
The Canadian Federation of Biological Societies - CFBS - and You

Activities of the CFBS Office

This article is to update you on the activities of the CFBS Ottawa office since my arrival as Executive Director on April 15, 1999. During the past 10 months, efforts have been made to restructure how we function in order to respond more effectively to the needs of the members of the Biological/Bio-medical Sciences Community. What has been obvious since my arrival is that members of the Federation are frequently unclear as to the various roles that the CFBS office performs on behalf of its life scientists. Currently, the CFBS Ottawa office is composed of two individuals Mrs. Wafaa Antonious, our Office Manager, and the Executive Director. Should you have suggestion on how we can further improve on what is presently being done we would be happy to hear from you.

I Communication

Communication with the membership and how it can be done more effectively has consumed much of our effort during the past several months.

1. In an attempt to deal with this problem we have set up a new web-site (www.cfbs.org). With the assistance of our Web-master, Steve Lau, this vehicle now allows us to place on the web a summary of events and communications that we believe are of concern to our constituency. At the same time we have established a list-server which permits us to communicate directly with each member when issues of importance arise.

2. As a further measure to determine how the CFBS Ottawa office can be more responsive, a draft of a strategic plan was developed and distributed to approximately 18 Societies representing most of the Canadian life science community. Fourteen of these Societies, including CSBMCB, were present at a strategic planning session that we organized in November 1999. A summary of this meeting is available on our web-site. What was encouraging from this planning session was the unanimous support for CFBS to continue its role as an advocate for Biological/Biomedical Science issues. Strong support was also voiced for CFBS to continue to organize a high quality, but more focused type of scientific conference each year. This

recommendation has been transformed into action for the Year 2000 CFBS Meeting in Ottawa (June 22-25) the details of that are present on the web-site.

3. To keep Societies informed of current news related to scientific issues of importance to the life science we are sending out by e-mail a series of CFBS-Alerts. These were sent initially to Society Executives but now with our new list-server and an updated data bank of members you should receive information more rapidly.

II Science Advocacy

During the past year CFBS participated in meeting with government officials, parliamentarians and members of granting councils. One session organized by the CFBS office took place in May, 99 and a second series of visits occurred in November in concert with colleagues in the Canadian Consortium for Research. The various issues discussed and the responses of decision-makers have been recorded on our web-site and in an article in the recent "Call for Abstracts".

To ensure that we deal with the issues of greatest concern to each society we have asked each of the Presidents to nominate a representative whom we might call upon when we meet with "decision-makers" to articulate the concerns of their members. Our goal is to "tailor-make" our visits such that the "decision-maker" visited, match as close as possible the issues under discussion. We have canvassed the various societies for nominations of individuals who will join with the CFBS team when it meets to consider the issues to bring forward. We are pleased that Reinhart Reithmeier has agreed to be CSBMCB's representative (email: r.reithmeier@utoronto.ca). He should be contacted when you have concerns that you believe should be advanced for consideration. While we realize that CSBMCB has voted to withdraw from the Federation and will organize its own scientific meetings we were, nevertheless, pleased by the decision of your Society to continue supporting the Science Policy/Advocacy activities of the CFBS.

Bruce Sells, FRS(C),
Executive Director
March 2000

III CFBS Annual General Meeting

For a number of years much discussion has occurred concerning the format of the CFBS Annual Meeting. This year we were determined, therefore, to attempt to respond to these concerns. Many Federation members indicated that they wished to attend meetings that were not only relevant to their particular interest but contained a program in which the material was presented in sufficient depth for them to justify the travel funds involved. In this way, they argued, they would be getting more value for their travel dollar. The year 2000 meeting in Ottawa in cooperation with CSBMCB is an attempt to deliver this type of conference. The downside of this decision is that each year only a segment of the Federation membership will be accommodated. While this is true we hope that over a 3-4 year period most of the interests of CFBS members will have been satisfied.

One thing is clear, however, most of us tend to opt for specialized meetings that allow us to keep

in touch with the most up to date activities in our particular field. There are, nevertheless, many arguments around this issue and the current approach is an "experiment" and we shall see how it works out. To encourage broader international participation we have advertised the Meeting in the Calendar of events of the American Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, American Society of Microbiology and American Society of Cell Biology. Notice of this meeting will appear also on their web-sites and in the FASEB Journal.

We believe that the meeting is of international caliber and we look forward to your presence. In all these activities, we are attempting to be responsive to the membership and the Bioscience Community. Therefore, it is vital for CFBS to have continuous feed back on our efforts and the needs of the Biosciences Community in order to reach the optimum in our communication and provide you with the best possible service.

The American Society for Cell Biology

40TH ANNUAL MEETING: December 9 - 13, 2000
Moscone Convention Center, San Francisco

Symposia

Keynote Symposium: Saturday, Dec.
9, 6:00 p.m.

The ASCB: 40 Years Leading the Revolution in Cell Biology

J. Michael Bishop, Michael S. Brown, Joseph L. Goldstein

The Mechanism of Protein Synthesis

Alan Hinnebusch, Harry F. Noller, Jr., Nahum Sonenberg

Novel Dimensions of Cell Motility

Marie-France Carlier, Thomas M. Roberts, H. Lee Sweeney

Chromosome Dynamics

Douglas E. Koshland, Victoria Lundblad, Daphne Preuss

Determination of Left-Right Asymmetry

Daniel Constam, Nobutaka Hirokawa, Elizabeth Robertson

Pathogen Recognition and Host Defense

Barbara Baker, Pamela Bjorkman, Ruslan M. Medzhitov

Cellular Organization at the Synapse

Mary Kennedy, Joshua R. Sanes, Morgan Sheng

Biological Clocks

Steve Kay, Ann Rougvie, Joseph S. Takahashi

Chemical Approaches to Biological Problems

Daniel E. Kahne, Jeff Kelly, Laura Kiessling

Minisymposia

Biophysical approaches in cell biology

Steven M. Block, Mimi Koehl

Cell migration and pathfinding

Gian Garriga, Denise Montell

Cell regulation by scaffolding and adaptor proteins

Sharon L. Milgram, John Scott

Centromeres, kinetochores and genomic instability

Pamela B. Meluh, Peter K. Sorger