DIZ Member Meeting Minutes

January 5, 2025

Meeting introduced by Bob Podolsky (chair) at 5:45 pm

**Kelly Dorgan (secretary)** – Introduce Kevin Kocot, new secretary

Mentoring program for 2nd year, will advertise more next year

**Adam Reitzel (program officer)**, not here, but sponsoring symposia – 4 in 2025.

How did people like the breakfast social? Mostly thumbs down, a few thumbs up.

**Abby Cahill (Hyman committee chair)** – Libbie Hyman scholarship – made changes, successful at more applications

33 applications, up from 6 last year – thanks to all who helped advertise

Will is rotating off committee – need a volunteer to join the committee. Review happens in the last couple weeks in February.

Funded 4 applications, 1 was unable to accept

Very wide variety of field stations in applications, freshwater, marine, terrestrial inverts

Deadline around mid-February for next year

Eligibility – student must be working at field station on invertebrates, can be research or coursework. Relaxed stipulation about first field experience and 1st or 2nd year of grad school or undergrad, but still show preference for that category.

Question: how many of applicants fit prior criteria?

So advertising increased the pool more than change in eligibility. Word of mouth, probably from DIZ business meeting or newsletters. (Chairs note: was advertised on three online scholarship sites and through email blast to SICB membership 2 weeks before deadline)

**Will Ballantine** (SPDAC rep) – SPDAC reorganized and more effective. New student orientation, non-academic careers workshop, booth, collating and combining mentoring information across divisions. Executive committee awarded formal budget. Work on increasing student engagement. 2026 last year, will need new SPDAC rep.

**Kevin Kocot** (secretary elect) – will take over as Secretary following meeting

**Bob Podolsky** – homework from SICB: (1) asked to adjust Hyman target; (2) social funds – should this be increased? (currently $800); (3) reorganization of divisions, some merging, do we want to consider reorganization?;  (4) Educational Council needs new members

Ken Halanych – history of Hyman fund – target change has been brought up before

Bob – the fund is now beyond its target, so target should be adjusted to current amount if we want to maintain it or increased if we want to build it

Molly – what do we want draw to be for fund each year? If we had more available, what would we do?

Table discussion for the moment

**Molly Jacobs**, (SICB communications editor) – presentation of SICB strategic plan

4 bold steps, each has strategies, supported by list of objectives, then tactics (not written yet). Important that strategic plan be member-driven. DEE a few comments from faculty, lots of useful comments from students.

**Step 1 – career support and mentorship**

Strategies – establish a universal mentorship program, support divisions

Expand prof dev opportunities across career stages

Create and fund postdoc awards, strengthening support for existing student awards

Develop intensive leadership training plan to create pipeline of future leaders

Forge meaningful partnerships to support non-ac career paths

**Step 2 – scientific culture of belonging – DEIJ consultant helping with language on this**

Strategies – training and education to broaden participation – BIOLEAPS grant – currently applying for larger grant for implementation

Support mechanisms for groups not currently well-supported

Integrate considerations into society activities

**Step 3 – financial sustainability**

Strategies – journal operations – profitable

Resource management to safeguard SICB's financial health

Develop and implement fundraising strategy

Improve financial literacy and transparency

**Step 4 – membership growth and engagement**

Strategies – support divisions to evaluate scope – want SICB to be cutting-edge, up to date

Grow SICB from regions and communities underrepresented – evolutionary developmental biology – potential to be home meeting for that field

Member retention

Elevate scientific profile

PDF in email has comprehensive  plan with objectives

Division comments:

Q – what about improving science, not just profile? Should be a bold step on this.

Q - What's missing is us being at the forefront of science

Q – SICB stands for excellence in science

Q – symposia are a way of advancing science

Q – what are the weaknesses of the society? Where are we short in advancing science?

Process – bring together plans from divisions. Did not revise SICB mission statement, maybe should be part of the process.

Q – for people who don't come to SICB every year, cost is an issue. Lots of support for students, but some faculty don't have institutional support. If want to grow from communities that are underrepresented, some of these people can't afford to be here.

Q – enthusiastic about increased support for postdocs

Q – some things are big expensive things… accessibility is an issue

Q – some people don't want the society to be any bigger – is growth good?

Don't just want to grow for growth's sake, there is desire for strategic growth

Q – what are areas of strategic growth?

DEDB, DOB – division of organismal botany – new division, intellectual growth in terms of integrative, emerging fields; SICB is not representative of diverse community – bioleaps is a good start

Q – how does this process move forward?

Get comments from people at SICB and decide whether to revisit these or move on to write tactics. Want buy-in from membership. Patricia will lead this process as past president. Should communicate to membership how it's being done – how will it be ratified? Executive committee or full membership? Who are the decision-makers on different steps? Executive committee / board.

Q – what is the relationship between this plan and bioleaps, currently being implemented? Are these independent?

Bioleaps leadership are also involved in the strategic planning. Ideally bioleaps would implement the strategic plan, but doing both at the same time.

Q – what is the relationship between the sicb plan and divisional plans?

Revisit divisional plan after the strategic plan comes out

**Kim Hoke** (NSF BIO representative) – rotator in behavioral systems, IOS

Thank reviewers; go to NSF booth if haven't yet been there; sign up for newsletters and blogs; monthly virtual office hours; no deadlines seems to be working; each year has priorities and associated special programs; good idea to email program officers before submitting – might be new programs

**Bob** – DPO nominating committee – contact them if you want to run

Fundraising – Hyman fund – target $200K, have $480K, $11K to use in 2026, should make decision about what we want to use each year. What do we want to do with new fundraising?

Auction – planning one next year – need help planning

Consider possible new goals – Pearse fund has been spent out; Mangum support – extend beyond 3 years for students; food insecurity for students DIZ awards

Q – Hyman fund – has a specific charter for which it was established. If we try to spend it for other than the charter, it's inappropriate. Disappointing that John Pearse fund wasn't tied to DIZ, establish a new fund in honor of John tied to DIZ, make sure not subsumed into general SICB budget. Previously lost ~$5K from Hyman fund because misappropriated by society, need to keep track of funds.

Yes, goal is to leave Hyman fund alone, talking only about newly raised funds

Q – Pearse fund has been set up, can we start something new without previous fund?

Roll all funds together to get interest; we now have links to spreadsheet.

Q – liked strategic plan, if Hyman fund is fully funded, could auction be used to support other aspects of DIZ plan?

Set target at $480K for Hyman fund, redirect auction to another fund?

Can put proceeds from Hyman auction into a different fund

SICB needs $25K to get endowed fund, can park $ in discretionary funds if don't have enough for endowed fund.

SICB Executive goal – increase Mangum fund rather than Hyman fund – Mangum fund is underfunded and subsidized by SICB

Abby – doesn't want to do the auction again; should have an auction in Portland, won't raise anywhere close to $25K, need to decide where $ is going before people start donating.

Should continue the conversation – potentially call it the Pearse auction or DIZ auction

Like the idea of having a Pearse fund, don't want it to disappear.

Currently $ goes to symposia, Hyman fund, students to come to meeting…

What are priorities of what to do with the $?

Start John Pearse fund, bank $ until we get to a sustainable level, should have loose set of goals.

Slush $ for membership – how is it being spent? Bob doesn't know yet. Wenner award.

Idea to have optional contest for students to submit lay abstract and have them judged, provide public abstracts – would require judging. Small award to best abstract.

Comment – not sure if it's the mission of a single division to do this science communication? Should this be a job of PAC?

Maybe better to showcase what students are actually doing. Maybe forum for students to showcase existing outreach that they're already doing, could feature them.

Bob – wants to reward science communication in some form

Other divisions have social media presence, could do that as a division, have students run it

What would you do with these abstracts?

Graphical abstract? Might be more useful for a student…

Motion to end meeting. 7:05 pm