

Minutes, Drosophila Board
October 19, 2020

Attendees: D. Andrew, H. Araujo, E. Bach, H. Bellen, J. Brill, B. Calvi, S. Celniker, K. Cook, J. Diangelo, B. Edgar, FlyBase, E. Geisebrecht, S.R. Gelbart, T. Igaki, L. Jones, Th. Kaufman, S. Mohr, B. Oliver, M. Peifer, N. Perrimon, L. Reed, N. Singh, T.T. Su, N. Tapon, T. Tootle, J. Treisman, A. Veraksa, M. Welte, C. Whitworth, M. Wolfner, J. Zirin
Attending for item 1 only: S. Brown, T. DePellegrin, D. Montell

Announcements:

Jessica Treisman (Treasurer) reported that the Trainee Initiatives committee (herself (Chair), T. Tootle, K. Harvey, M. Welte) decided to use funds this year for outreach rather than for defraying meeting costs of trainees who needed assistance, because the 2021 virtual fly meeting registration fee is just \$80 for grad students. They will take \$8000 from the Reserve fund (<5% of its content) to make 4 awards. They will put an ad on FlyBase requesting applications. If there are too few fundable applications, they will use the remainder of the \$8000 to give grants of \$599 for summer-research students (based on a competitive review process).

Mariana Wolfner (President) told the Board that she consulted Scott Hawley and Barry Ganetzky about the Board's idea of using \$1500 from Sandler Lectureship funds, annually, for such trainee initiatives. This (in addition to Sandler Lecturer costs) still comes in well below the several-thousand dollars taken in in interest each year. The Board approved this unanimously. [Note: I've told this to Barry and Scott, and they were delighted. Barry suggested "when the diversity/equity initiatives are announced the support provided by the Sandler Fund will be mentioned". Scott and Barry also suggested that the Sandler Lecturer runner(s)-up also receive a monetary recognition. After discussion of several alternatives, the Board voted unanimously to give the (up to 2) runner(s)-up a 5-year membership to GSA (but if any prefer a one-time registration to the ADRC they can have that instead).]

Agenda item 1: ADRC meeting frequency:

The Board returned to this topic, which had been raised a couple of years ago but not resolved. Bruce Edgar presented the issue and history. The question was: in light of regional meetings, and the alternate-year EDRC, should the ADRC go alternate-year? In previous FlyBoard meetings, the sentiment had apparently been to keep it annual but there was no formal vote. Suzy Brown provided numbers on ADRC and EDRC for discussion; these are not yet formally available for dissemination. The ADRC is about twice the size of the EDRC, though the latter has been growing. The ADRC has stayed ~constant at ~1200 attendees +/- perhaps depending on venue. Main overlap between attendees is PIs. EDRC is hosted by an institution, which often provides financial support, and there is no organizational support for it analogous to GSA's support for ADRC.

Several points were raised during the Discussion:

- Suzy Brown (GSA) reported that GSA is still negotiating with Town and Country for the 2022 ADRC. No negotiations have begun with other, future venues. [In this new-normal, such negotiations are 1-2 years out rather than 5 years out.]
- TAGC may be in 2024 but this is not yet decided.
- The middle of a pandemic, while meeting structures are changing, may not be the time to make major changes in timing, etc.

- EDRC would be very expensive for North Americans to attend.
- ADRC has many early-career researchers, and skipping a year may deny them opportunities to attend a major meeting at a critical time in their training/career. Ditto for undergraduates. Updating the community of technical advances annually is important.
- Regional meetings are getting larger and could serve the function noted in the bullet point just above, if they alternate with ADRC, the way it happens in the worm-community. [MW asked the Regional Reps to please let the FlyBoard know the timing and size of their regional meetings.]
- But (in reference to the bullet point just above) Canadian researchers attend both the Canadian Fly meeting and the ADRC, finding the latter valuable in a different way from the former.
- We need to support the community, beyond “just a meeting”; annual is important for this. If we drop the meeting frequency that will tell the community that it is not important, not cohesive.
- Alternate-year may not increase attendance at ADRC; people will just go to other meetings.

The question was called, seconded, and a vote was taken. 95% of the 20 members voted to keep ADRC yearly, so we will do that.

Agenda item 2: How can the Fly community support those whose careers have been disproportionately negatively-impacted by the pandemic?

Tin Tin Su presented the situation.

The pandemic has had a disproportionate negative effect on early-career researchers and female researchers, given lab shutdowns, family balance, etc.

What can the FlyBoard do to help?

- Fill out NIH survey on pandemic impacts on your research. [N.B. email from NIH’s Dr. Mike Lauer 10/5/20 says “researchers in (their) sampling population will be receiving an email from Qualtrics (noreply@qemailserver.com) in mid-October; it needs to be filled out by the end of October”. Mark P recalled such an email; others have not received it (though, I received a similar one from NSF – MW)]
- Keep junior, female, other underrepresented, faculty visible – invite for conferences, etc.
- Make university administrations more aware of the problem. A letter from the FlyBoard might help with this (see below). Beyond urging the option for tenure-clock extensions, we can suggest:
 - o teaching support – or relief – for impacted faculty
 - o support for childcare costs
- Whitepaper based on this can be sent to NIGMS, NSF, etc.
- Those of us on grants-panels, editorial boards, and in reviews of manuscripts should keep the situation in mind; we have the clout to push journals, etc. to be less demanding/more realistic in these times.
- Pre-review grants for junior/impacted faculty.
- Provide a “helpline” for junior faculty (and late-stage postdocs, grad students)
- Consider ways to help impacted researchers to rapidly recoup stocks lost during the pandemic as their labs downsized their stock collections; Stephanie Mohr and Laura Reed will work on possible options for this.

- It would be useful to have demographic data:
 - o Demographic survey of field and pandemic effects on labs, etc.
 - o Data on loss of people from the field due to pandemic [Tin Tin says there are no data on this yet, it is too soon.]
 - o GSA and/or Twitter may provide ways to obtain these data.
- A statement is good, helpful, and supportive. But the problems go beyond our capacity to fix.
- We do not have funds to do anything substantive in that sense.

Tin Tin will draft a statement, based on what she has learned. The statement, with input and edits from the FlyBoard will be made available to the fly community to read, and to sign onto as desired.

Final Announcement:

Please send Mariana any info for FlyNews, no later than Nov. 10.

- Updates from Stock Centers
- Updates from Flybase and other Online Resources about new features.
- Other important information for the Drosophila research community.

FlyNews will also include

- a link to the statement from Agenda Item 2
- info about ADRC 2021
- info about the upcoming elections for Board membership