

ISN Council Meeting at the 2014 ICN at the Sapporo Convention Center, Hokkaido, Japan

July 29, 2014, 7:30 PM

Presiding: Alison Mercer, outgoing ISN President

Scribe: Susan Fahrbach, ISN Secretary

In attendance: Kentaro Arikawa, Amir Ayali, Christa Baker, Ari Berkowitz, Catherine Carr, Melissa Coleman, Heather Eisthen, Susan Fahrbach, Martin Giurfa, Cynthia Harley, Uwe Homberg, Paul Katz, Rudige Krahe, Joyce Lancaster, Toshiya Matsushima, Alison Mercer, Karen Mesce, Makoto Mizunami, Peter Narins, Yoshitaka Oka, José Peña, Sakiko Shiga, Ana Silva, Gabriella Wolff, Sarah Woolley

Agenda

- 1) Welcome (Alison Mercer, ISN President)
- 2) Membership report (Joyce Lancaster, Allen Press representative)
- 3) Financial report (Karen Mesce, ISN Treasurer)
- 4) Report on the 2014 ICN (Yoshitaka Oka, Chair of the Local Organizing Committee; Toshiya Matsushima, Vice Chair of the Local Organizing Committee; Makoto Mizunami, representing the Sapporo contingent of the Local Organizing Committee)
- 5) Preparations for the 2016 ICN (Ana Silva, Universidad de la República, Montevideo, Uruguay; José Luis Peña, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, New York; both representing the 2016 Local organizing Committee)
- 6) Meeting organization & Allen Press proposal (Alison Mercer, ISN President, and Peter Narins, ISN President-Elect)
- 7) Proposals for the 2018 meeting (Peter Narins, ISN President-Elect)
- 8) Nominations for Officers, Council (Peter Narins, ISN President-Elect)
- 9) Springer proposal (Peter Narins, ISN President-Elect)
- 10) SICB proposal (Paul Katz, ISN Past-President)
- 11) Other business; miscellaneous

Alison Mercer, ISN President, opened the 2014 meeting of the ISN Council by expressing her appreciation to the leadership and members of the Local Organizing and Program Committees for their hard work in making the 2014 ICN possible. She thanked the council members for their service, expressed her gratitude for the support given to her by the council and the membership, and expressed confidence that ISN President-Elect Peter Narins is well-prepared to serve the ISN. She also thanked all involved in preparing the proposal to the U.S. National Science Foundation that provided support for young investigators to attend the 2014 ICN.

Joyce Lancaster, representative from Allen Press, the ISN management company, reported that it is time to begin the membership renewal campaign. She noted a recent drop-off in membership. She noted that some drop-off is to be expected as graduate students and post-docs move on to different stages of their careers, but she expressed minor concern and will monitor trends over time. She reminded the council of the importance of colleague-to-colleague interactions in promoting membership renewals. She posed two questions to the council: Should membership rates remain the same? Should we retain a one year option for graduate students, or shift everyone to a two year membership category?

A brief discussion followed. It was noted that the two year membership links membership with congresses, spanning “meeting-to-meeting.” It was noted that the biggest drop-off was among graduate students. ISN President Alison Mercer stated that the ISN Executive Committee will examine membership rates at their next meeting. ISN President-Elect Peter Narins asked if only members can attend congresses? The answer to this question is no. Yoshitaka Oka, Chair of the Local Organizing Committee for the 2014 ICN, emphasized that the ability for non-members to attend congresses is an important part of the success of these meetings.

Karen Mesce, ISN Treasurer, presented the financial report. She began by stating that her goal as Treasurer is to keep ISN funds above \$500,000 (U.S. dollars). She noted that this may seem like a high benchmark, but that the ISN could take a financial hit of hundreds of thousands of dollars if a congress failed as a result of circumstances beyond our control. She commented that we cannot count on receiving continuing support for conference travel for young investigators from U.S. funding agencies such as the National Science Foundation, which contributed \$27,000 for ICN 2014. She briefly explained the ratio of cash to investments in the ISN portfolio, which is conservatively but productively invested. She concluded her remarks by stating that there is a trend for income from membership dues to increase while donations are declining.

A brief discussion followed. Several questions were raised about why donations are so low despite announcements on the website and in the ISN newsletter. Perhaps individual donors might receive some form of public recognition? Several council members expressed the opinion that growing the membership would provide more financial stability than attempting to increase donations. The possibility of forming a Development committee was raised, as was the possibility of recruiting more lifetime members. The discussion concluded with ISN President Alison Mercer’s expression of gratitude to Karen Mesce for providing such sound and transparent management of ISN resources.

The Chair of the Local Organizing Committee for ICN 2014, Yoshitaka Oka, provided a short report on the congress. Overall registration is 615, with very strong Asian participation. Yoshi credited the IBRO Advanced School of Neuroethology for attracting many students from Asia, and he expressed appreciation for the support the ISN has provided to the IBRO School. He noted that the satellite symposia that preceded the congress were very lively, with more than 200 in attendance. He concluded his remarks by pointing out several differences in the handling of congress funds in Japan versus the U.S. and Europe.

A brief discussion followed. It was asked if meeting insurance was purchased for ICN 2014. The answer was no, as such insurance is not available at a reasonable cost in Japan. Joyce Lancaster noted that the ISN can buy such insurance for itself, even for congresses held in another country. Such insurance could cover hotel attrition caused by bad weather.

The following point in the meeting marked the transition of leadership that is a hallmark of every ICN. From this point on, Peter Narins serves as the ISN President. Alison Mercer continues to serve the ISN in the role of Past President.

The chair of the council meeting transitioned to the new President. The first order of business for the new President was the introduction of José Peña and Ana Silva, Co-Chairs of the Local Organizing Committee, who then led a discussion of the 2016 ICN to be held in Montevideo, Uruguay.

The whole set of ICN-associated events is scheduled for March 28 through April 3, 2016. The ICN will be preceded by an IBRO school and a major electric fish satellite meeting, plus a meeting of Latin American neuroethologists. The actual congress will begin the evening of March 30 and end on Sunday, April 3, 2016. There will also be associated relevant Brain Awareness Week activities (in Spanish). The co-organizers are using the budgets of the 2012 and 2014 meetings as guidelines. They plan to keep registration fees similar to those used in 2012 and 2014. They estimate that they will need to raise \$75,000 (U.S. dollars). José and Hans Hofmann will begin applying for funding to U.S. federal agencies, including the National Science Foundation. Some degree of financial support will also be provided by the Uruguayan Ministry of Tourism, and special tax-free status will be granted as the opportunity to host ICN 2016 is regarded as good for the entire country. The U.S. dollar will be used as the conference currency. The working assumption is that 500 conferees will attend.

A lively discussion followed. Hans Hofmann will serve as Co-Chair of the Program Committee with Martin Giurfa. A question of whether a graduate student could serve as an assistant was briefly discussed, but the council generally expressed the opinion that service on an ICN Program Committee is an honor reserved for senior members of the ISN. Yoshitaka Oka stressed, based on his experience with ICN 2014, that the meeting registration and abstract systems MUST work well together, or chaos will ensue. Heather Eisthen strongly supported Yoshi's view that the website needs to work perfectly. The Local Organizing Committee indicated that a functional website was one of their highest priorities.

The possibility of having Allen Press coordinate the meeting was raised. They have the relevant experience, but these services would not be covered by our standard operating contract.

Ana Silva noted that for many reasons she prefers that there be local control of the ICN 2016 website. Several present asked if abstracts could be made available for searching and downloading. There was general agreement that this would be very beneficial for the promotion of neuroethology.

There are three proposals for the 2018 ICN site: Berlin, Germany; Brisbane, Australia; and Cambridge, UK. All of the proposals are strong, with excellent leadership teams in place. All of the sites will be briefly described at the ICN 2014 Business meeting, with voting taking place by electronic ballot after the meeting.

The process for election of new council members and early career representatives was briefly described by Peter Narins. In August 2014 members will vote by e-mail for President-Elect, Secretary, and seven council members, including one early career representative. There was general consensus that the rotation of council members and early career representatives is confusing.

Peter Narins then discussed the broad outlines of the possibility of having the ISN affiliate with Springer, publisher of the Journal of Comparative Physiology. The publisher could provide a discounted subscription rate for members, publish 1-2 pages of ISN news in each issue, and publish meeting

abstracts at a discounted price. A direct link to the ISN website would be provided on the Journal of Comparative Physiology homepage.

A lively discussion ensued. Questions were raised regarding the size of the subscription discount, and whether the access provided would be to individuals or to all ISN members. Several council members felt that most ISN members already likely had access to the Journal of Comparative Physiology via their home institutions. A more attractive benefit to the ISN would be cash support for some activity related to congresses, such as support of a lectureship or support of a session that could be associated with the publisher (e.g. the Springer Lectureship, the Springer Symposium). Concern was raised over the publication of abstracts by an entity other than the ISN. Several council members were unhappy with the possibility of affiliating with a publisher that does not support Open Access. Peter Narins offered to continue the dialog with Springer, as such an affiliation may still be an attractive possibility that offers benefits to our members.

Past-President Paul Katz presented a proposal from Chuck Derby that the ISN become integrated with SICB (Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology). This U.S.-based society holds a January meeting every year that takes advantage of the break between semesters typical of North American institutions. One possibility would be for ISN to organize a session within the larger SICB meeting. Another possibility would be for member registration rates for meetings to be offered to members of both societies for all meetings sponsored by SICB and ISN.

This proposal was felt to be interesting, but in the interests of time was tabled for future discussion.

There was no miscellaneous business. President Narins thanked all those in attendance and closed the meeting.