

Minutes of FAOBMB Executive Meeting, Taipei, May 6, 2011

The meeting was held in the Institute of Biological Chemistry, Academia Sinica, in Taipei, hosted by Professor Andrew Wang, President of FAOBMB and by Professor Ming-Daw Tsai, Director of the Institute of Biological Chemistry and Taiwan delegate on the FAOBMB Council. The meeting followed a symposium entitled “Advances in biochemistry and molecular biology for biomedical applications” which was also held in the Institute. The meeting started at 2 pm after members were given a tour of the Institute by Professor Tsai.

Members and observers thanked Professors Wang and Tsai for their excellent hospitality and also thanked Dr Shan-Chi Ku for her excellent organization of the symposium and meeting arrangements.

Present

Executive members:

Professor Andrew Wang, President; Professor Masamitsu Futai, Past-President; Professor John de Jersey, Secretary-General; and Professor Uhtaek Oh, Treasurer.

Invited observers:

Professor Piamsook Pongsawasdi, Chair, FAOBMB Fellowship Committee.

Mrs Koh Siok Im and Dr Lai Poh San, Co-Chairs of the Organizing Committee for the 2011 Singapore Symposium.

Professor Phillip Nagley, Co-Chair, OzBio 2010.

Professor Ming-Daw Tsai, TSBMB President and FAOBMB Council delegate.

Dr Shan-Chi Ku, Academia Sinica.

Agenda Items

1. Welcome by the President

The President welcomed all attendees, especially those who had made the trip from overseas. He expressed special thanks to Professor Futai for attending, given the extremely difficult circumstances faced by the people of northern Japan in the wake of the tsunami.

The President strongly endorsed the value of holding an Executive meeting mid-way between Council Meetings.

2. Greetings

Attendees introduced themselves and described their roles in FAOBMB.

3. President's Report

- **FAOBMB website and newsletter.** A new website for FAOBMB has been launched following the Melbourne Council Meeting. The web address is “faobmb.net” (faobmb.org was not available). Dr Shan-Chi Ku had played the major role in getting the site populated and up and running and was thanked by the members for her excellent efforts in this regard. The Secretary-General agreed to ask the ASBMB web officer to take down the former website which was part of the ASBMB site. All member societies of FAOBMB are asked to put a link to the new web site on their own web sites. The President indicated that suitable articles from FAOBMB members for the website would be much appreciated. He also suggested that a newsletter be considered, possibly web based, and Phillip Nagley agreed to look into this possibility.
- **Functional Genomics and Structural Biology Workshop** in Kuala Lumpur, May 9-13, 2011. The President has helped to organize and will participate in this workshop and will advertise FAOBMB as a sponsor. He will seek to have the name of Malaysian delegate's on the FAOBMB Council clarified in discussion with Professor Sheila Nathan.
- **Bid for an IUBMB-FAOBMB sponsored conference in Taipei in 2014.** A bid has recently been submitted to IUBMB for sponsorship of a conference in 2014 in Taipei, jointly with the FAOBMB and TSBMB. Suggested dates are October 20-26 although there is some flexibility at this stage. It was pointed out that by 2014, it will be 4 years since the last IUBMB sponsored conference in our region (OzBio2010) and therefore the timing is suitable. Professor Tsai gave details of the bid, indicating that an attendance of 1100 (550 full registrants and 550 students) is foreshadowed. The venue may be Academia Sinica but a convention centre is also possible. The bid will be considered at the IUBMB Executive Meeting in Mexico in October. Phil Nagley agreed to send Ming-Daw papers associated with the successful Melbourne bid to IUBMB for OzBio2010. It was suggested that TSBMB consider inviting cognate Taiwanese societies (especially the cell biology society) to jointly sponsor the conference. Professors Tsai and Wang indicated that they would like to proceed with the conference even if IUBMB was unwilling to be a sponsor. The Executive recommended strong FAOBMB support for this proposal. The Secretary-General will ensure that a formal recommendation is made at the October FAOBMB Council Meeting and

the results communicated to IUBMB before the IUBMB Executive later in October in Mexico..

- **FAOBMB Medal.** The process is underway for the award of the inaugural FAOBMB Medal. The Secretary-General indicated that seven nominations were received by the deadline of May 1 and provided the files to Shan-Chi who will act as secretary for the Awards Committee. This will be made up of Professors Wang and Futai and by the Chairs of the Organizing Committees for the Shanghai (Jiarui Wu), Melbourne (Phil Nagley) and Singapore (Koh Siok Im) meetings. The winner will be informed by June 30. Siok Im and Poh San agreed that the opening scientific session of the Singapore Congress will include the presentation of the medal by the President and a lecture by the medallist. Andrew and Shan-Chi will also investigate the striking of a medal. The Executive warmly recognized the generous sponsorship of US\$5000 for the inaugural medal from the TSBMB.

4. Secretary-General's Report

- **Elections required in 2011**

John de Jersey's second and final term as Secretary-General will finish at the end of this year. The meeting agreed to the following timetable for election of a replacement: call for nominations in early July; an election if needed to be held from mid-August to late September, with the result available before the Singapore Council meeting.

The positions of Chair of the Education Committee and Chair of the Fellowships Committee will need to be advertised, with appointments for the next three years to be made at the Singapore Council Meeting. The Committee Chairs are elected for three year terms.

- **Introduction of an FAOBMB Education Award**

A proposal to introduce an award recognizing excellent contributions to biochemistry and molecular biology education was approved in principle at the last two Council Meetings, pending available funds. This award is designed to complement the FAOBMB Medal which emphasizes excellence in research. The meeting agreed to recommend to Council that this award be instituted, with the first award to be made in 2012. The Treasurer was asked to allocate the sum of US\$3000 in the 2012 budget. The Secretary General is to circulate the guidelines for the award to Executive members for amendment as required prior to the Council Meeting in Singapore. There was a discussion on whether the FAOBMB should form an Awards Committee, and if so, what should be its scope. This is a

matter for Council to consider. (**Secretary's note:** After the meeting, there was also a suggestion to form a Scientific Advisory Committee or similar, to assist the Executive and Council in such matters as nomination of speakers for named lectureships and symposia).

- **Amendments to the Rules and Standing Orders of FAOBMB**

Amendments are needed to bring the Rules of FAOBMB up to date and to introduce changes that have been agreed in recent Council meetings. The Secretary-General took the meeting through proposed changes to the rules which were substantially agreed to. He will circulate to Council members a document incorporating the proposed changes and an accompanying letter showing the reasons for the changes, for input prior to the Council Meeting. He will also suggest changes to the Standing Orders (which can be seen as making the Rules operational).

- **Invitation to FAOBMB to nominate speakers for the Seville IUBMB Congress (September 4-9, 2012)**

Professors Oh and Tsai agreed to send in suggestions for symposia in their areas of research interest.

- **The FAOBMB web site**

The meeting thanked Professor Wang and Dr Shan-Chi Ku for their excellent work in establishing the new FAOBMB web site (faobmb.net). The meeting agreed that it would be a good idea for FAOBMB to establish the position of Web Officer to work with the Executive to maintain and improve the web site. The meeting agreed to establish this position and to appoint Dr Ku (to be ratified by Council).

5. **Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer submitted a report of anticipated income and expenditure in 2011 based on his report to the Melbourne Council Meeting (see Appendix 1). Various items were discussed and the report was amended as shown in the attached statement of income and expenditure which was approved by the Executive. The expected operational income in 2011 totals US\$81000, including \$23000 from subscriptions, \$24000 from IUBMB, US\$5000 as part of the interest received on FAOBMB investment funds (see below), and an anticipated contribution from the OzBio2010 organizing committee of \$23000. Phillip Nagley explained that this allocation from the proceeds of OzBio2010 included \$5000 in return of the underwriting funds from FAOBMB for Council member registrations. The

remaining amount was worked out by dividing up the meeting surplus among sponsoring societies based on the number of registrants attributable to each society. The Taiwan Society for BMB has generously provided US\$5000 for the inaugural presentation of the FAOBMB Medal.

The budgeted expenditure (total of US\$56,400) includes \$15000 to support the Singapore meeting (\$10000 for invited speakers and \$5000 for travel fellowships). In addition, \$8000 has been provided to fund registration waivers for members of Council and Travel Fellowship holders attending the Singapore symposium. This recognizes the financial burden placed on the Organizing Committee by registration waivers and follows a similar contribution to underwrite Council member registrations for OzBio2010. This contribution has been provided on the understanding that some or all will be returned if the meeting makes a profit. A contribution of \$5000 to the Asian University for Women in Bangladesh (the second of three such contributions approved at the Shanghai meeting to support the introduction of a BMB program at the University) will be made on receipt of a letter documenting appropriate expenditure of the first payment.

The Treasurer noted that a sum of approx US\$250000 had been put in a term deposit in the National Australia Bank (in Australian dollars), earning approx \$15000 p.a. in interest.

6. FAOBMB Medal

See discussion in the President's Report above.

7. FAOBMB Exchange Fellowships

Draft guidelines for FAOBMB Exchange Fellowships for early career biochemists and molecular biologists had been introduced at the Melbourne Council Meeting. The Executive agreed to a budget allocation of \$7000 for a round of fellowships in 2011. Guidelines will be circulated to members of the Executive and the Fellowships Committee Chair for amendment (if required) and approval. Then applications will be called. The Exchange Fellowships will be similar to the Wood-Whelan Fellowships offered by IUBMB and fellowships offered by the Third World Academy of Sciences. The Secretary General agreed to initiate discussions with member societies on the basis that they may be prepared to jointly sponsor, with FAOBMB, one or more Exchange Fellowships for awardees to work in their countries. However, it was agreed that any such negotiations would not delay the offering of fellowships in the current round.

8. Other Reports

It was noted that several items relevant to the Education Committee and the Fellowships Committee were discussed elsewhere in the Agenda. The Secretary-General reported advice from the Education Chair of IUBMB (Professor Susan Hamilton) that there were two FAOBMB positions unfilled on her Committee.

9. Reports on FAOBMB Meetings

- **22nd FAOBMB Singapore Symposium.** Koh Siok Im and Lai Poh San presented a report on progress towards the Symposium in October. The Executive supported the plans of the organizing committee and noted the high quality of the speakers. The meeting made the following additions/comments:
 1. The FAOBMB Council Meeting will be held from 1.30 pm till about 5 pm on Tuesday, October 4th, with a light lunch to be provided in the meeting room from 12.30 pm. The Organizing Committee was asked to book a suitable room for the meeting, to accommodate a total of approx 25 Council members and invited observers. The room should contain equipment for the showing of power point presentations. Other arrangements for the Council would be made by the Executive.
 2. The program will commence with an official opening on Wednesday, October 5. Siok Im and Poh San were encouraged to invite a leading member of the Government (e.g. the Science Minister) to officially open the meeting. A welcome by the President would follow, then the presentation of the FAOBMB Medal by the President. The medallist would then give a lecture of approximately 45-50 minutes.
 3. The funds to be provided by FAOBMB in support of the Symposium were agreed upon (see above in Treasurer's Report).
 4. The Organizing Committee will indicate the process whereby Council Members and Travel Fellowship award winners can obtain free registration for the symposium when they register.
 5. The deadline for submission of abstracts was agreed on as June 30.
 6. A timetable for the award of Travel Fellowships was agreed upon.
 7. Siok Im and Poh San indicated that they would contact Susan Hamilton about the outcome of their application for IUBMB Education Committee support for an Education Workshop at the Symposium.

Given the relatively high cost structure of the meeting and the relatively high registration fee, the importance of advertising the meeting as widely and

effectively as possible was emphasized. FAOBMB member societies should be contacted very soon with encouragement for them to publicize the symposium.

- **13th FAOBMB Thailand Congress.** Piamsook Pongsawasdi, Chair of the Congress Organizing Committee, gave a verbal report on progress. The Congress is likely to be held in the third week of November, 2012 (Sunday November 18 till Thursday, November 22). Current plans are for the congress to be held in Chiang Mai (a city of about 2 million people in Northern Thailand) rather than in Bangkok. A more detailed report will be provided for the Council Meeting in Singapore.
- **23rd FAOBMB Symposium.** The Secretary General reported that the President of the Bangladesh Society for BMB, Professor Syed Salaheen Qadri, had recently reaffirmed their wish to hold an FAOBMB-sponsored symposium in Bangladesh in 2013, probably in December. Executive agreed with this proposal in principle and requested a more detailed proposal for the Singapore Council Meeting.
- **15th IUBMB and 24th FAOBMB Taipei Conference in 2014.** See President's Report above.
- **2015.** This will be a Congress year and it is to be hoped that India may be prepared to host an FAOBMB Congress. The Indian delegate on Council, Professor Raj Nagaraja, had previously indicated India's wish to host a meeting in the near future.

10. Other Business and Closure of Meeting

It was agreed that the most pressing matters had been discussed so it was decided to adjourn the meeting at 5.30 pm.

John de Jersey, Secretary General.

May, 2011.

Appendix 1

Expected Income in 2011 (in USD) (revised)

1. Subscription: 23,000

2. IUBMB Support: 24,000

 Speaker Invitation for Singapore Symposium: 10,000

 Bioinformatics Education Workshop: 9,000

 Visiting Research Fellowship: 5,000

3. Interests from the FAOBMB fund in NAB: 5,000

4. Corporate Support: 5,000

 TSBMB: 5,000

5. Contribution from ASBMB (OzBio2010 Surplus): 23,000

Total Income: 81,000

Expected Expenditure

1. EC and Council Meeting: 15,000

Travel Expenses: 7,000

Registration Waiver: 8,000

2. Support for Singapore Symposium: 15,000

For speaker invitation: 10,000

Travel Fellowship: 5,000

3. Bioinformatics Education Workshop in Myanmar: 9,000

4. Visiting Research Fellowship: 7,000

5. Asian Women University Aid: 5,000

6. FAOBMB Medal: 5,000

7. Bank charge and others: 400

Total Expense: 56,400

Balance: 24,600 USD

Expense starting from 2012

FAOBMB Education Award: 3,000