proposed system, students who wish to speak in a session with the big-wig would do so at the expense of not entering the BSP competition.

- The proposed system would allow the same judges to see all competing talks, eliminating inconsistency in judging.
- But there will always be a level of inconsistency – this just moves it to a different step of the process. In the proposed system, the inconsistency would be in the people selecting the abstracts.
- Consistency could be improved within the current system by having a better rubric, and by making stronger efforts to calibrate judging.
- We want to bring students in and retain them. The proposal would create a two-tiered system among students. The students who are deemed worthy of competing would be an elite class, separate from those deemed not worthy.
- Other divisions that do this have backed off from the extended abstracts, it was hard to get students to do it or to do it well.
- Other divisions seem happy with the single-session model, and the sessions have been packed.
- Arranged mentoring is less effective than spontaneous interactions between PhDs and students.
- But not everyone gets spontaneous mentoring interactions. If we formalized it then everyone might get help.
- There is literature suggesting that assigned mentoring is problematic for women and people of color.
- Having a session with diverse students at different stages is helpful. But the proposed system will inherently favor students in the advanced stages of their degree.

There was a motion to put Bob's 3 proposals on the spring ballot. A vote was taken by show of hands of members present, with 15 voting yea, 2 voting no, and 4 abstaining. The motion passed and these items will be on the spring ballot.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 pm