
CSBMCB President's Report

Dr. Joe Casey

Foreword

Why do we need CSBMCB? At our meeting I posed this question to the CSBMCB board. As a group we were highly biased to think positively about CSBMCB, but our answers to this simple question were still informative. We need CSBMCB to: 1. Act as the professional society for a large group of Canada's researchers, 2. Provide a strong voice, advocating the needs of these scientists to the government, 3. Organize scientific meetings, placing Canadian researchers on stage with the world's best, 4. Recognize excellence in Canadian biochemists, molecular biologists and cell biologists through significant achievement awards. From this discussion it was clear that we are doing a good job on some of these areas, and need to improve in others. We have ideas and enthusiasm to further improve CSBMCB in the coming year. We hope that you agree that there is a real need for CSBMCB. Please tell your colleagues about CSBMCB and encourage them to join!

Upcoming CSBMCB Meetings

2005- Meeting organizers Rick Wozniak (University of Alberta) and Rick Rachubinski (University of Alberta) have put together an amazing group of speakers for the upcoming 48th Annual CSBMCB Meeting, "Cellular Dynamics" (March 16-20). The meeting opens with Nobel Prize winner, Dr. Günter Blobel and continues with world leaders speaking on the topics of Organelles of the secretory pathway, Imaging Technologies, Organelle Inheritance, Protein Folding, Nuclear structure, mRNA localization and Systems approaches to Cell Biology. More information, including registration, is available at: <http://www.csbmcb.ca/>. Did we mention that the meeting is at the Banff Centre (Banff Alberta, one hour from Calgary), in the middle of one of the world's most beautiful areas, during spring ski season (afternoons are scheduled open during the meeting)?

2006- Planning for the 49th Annual meeting is well under way. A committee headed by Reinhart Reithmeier (University of Toronto) is organizing the meeting "Membrane Proteins in Health and Disease" at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, from May 31- June 4, 2006.

2007- The 50th Anniversary meeting for CSBMCB will be something special! David Thomas (McGill) and Eric Brown (McMaster) head the organizing committee for this meeting on "Systems Biology," which will be held in summer 2007 in Québec.



CSBMCB Awards

One of the most important roles of CSBMCB is to recognize excellence in Canada's biochemists, molecular biologists and cell biologists. In 2004 we awarded the Merck-Frosst Award for meritorious research by a scientist in the first 10 years as an independent scientist to Rick Wozniak of the Department of Cell Biology, University of Alberta. Rick's work on nuclear pores has been published in the top journals and has made a major impact on the field. Morag Park of the Department of Biochemistry, McGill University received the Jeanne Manery Fisher Memorial Award for scientific achievements by an eminent woman scientist. Both award recipients presented fascinating talks at the 2004 CSBMCB Meeting at Mt. Tremblant. You can read more about the research of Drs Wozniak and Park later in this issue of the Bulletin.

Advocacy Survey

This year we decided to find out what your opinion was about science policy, and you told us!

CSBMCB Vice-President, David Thomas (McGill) has summarized the results in an article in this issue of the Bulletin. The results show that many of you are passionate about science policy and support the CSBMCB in an invigorated approach to advocacy for our member's research interests. The message to us was clear: continue to push the interests of CSBMCB with members of the federal government, but also have a greater dialogue with the granting councils. Please continue to give us your opinions so that we can truly act as the voice for CSBMCB members!

Science Policy and Advocacy

One of the key roles of CSBMCB is to keep government officials aware of the needs of biochemists, molecular biologists and cell biologists. Our ongoing efforts in this direction include our support of the Canadian Federation of Biological Societies (CFBS). Part of your CSBMCB membership supports the advocacy efforts of CFBS. Bruce Sells, executive director of the Canadian Federation of Biological Societies, has developed excellent contacts with Parliamentarians. Through working with Bruce we have affected CFBS policy and gained access to Parliamentarians for discussions. Clearly the major issue confronting CSBMCB members is sustained, or increased operating budgets and we continue to press this point in all of our meetings with the government. The good news is that advocacy efforts work. Parliamentarians and senior government officials know about the importance of our research, but still need continued polite pressure.

Over the last year we have taken on two new initiatives in our advocacy efforts. First, we helped to sponsor the "Leader's Forum for Health Research in Canada" (see report at <http://www.cfbs.org/newsletterLeadersFrm.html>). The goal of the event was to bring together a wide range of Canadians working in health research, to try to drive a common view and thereby increase research support. We are hopeful that from the Leader's Forum will come more effective advocacy for our research activities. Second, we have begun to develop interactions with the Council for Health Research in Canada (CHRC). CHRC has emerged as an effective group advocating on behalf

of health researchers. Since their interests are very much aligned with ours we have begun to work with them, with the hope of affecting their policy to the benefit of CSBMCB members. Working with CHRC we hope to amplify our advocacy efforts.

Each CSBMCB member can help in our advocacy work. Like everyone else, our Parliamentarians need encouragement when they do the right thing! If you receive a new operating grant from a Government agency, write a letter of thanks to your MP, the minister responsible and the Prime Minister. Letters to Parliament can be sent without postage. You can find the address for your Member of Parliament at <http://www.parl.gc.ca/>. It is also very effective to invite your MP to visit your laboratory. Many know little about our research and showing them what we do can be a real eye-opener for them. One last piece of advice when contacting MPs is to stay positive. We all know that there are frustrating aspects to science funding in Canada, but the most effective strategy is to stay positive, to encourage our government to do the right thing: stabilize and increase research support.

Membership

CSBMCB needs a strong membership base in order to thrive. Annual membership fees provide the operating budget for the society. Of equal importance is to have a large numerical base of support. When we lobby politicians on policy they want to know how many scientists we represent. How valid is our voice? With a strong membership base we can advocate strongly for Canadian biochemists, molecular biologists and cell biologists. CSBMCB councillor Linda Penn (Toronto) has done a terrific job to build our membership through several initiatives. Among these, Linda has found CSBMCB representatives at departments at Universities across the country. Thank you to each of you who have agreed to take on this task! Thanks go also to each CSBMCB member for the continued support of CSBMCB and its activities.

Communications

You hold in your hands the Bulletin, one of our most important tools to communicate with the

CSBMCB membership. We thank CSBMCB Councillor, Frances Sharom (Guelph), for putting the Bulletin together. We also thank CSBMCB Departmental representatives for supplying the departmental news reports!

The CSBMCB Link is now one year old. The link is published three times per year and serves as a more regular way to communicate with the CSBMCB. The link contains articles about the science successes of CSBMCB members and reports on science advocacy efforts of the CSBMCB. We thank founding Editor, Caren Helbing (Victoria), for her great work on The Link. John Orłowski (McGill) will take over as Editor. You can send John articles at john.orłowski@mcgill.ca.

Thank you(s)

CSBMCB is an active organization with a surprising amount going on behind the scenes. Keeping CSBMCB running requires the efforts of many people, some of whom I would like to thank here. CSBMCB has contracted CFBS to take care of some of our administrative needs. Wafaa Antonious, CFBS Manager, Administration and Planning, has been tireless in her efforts to keep us on track from our emailings, to our website and financial affairs. Laila Riad, CFBS Administrative Assistant, has also worked with Wafaa on our behalf. Kim Bournat of the Department of Physiology, University of Alberta, has been very helpful with secretarial assistance, in particular with the advocacy policy survey.

The annual meetings of CSBMCB occur because of the hard work of many people. The 2004 CSBMCB meeting was organized by Terry Hebert (Université de Montréal). Terry put together an outstanding program on "Cell Signaling" From the Membrane to the Nucleus", which was held at Mt. Tremblant Québec.

In most organizations, and CSBMCB is no exception, it is actually the Secretary and Treasurer who do most of the work. This has been particularly true over the last year for our Secretary Albert Clark (Queen's) and Treasurer, Vince Duronio (UBC). Vince and Albert have done a terrific job, working with dedication as we all have scrambled to figure out how to function after our long-time

Treasurer (Fred Palmer) and Secretary (Gene Tustanoff) retired earlier this year.

Each of the members of the CSBMCB board (see who they are on the previous page) is an active researcher, who has given up their time to attend our board meetings, to help to run CSBMCB so that the Society can function. This year Eric Brown (McMaster), Frances Sharom (Guelph) and Dev Mangroo (Guelph) have infused the board with enthusiasm as new CSBMCB Councillors. David Thomas, Chair of Biochemistry at McGill, has stepped up to act as CSBMCB Vice-President and will be President next year. Caren Helbing (Victoria) and Bruce Waygood (Saskatchewan) have completed their terms as Society Councillors, with thanks for their contributions! David Andrews has completed his three years as Vice-President, President and Past-President of CSBMCB. David put tremendous energy and creativity into his time on the CSBMCB executive and set a great example for those of us following him.

Future Outlook

The future looks bright. The current CSBMCB board is energized and full of ideas. The challenge is to convince the government to continue to increase research funding. However, lobbying efforts are paying off. From discussions with the government it is clear they have heard our message. Increasing CSBMCB membership gives us more clout when we lobby. The recent advocacy survey was a shot in the arm; many CSBMCB members feel strongly about policy issues, and thankfully, for the most part our views seem to represent the survey responses. Please keep us relevant by giving us your opinions on science policy issues! CSBMCB annual meetings continue to be a source of pride. These meetings have attracted considerable positive feedback for their combination of cutting-edge science in enjoyable places. We are certain that the upcoming scheduled meetings will continue to be outstanding. It has been a pleasure to be involved in honouring Canada's amazing scientists with CSBMCB awards.

Finally, thank you to CSBMCB members, whose financial and moral support make the Society viable!