

## Phillip Nagley, FAOBMB Secretary General, reports on the 2013 Special FAOBMB Symposium and Council Meeting held in Singapore, during December 2013.



*Venue for FAOBMB Symposium – Clinical Research Centre at the National University of Singapore.*

The 2013 Special FAOBMB Symposium was held in Singapore on 16–17 December, following the cancellation of the 23rd FAOBMB Conference that was to be held in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The unfortunate cancellation of the Dhaka meeting took place because of the political unrest and extensive civil disturbances in Bangladesh in the lead-up to the national elections held there early in 2014. FAOBMB is indebted to the Singapore Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (SSBMB), whose leadership arranged the Special

Symposium at very short notice late in 2013 and provided the facilities at the National University of Singapore (NUS) not only for the scientific program to be held but also for the Council meeting of FAOBMB that was scheduled to be held in Dhaka. Thanks are particularly due to Thilo Hagen (SSBMB President) and Siok Im Koh (FAOBMB Education Chair), both based in Singapore, for their intensive efforts to make the Singapore meeting such a success.



*Speakers in Education Symposium, from left: C Pawan K Patro (Singapore), Nirma Samarawickrema (Australia), Siok Im Koh (FAOBMB Education Chair), Janet Macaulay (Australia), Gracia FB Yu (Philippines) and Thilo Hagen (Singapore).*

The scientific program of the Special Symposium included two lectures on leading topics in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, delivered by the Immediate Past President of FAOBMB, Professor Masamitsu Futai (Mechanism and cell biology of proton-pumping ATPases), and the President, Professor Andrew Wang (Structure and function of proteins relevant in drug discovery). The two FAOBMB Award winners provided the highlights of the Symposium. Professor Sharad Kumar (Centre for Cancer Biology, Adelaide, Australia) received the 2013 FAOBMB Award for Research Excellence and spoke on the molecular control of cell death, focussing on drosophila in which developmental death of tissues during metamorphosis can be not only by apoptotic death but in some cases also by autophagic cell death. Associate Professor Janet Macaulay (Monash University, Melbourne, Australia) received the inaugural FAOBMB Education Award and delivered her lecture on changes in higher education (from teaching to learning) as part of the Education Symposium.

Other speakers in the IUBMB-supported educational program included: Nirma Samarawickrema (Monash University, Australia) – using videos to support development of lab skills in undergraduate practical classes; Thilo Hagen (NUS) – introducing independent learning by students in large undergraduate lecture programs; Chinari Pawan Kumar Patro (NUS) – use of innovative educational methods for stimulating computational thinking by life science students; and Gracia Yu (University of the Philippines Manila) – the application of integrated, interactive and research-centred teaching of biochemistry. Collectively these educational speakers provided great examples, through their own enthusiastic presentation styles as well as the exciting programs they have developed, of the innovative and engaging approaches that are required to get today's students of biochemistry and molecular biology interested in the subject matter and to motivate them to learn independently.

The Symposium also provided the opportunity for the FAOBMB Travel Fellows, all early career researchers, to give short oral presentations on their research work. Normally, at FAOBMB Conferences, the FAOBMB Travel Fellows present their work in poster format. The six speakers all gave excellent



*Professor Andrew Wang (FAOBMB President) presents Professor Sharad Kumar with the 2013 FAOBMB Award for Research Excellence.*



*Associate Professor Janet Macaulay receives the 2013 FAOBMB Education Award from Professor Andrew Wang (FAOBMB President).*

talks on their research work, carried out in Australia, India, Iran and Thailand, showcasing the wide range of the research approaches to various biological and biotechnological topics by young researchers who came from right across the FAOBMB region.



*Dinner following the Symposium, from left: Somporn Kamolsiripichaiporn (Thailand), Kiyoshi Fukui (Japan) and Janet Macaulay (Australia).*



*FAOBMB Executive Committee and Delegates at the Council meeting.*

## FAOBMB Council Meeting

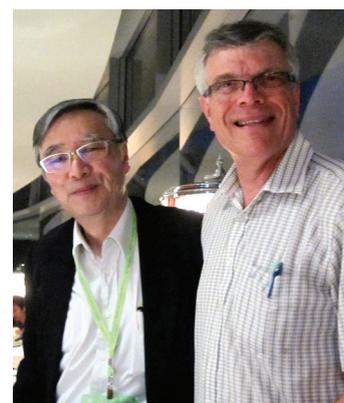
The FAOBMB Council meeting took place immediately before the Symposium on 16 December. In spite of the late change of venue to Singapore from Dhaka, the Council meeting was well attended, with all but one member of the Executive Committee present (apologies from the Treasurer Professor Uhtaek Oh). Delegates from eight Constituent Member countries, plus two observers, were also in attendance. Highlights of the proceedings of the Council meeting included:

- Incoming President for 2014, Professor Kiyoshi Fukui (Japan), was welcomed
- A new program of FAOBMB Exchange Fellowships will be introduced (details to follow)
- A new program of FAOBMB Travel Lectureships will be introduced (details to follow)
- The new FAOBMB Entrepreneurship Award will be introduced (details recently advertised within the FAOBMB Community)
- Hong Kong (HKSMBM) will re-join as a Constituent Member from the beginning of 2014
- Sri Lanka (College of Biochemists) will join as a new Constituent Member from the beginning of 2014

- In addition to the new Treasurer (Professor Piamsook Pongsawasdi, Thailand) who was elected prior to the Council meeting, an election held at the Council meeting saw Professor Sheila Nathan (Malaysia) become Chair of the FAOBMB Fellowships Committee effective from the beginning of 2014 (see [www.faoymb.net](http://www.faoymb.net) for details for 2014 of the FAOBMB Executive Committee and Delegates of Constituent Members)
- Because of recent changes in the law in the State of Victoria, Australia (in which FAOBMB is officially registered as an Incorporated Association), an extensively revised and expanded set of Rules was approved by Council; at the same time, the Secretary General, Professor Phillip Nagley, brought before Council major revisions to the Standing Orders of FAOBMB, which were approved by Council (see [www.faoymb.net](http://www.faoymb.net) for the revised Rules and Standing Orders)
- A detailed report on planning of the joint IUBMB-FAOBMB Conference to be held in Taipei, Taiwan (including a Young Scientists Program) during October 2014 was approved
- Planning for the next FAOBMB Congress to be held in Hyderabad, India, during November 2015 was noted
- Preliminary planning for the future FAOBMB Conference to be held in Manila, Philippines, during December 2016 was noted
- It was agreed to support the proposal from the Nepalese delegate (Dr Tilak Shrestha) to circulate his request (made by Skype communication during the meeting) for disused or obsolete DNA sequencing equipment to be provided for the use of Nepalese biochemists and molecular biologists
- Professor Masamitsu Futai (Immediate Past President, from Japan), was appointed as a new Honorary member of FAOBMB



*2013 FAOBMB Travel Fellows, from left: M Obayed Ullah (Australia/Bangladesh), Mohammad Sabbir Siddiqui (Australia/Bangladesh), Susanti (Australia/Indonesia), Professor Piamsook Pongsawasdi (FAOBMB Fellowships Chair), Kantamas Apitanyasan (Thailand), Mojtaba Bagheri (Iran) and Chintan B Bhagat (India).*



*From left: Professor Masamitsu Futai (newly elected FAOBMB Honorary Member) with Professor Phillip Nagley (FAOBMB Secretary General).*