

# SMBE Secretary's Report

Nadia Singh\*

Department of Biology, University of Oregon

\*Corresponding author: E-mail: nsingh@uoregon.edu.

## Council Meetings

### I. Call to Order

President Harmit Malik called the council meeting to order at 7:00 AM Pacific time on Wednesday, June 30, 2021. In electronic attendance were President Harmit Malik, Past-President Marta Wayne, President-Elect James McInerney, Councilors Mary O'Connell, Beth Shapiro, Stephen Wright, Sarah Schaack, Josefa Gonzalez, and Katerina Gushanski, Secretary Nadia Singh, Treasurer John McCutcheon, MBE Editor-in-Chief Sudhir Kumar (ex-officio), and GBE Editors-in-Chief Laura A. Katz (ex-officio) and Adam Eyre-Walker (ex-officio).

### Noncouncil Members in Attendance

Lulu Stader (Executive Administrator) also attended.

### II. Treasurer's Report

John McCutcheon presented the annual Treasurer's report, with details on journal and meeting revenue and expenses. This year, OUP has asked us to switch from volume-based accounting to calendar-based accounting. This will require us to be extra careful regarding accounting during the transition. The Society continues to be in a strong financial position, and projections regarding journal income following the switch to OA are encouraging. Council decided to form a subcommittee to determine the best path forward to ensure financial security in the long term while preserving flexibility in the short term. Full details can be found in the Treasurer's report.

### III. Secretary's Report

Secretary Nadia Singh briefly reviewed the Council's actions over the preceding year. Council voted on five motions between January 1 and June 30, 2021. Council approved: 1) extending the GBE social media contract, 2) renaming society awards for the honor rather than the individual, 3) creating an internet access award for SMBE 2021, 4) scheduling two live code of conduct implementation training sessions for council members, organizers, and session moderators plus paying for the recording for those who can't attend live; scheduling a code of conduct enforcement training for Council members and conference organizers and recording this session also; including a link to the code of conduct on the conference registration site and a checkbox indicating that registrants agree to the terms of the code, and 5) creating a "Special Services to the Society Award" and awarding it to Leigh

Thorne. Council also discussed revamping the application requirements for the graduate student excellence awards. Full details can be found in the Secretary's report.

### IV. Election of SMBE Officers

A nominations committee to nominate candidates for the position of President-elect and two councilor positions was chaired by Juliette de Meaux. The committee members were Amanda Larracunte, Tanja Slotte, Kelley Harris, Martin Lysak, Ya-Long Guo, Lauren Duret, and Nadia Singh (ex officio, SMBE Secretary, as per by-laws.) The Society's membership was informed by email of the committee composition in early 2021 and asked to nominate candidates for the positions. The Council continues to remind the nominating committee every year to prioritize gender and geographic representation among the candidates and maintains flexibility in how the committee achieves this.

The final selected nominees were Kateryna Makova and Dmitri Petrov and for President-elect, and Maria Anisimova, Maria Avila Arcos, Song Ge, and Jeffrey Ross-Ibarra for Councilors. The membership of the Society was issued online ballot details through Allen Press. In total, 545 members voted in this election out of the 2,563 members invited. This corresponds to a 21.3% participation rate, consistent with historic participation rates (though slightly lower than 2020 of 23.8%). The election results are that President-elect is Kateryna Makova, and the Councilors are Dr Maria Avila Arcos and Dr Jeffrey Ross-Ibarra.

### V. Editors'/OUP/AP Reports

The Editors-in-Chief of MBE and GBE gave reports on the current states of their journals (see separate editors' reports for full details). For GBE, submissions are stable and substantial. Social media presence continues to grow, which in turn leads to more traffic on the website. The first special issue is coming out the month following the Council meeting. Inclusivity monitoring is underway. Council discussed Genome Reports, which are a source of income for the Society. During the conversation, Council voted to fund a pilot proposal to have a graduate student assess the Genome Report before going to an AE. This streamlines the process considerably and lightens the AE workload.

MBE continues to be in a strong position. Submissions are up, as is the journal impact factor. The transition to open access appeared not to affect submissions. The editorial board

is now very diverse. The process for identifying a new Editor-in-Chief is underway.

Lulu presented the OUP report. Council continued to discuss fee waivers and using them to increase access.

Harmit presented the Allen Press report. It was noted that Allen Press has taken on a larger role regarding registration and organization for SMBE 2021. Society membership is at its peak, with over 3,000 members. This year, we had over 1,000 new members due to targeted advertising for the hub model for SMBE 2021.

## VI. Other Activities

### *Future Annual Meetings*

SMBE 2022 is currently being planned as a hybrid meeting with the in-person component held at the University of Auckland. SMBE 2023 will be in Italy. Council considered proposals for SMBE 2024 and voted to hold the meeting in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. Council agreed to prioritize making this meeting financially accessible to Mexican attendees.

### *The IDEA Task Force, Proposals*

Council discussed timelines for the task force nominations and a call for proposals. Council agreed to launch these concurrent with the annual meeting.

### *Demographic Survey*

Council discussed the need to gather demographic data to inform efforts to diversify our membership on several axes. Discussions on this topic will continue at future Council meetings.

### *Safe SMBE*

Councilors Stephen Wright and Sarah Schaack reported on this initiative and noted that considerable progress had been made in this space. For this year, we have added the Code of Conduct to the annual meeting. Code of Conduct implementation training was also offered for Council, organizers, and the symposium organizers. There was also enforcement training for Council and the hub organizers. Moving forward, programming will expand to include allyship training and increase the number of safety officers.

### *Recommending NIH Reviewers*

Harmit presented a request from NIH for the names of potential reviewers. Council discussed the costs and benefits of providing the names of our associate editors to NIH. Council agreed we should provide NIH with a list of our US editors from MBE and GBE to serve as potential reviewers for study sections.

### *Early Career Award*

This award is given to outstanding members of the SMBE community who are in the early stages of an independent research career. The 2021 recipient was Kelley Harris.

### *Mid-career Award*

This award is intended for outstanding members of the SMBE community who are in the midst of their research careers. The 2021 recipient was Tanja Stadler.

### *Lifetime Achievement Award*

This award is intended for outstanding senior members of the SMBE community. The 2021 recipient was Michael Lynch.

### *Graduate Student Excellence Awards*

This Symposium provides a forum for young investigators to showcase their exemplary research and continues to be a highlight of the SMBE annual meeting. We elected to celebrate all of the candidates in this Symposium. The awardees were:

Alida de Flamingh  
Amanda Kowalczyk  
Catarina Branco  
Ian Vasconcellos Caldas  
Mengyi Sun  
Michelle Harwood  
Thea Rogers  
Yeonwoo Park

### *Best Graduate Student Paper Award*

These awards provide recognition for outstanding student papers in both SMBE journals. For MBE, the committee selected one winner and three honorable mentions.

*Winner:* Jana Helsen: "Gene Loss Predictably Drives Evolutionary Adaptation"

### *Runners-Up/Honorable Mention*

Ana Marija Jaksic: "Neuronal Function and Dopamine Signaling Evolve at High Temperature in *Drosophila*"

Jun Huang: "A Simulation Study to Examine the Information Content in Phylogenomic Data Sets under the Multispecies Coalescent Model"

Chao Zhang: "ASTRAL-Pro: Quartet-Based Species-Tree Inference Despite Paralogy"

For GBE, the committee selected one winner.

*Winner:* Tiffany Batarseh: "Genetic Mutations That Drive Evolutionary Rescue to Lethal Temperature in *Escherichia coli*"

## VII. Additional Business

Council discussed governance and a governance review. It was noted that SMBE has evolved, and we need more governance to support it. Council agreed we should put together a task force charged with coming back to Council with a green paper on governance structure. The ultimate goal is to have a transparent governance structure with clear policies and procedures.

## Business Meeting

This year's business meeting was prerecorded and broadcast twice during the annual meeting. The President noted that

we had reached a historic high membership count, with over 2,700 members at the time of the recording. The President also reviewed the benefits of membership. He stated that GBE submissions are strong and stable and that MBE has made a concerted effort to diversify the editorial board through balanced gender and geography. The President reported the election results and the locations of SMBE 2022 and 2023.

Details regarding the format of SMBE 2021 were presented, especially as they relate to the benefits of the online format versus the challenges. All of the awards were highlighted by the President as well. The President also discussed several developments for the upcoming year, including the IDEA task force, moving toward more sustainable meetings, and the call for regional and satellite meetings.