

Meeting Minutes of the 2012 Fly Board meeting

The 2012 National Drosophila Board Meeting took place on Wednesday March 7 in the Chicago room of the Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers, Chicago, Illinois, from 3:00 to 6:00 PM.

Attendees: Michelle Arbeitman, Seth Blair, Eric Baehrecke, Amy Bejsovec, Hugo Bellen, Giovanni Bosco, Suzy Brown, Steve Crews, Sue Celniker, Adam Fagen, Elizabeth Gavis, Bill Gelbart, Pam Geyer, Karen Hales, Masa Itoh, Thom Kaufman, Kathy Matthews, Lisa Meadows, Stephanie Mohr, Denise Montell, Laura Nilson, Tom Neufeld, Brian Oliver, Terry Orr-Weaver, Elizabeth Perkins, Helena Richardson, Maxi Richmond, Juan Riesgo-Escovar, Helen Salz, Allan Spradling, Toshiyuki Takano-Shimizu, Carl Thummel, Kwang-Wook Choi

1. Introduction and Approval of the 2011 minutes (Liz Gavis)
2. GSA Expanding Opportunities (Adam Fagen)
3. President's Report (Liz Gavis)
4. Report of the 2012 Organizing Committee (Steve Crews)
5. 2013 Fly Meeting Organizers (Liz Gavis)
6. Report of the GSA Senior Director (Suzy Brown)
7. Treasurer's Report (Pam Geyer)
8. Drosophila Board Election Report (Terry Orr-Weaver)
9. Image Award (David Bilder)
10. Sandler Lectureship Committee (Liz on behalf of Richard Mann)
11. Victoria Finnerty Undergraduate Travel Award (Helen Salz)
12. Asia-Pacific Drosophila Research Conference 2 (Kwang-Wook Choi)
13. Undergraduate Education Initiatives (Karen Hales)
14. Outreach and educating the public (Liz Gavis, Eric Baehrecke)

BREAK 4:30-4:45

Community Resources and Projects

15. White Paper (Denise Montell)
16. Bloomington Stock Center (Kathy Matthews, Kevin Cook)
17. Kyoto Stock Center (Masa Itoh)
18. Indian Stock Center (VijayRaghavan)
19. Species Stock Center (Teri Markow)
20. Mexican Drosophila Species Stock Center (Juan Riesgo-Escovar)
21. Berkeley Drosophila Genome Project (Sue Celniker)
22. ModENCODE and ModENCODE II (Sue Celniker)
23. Drosophila Gene Disruption Project (Hugo Bellen)
24. Harvard Drosophila RNAi Screening Center (Stephanie Mohr)
25. Harvard Transgenic RNAi Project (Liz Perkins)
26. Vienna Transgenic RNAi Project (Lisa Meadows)
27. DIS (Jim Thompson)
28. FlyBase (Bill Gelbart)

ADJOURN 6:00

3:00 Call to order by Elizabeth Gavis (President)

Approval of 2011 minutes for the record.

1) Introductory comments by President

Liz mentioned that we needed further discussion on a few issues from last year's Board meeting that were not fully resolved during the previous year. A major continuing issue is how, as a community, can we best tackle the issue of NIH funding for Drosophila research so that the public is more aware of the importance of basic science in public health and the role that Drosophila plays. Last year, the board decided to hire a part time science writer who would attend select scientific meetings where Drosophila studies are highlighted and prepare press releases to help "get the word out". Ricky Lewis was hired and is present at the Chicago meeting. She anticipates consulting with plenary speakers and others to help her prepare press releases on exciting topics. It is hoped that these releases will be picked up by various media including print and radio as well as internet blog sites. It was also mentioned that GSA was organizing an advocacy lunch at the meeting to further address the issue of how to make the public better aware of the role of genetics and Drosophila research in public health. Additionally, FlyNews, which was started by Denise Montell and is distributed by GSA, helps publicize these efforts and to make the fly community aware of available research resources. FlyNews is anticipated to be a quarterly release that will continue with the elected board President's taking the lead role on reporting issues of interest to the community.

2) GSA expanding opportunities (Adam Fagen)

Adam Fagen, the newly appointed Executive Director of the GSA, reported on how GSA helps the Drosophila community:

There are about 5000 GSA members, 28% students, 28% postdocs and the rest being PIs. Drosophila researchers represent the largest sub-community within GSA. GSA organizes 10 meetings and publishes two journals, Genetics and G3. It also publishes brochures on career opportunities, manages the major awards, advocates for funds for research and also partners with other societies. Educational outreach is an important GSA mission. It also handles some legal work for meetings and does all the finances. Adam Fagen asked board members to give direct input on issues through him.

3) Presidents report (See above)

4) Report from the 2012 organizing committee (Steve Crews)

Overall, meeting organization went smoothly. All invited plenary speakers accepted. There were co-chairs recruited for each platform session. Rather than the traditional historical focus of the opening night session, speakers were asked to talk about their perspective on the future.

A new session on systems biology and a session devoted to undergraduate research have been added. One issue that still needs work is the mechanism for poster judging. One possibility is that regional reps could help and perhaps a text in voting system could be put in place.

5) 2013 organizers

The 2013 organizers were announced: Richard Mann, Hannele Ruohola-Baker, Kristin Scott, and David Stern.

The new President (Michael O'Connor) needs to recruit the 2014 meeting organizers. Additional discussion ensued concerning the possibility of new meeting sites. The Chicago meeting is getting very expensive. Some other sites mentioned were Orlando, Indianapolis, and possibly Las Vegas, although the later was not viewed as ideal since the rates increase substantially on weekends. It was mentioned that keeping a geographic rotation was advisable and that the location should be within driving distance of many attendees and should also have convenient international flight connections. A survey will be conducted by Suzy Brown at the end of the meeting concerning this issue and may also be mailed to those not in attendance.

6) Report of GSA Senior Director (Suzy Brown): no discussion

7) Treasurer's report (Pam Geyer)

Pam reported that we have a surplus 325K dollars and that GSA only requires that we keep a balance of ~150K for their sponsorship. The 2012 meeting was projected to accrue a minor deficit. Much of the discussion focused on what to do with the surplus funds.

1) The Larry Sandler fund contains about 30K and its income is not sufficient to keep it going. Presently, it is invested in money market accounts, which accrue little interest. At the 2011 board meeting, new investment strategies were advised but that still has not occurred. The board voted to put an additional 20K into the Sandler account and to examine whether new investment strategies could be managed under the auspices of the GSA. With the extra investment it was thought that perhaps the Sandler award committee could look at the possibility of runner up prizes.

2) The issue was raised as to whether we should provide additional travel awards for travel to the National meeting for those unable to come because of financial constraints. The main concern was how to assess need. The Victoria Finnerty award already provides a mechanism for funding undergraduate travel – this award currently has no funds and represents a worthy cause in need. At this time establishing an endowment was not recommended but it was agreed that we will make a one time 6K donation using our surplus funds and see how it goes. There is already a committee in place to select the students.

3) A major point of discussion concerned spending more money on advocacy. At we have spent only 4K for Ricki Lewis to attend the National Drosophila Conference. One

possibility is to hire Ricki to attend other meetings where Drosophila is well represented such as the Model Organism meeting.

Other ideas included development of a web resource for the general public, which was discussed in 2011 but has not happened. SDB has an outreach web page that the Drosophila community might be able to emulate. GSA could make a list of the best advocates and put this on their web site. Some members thought that development of web based resources was not best way to engage the public but that perhaps distribution of videos through various web links (You Tube, commercial vendors, etc.) would be more effective. These videos would have different target audiences, for example children, lay people, and others for more sophisticated viewers. Where these videos live (for example GSA site) was not viewed as important as getting web links to them.

The discussion then moved to whether a committee should be formed to take charge and perhaps solicit proposals from the fly community and to use some of the surplus funds to finance the endeavor. Pam says we do have the funds and Adam mentioned that they are thinking about doing some of this and perhaps one way to get it rolling would be to have a contest to get people to make videos. Some concern was raised about copyright infringement issues if images from published research were used. The point was raised that maybe we also need to engage the worm and other model organisms communities to consider joint efforts. The consensus view is that we want to put money into communication.

It was suggested that a committee be formed to investigate this issues further. Eric Baehrecke and Phyllis Edelman from the GSA will be part of the committee and Liz Gavis agreed to serve as well.

8) Election report (Terry Orr-Weaver)

The 2011 elections went smoothly. Amy Bejsovec is the President-elect and Seth Blair is the Midwest representative. The discussion moved to how to get more participation. It was mentioned that 307 votes were received by the deadline but then 100 more votes came in when the deadline was extended and a 2nd email sent. It was suggested that at least two reminders be sent and that the candidates should have links to their research sites and a statement as to why they want serve. It was also brought up that the Treasurer position needs to be passed on since Pam has served for quite some time.

9) Image award: no discussion

10) Sandler Committee report (Richard Mann via Liz)

There were 32 nominations this year, a substantial increase over the recent past maybe because of extended eligibility period and because numerous reminders were sent out. One comment was that only 4 of past winners have been women – although this year's winner is a woman. Not clear if this reflects low numbers of women being nominated.

11) Victoria Finnerty travel award (Helen Salz)

The award was advertised by a pdf sent out by GSA and through FlyNews. Twenty six applications were received and considered by the committee chaired by Helen Salz. The committee had \$5K and made 6 awards. All 6 students are coming to meeting and are presenting posters. For next year it was suggested that there be one additional committee member (total of 4) and that they do a rotation. GSA will have an online application form next year.

12) Asia Pacific Conference (Kang Wook-Choi)

Kang reported that the first meeting last year was a success with 450 attendees from 16 countries. The next meeting is scheduled for 2013 in Seoul, Korea.

13) Undergraduate Education initiatives (Karen Hales)

The undergraduate researcher workshop at this year's fly meeting will feature two student speakers and also will have a mixer with graduate students so that undergraduates get a "real" perspective on the what the graduate student experience is like.

15) White paper discussion (led by Denise)

The White Paper is prepared every two years to offer guidance to the program staff at NIH as to what the Drosophila community thinks is important for its future. The biggest concern voiced is the new emphasis on translation relevance at NIH. The discussion focused on what is the best way to incorporate the idea that Drosophila does have translational applications, but without losing sight of the fact that basic research is critically important.

It was emphasized that document should be prepared in such a way that NIH officials do not view it as just a "Christmas" list. The White Paper is not intended to support individual PI programs, but its purpose is to highlight the general needs of the community.

Denise and Bill mentioned that they had talked with NIH staff and that NIH officials do think the document is valuable especially for providing a big picture view. Some people supported a suggestion that we update the White Paper on a more-timely basis instead of every two years. Others think that since the White Paper should be a priority list, and priorities don't change that fast, then maybe every two years is OK.

The consensus was that we need a mechanism to ensure that senior NIH officials see the White Paper. This is important for several reasons. First, there is a sense that some NIH officials think Drosophila is over resourced already and with no growth in budget, if NIH is going to fund anything new, then they have to take it from something else and that something might be fly research since it has been around for a long time. Second, Drosophila research is an easy target for cuts since many institute directors (GM notwithstanding) may not see the value of the fly as a research model. One particularly pressing concern concerning that the White Paper should address is the stock center. Its

support is the Number One priority for the community, but funding for it is still decreasing.

There was concern that we should think about a mechanism to reinvigorate the White Paper such that it is not just a minor change from the previous one. The present version has not changed much and that there is no sunsetting of projects. It was pointed out that it is important for each contributor to the White paper to make clear which aspects of their projects have been achieved and what milestones have been reached. They also need to emphasize what is new with each project due to technology changes. One idea is to provide an appendix that summarizes of what projects have accomplished. It was also suggested that maybe a short preamble should be added that points out the new aspects of the document relative to the last submission.

One new initiative that was raised was the possibility of developing a drug screen project for the community. There are presently worm and zebrafish screens, but no flies screens. If we want to include this initiative someone needs to spearhead it. Maybe we need a special meeting to specifically discuss new initiatives.

16) Bloomington stock center (Kevin Cook): no discussion

17 Kyoto stock center

Masa Itoh reported that the Kyoto stock center which was established in 1999 currently hold 27K stocks including Gal4, UAS, RNAi lines etc. They will accept new lines. One just need to contact them. His full report is in the record.

18) Indian stock center (Vijay via Liz)

Vijay reiterates that there is space and some money so they are open to ideas.

19-20) Species stock center (Maxi Richmond, Juan Riesgo-Escovar)

The San Diego stock center grant did get renewed, but the budget is declining so the cost of ordering is going up a bit. With genome sequencing the demand for other species is rising and there will be a new center to house Mexican species. Some backup copies of certain stocks will also be kept in San Diego

21) Berkeley Drosophila Genome Project (Sue Celniker)

Efforts are underway to tag all cDNAs for overexpression and to generate UAS lines. Genome annotation number 6 and heterochromatin sequence annotation are coming soon.

22) modEncode project (Sue Celniker)

Two new grants went in: one to complete all transcription factor chip studies using endogenous tagged transcription factors; another to do Chip-Seq of all RNA binding proteins.

23) Gene disruption project (Hugo Bellen): no discussion

24) Harvard RNAi screening (Stephanie Mohr)

The project funding was renewed and cell based screening is still going strong. There will be a slight charge increase. Harvard agreed to upgrade their screening microscope and they are pushing for more informatics development.

25) TRIP Project (Liz Perkins)

TRIP was also refunded and users letters were important in this endeavor. The TRIP will be collaborating to make new lines with Japan and China. Another initiative is to validate the lines efficacy by qPCR. The new RSVP will show the qPCR data and any observed phenotypes and will also include a section for community feedback.

26) Vienna RNAi (Lisa Meadows)

Funding is from the city of Vienna and Austrian government. They have funds for 5 years. Users need to cite resources in their papers.

27) DIS: no discussion

28) FlyBase (Bill Gelbart)

There is concern over the future of FlyBase since there is no big grant supporting it. FlyBase will be sending out a survey to community which is important to answer and will help determine priorities for FlyBase. One concern is that PIs need to properly reference FlyBase to help document that it is a used resource. FlyBase is happy to send a representative to regional meetings to promote usage. Peter Cherbas is taking over DGRC and his grant is coming up so he needs letters of support.