

**Minutes of the 2015 International Society for Neuroethology Executive Committee Meeting
Executive Summary**

May 2, 2015

San Diego, CA USA

Executive Committee members present:

Peter Narins, President (PN)
Alison Mercer, Past-President (AM)
Paul Katz, Past-President Emeritus (PK)
Cathy Rankin, President-Elect (CR)
Susan Fahrbach, Secretary (SF)
Karen Mesce, Treasurer (KM)

Representative of the 2016 ICN Local Organizing Committee (LOC)

Ana Silva, Chair (AS)

Representatives of the 2016 ICN Program Committee (PC)

Martin Giurfa, Co-Chair (MG)
José Peña, Co-Chair (JP)

Representative of Allen Press

Joyce Lancaster (JL)

Meeting Agenda

1. Financial report (KM)
2. ICN 2016
 - a. LOC report (AS)
 - b. PC report (MG & JP)
3. ISN Membership (JL)
4. General business (PN)
 - a. populating the ISN committees
 - b. website discussion
 - c. nominating committee
 - d. planning for ICN 2018
 - e. update on the 2015 Andean School of Neuroethology

1. Financial Report

KM presented a detailed financial report. A summary will be published in the June 2014 ISN Newsletter. All 2014 taxes have been filed. The mandatory declaration of non-profit status has also been filed in California, the state of incorporation of the society. As of April 30, 2015, the assets of the ISN (cash and investments) were \$566,227. This is the highest they have ever been. KM estimates that the base annual operating costs of the ISN are \$38,000. Expenditures for 2014 were roughly \$72,000, reflecting the costs of the 2014 ICN. KM stated that it is likely the ISN can weather most unforeseen events as long as our overall holdings fall no lower than \$500,000. KM noted that she is in possession of the paper records of the ISN, including financial records, and there was a brief discussion of the value of digitizing these records.

KM reported that donations increased in 2014 relative to 2013. The Executive Committee expressed its gratitude to KM for her careful stewardship of ISN resources.

2. 2016 ICN

LOC

AS provided a thorough update on the 2016 ICN, scheduled for March 31 through April 3, 2016. The work of the LOC is proceeding well, including planning of a School of Neuroethology and satellite meetings to be held in conjunction with the congress. Much attention has been paid to the distribution of the different sessions in the Montevideo Radisson Hotel, the site of the conference. The meeting will be preceded by a School of Neuroethology for Latin American students, and a Southern Cone Neuroethology meeting organized by young neuroethologists from the region. A call for satellite meetings has been issued, and 6 proposals have been received. The LOC is especially enthusiastic about a satellite on Neuroethology in Education: Teaching Proposals for Middle and High School targeted to local teachers. Andres Gonzalez is organizing the satellites. There are several exciting proposals that will integrate cultural and artistic activities with the ICN. On-site babysitting services are being organized. The ICN website will launch around June 1, 2015. The key dates have all been set, following past deadlines. The website is being directed by Laura Quintana. A beta version is now available. The front page was shown to the Executive Committee. PK noted that there should be a link back to the ISN website on every page, and that every page should mention support from the society. This information should be displayed prominently on the homepage, but should be at least in the footer of every page. Special attention is being paid to making abstract submission run smoothly. AS noted that the template developed for the 2016 ICN could be made available for use by the future congresses. Accompanying persons will be able to attend the opening session and the banquet; there also may be some tourist opportunities. An effort will be made to keep the cost of the banquet low, possibly \$10. The LOC has decided that all funds will be collected with credit cards. The cards accepted will be Visa, MasterCard, and American Express. The registration website was introduced in PowerPoint form, and specific comments were provided to improve its clarity and user-friendliness.

AS stated that the budget being used by the LOC is similar to that presented at the Maryland meeting, but that the LOC has added some programming costs and would like to cover travel for some invited speakers. They have solicited three ministries to sponsor the meeting “in the national interest.” All three ministries have provided the requested Declaration of Interest. This results in a handsome tax break. The paperwork is burdensome, but it is now completed. As a result, the estimated costs are reduced by \$30,000, from \$299,154 to \$267,680. There was a discussion of which individuals will receive support for their registration fees. Speakers, members of the LOC, co-chairs of the PC? After discussion, KM proposed that the LOC be given autonomy to make these decisions as they see fit, within the resources provided by the ISN. In general, the LOC is planning to raise US \$25,000, and thinks it needs \$50-70,000 from international agencies. CR recommended that a break-even point be calculated. She advised the LOC to make the best possible estimate of fixed costs, and then figure out how many people need to attend the meeting to cover the fixed costs. Proposals will be submitted to U.S. federal funding agencies with the assistance of the ISN Treasurer. KM reminded those present that the use of U.S. funds is restricted to U.S. citizens. Estimated attendance at the meeting is at least 500.

The plan for the opening ceremony includes welcome messages from Dean of the University and the Minister of Education and Culture. The LOC is also planning a short, one hour symposium on history of Neuroethology in South America – there will be talks, but they will be non-scientific – homage will be paid to important scientists such as Omar Macadar, John Hildebrand. This symposium will be followed by a

welcome party with music. After some discussion, the Executive Committee expressed its support for this vision, but advised the LOC to keep the formal events relatively brief and focused.

Food will be provided at the opening ceremony, and there will be three days of box lunches. The last day of the meeting is Sunday. The city will be less crowded, so attendees can enjoy going to restaurants on Sunday. Congress registrants will be able to express special diet needs at the time of registration. Two banquet options were presented. Option 2 is 4 blocks from the Convention Center at Club Uruguay – Option 1 is a venue called Kibon, outside on a peninsula on a river, but getting there requires buses and travel time. After considerable discussion that extended into the lunch break, the Executive Committee expressed a general preference for the Club Uruguay site because of its proximity to the hotel and simpler logistics.

PC

MG and JP led the discussion of the PC report and presented a series of informative PowerPoint slides. The other members of the PC are Heather Eisthen, Hichiro Fujita, Justin Marshall, Jeremy Niven, Carmen Sandi, Lidia Szczupak, Barbara Webb, and Sarah Woolley. Heather provides excellent continuity with the Sapporo congress; Justin Marshall will learn much that he can use for planning the Brisbane meeting.

MG began his presentation with the 10 slots for plenary lectures. Much interesting discussion ensued, with Martin and José providing thoughtful insights. A summary follows.

1. The New President Lecture – Catherine Rankin
2. Franz Huber Lecture – Gene Robinson
3. Walter Heligenberg Lecture – Dora Angelaki
4. Taste – Anupama Dahanukar (a topic not previously considered at a congress)
5. A South American Lecture – Daniel Tomsic
6. A Second South American Lecture – Suzanaerculano
7. Higher Order Cognition – Andreas Nieder
8. Social Hierarchies – Hailan Hu
9. Decision Making – Adam Kepecs
10. Olfaction – Bill Hansson initially accepted an invitation, has pulled out because of other commitments

The 12 Symposia were selected from 20 submissions; even after a symposium topic was accepted, the rosters of speakers were actively regulated by the PC to ensure that diverse views and many geographic regions will be represented. A summary follows.

1. Cognitive approaches to behavior
2. Neural mechanisms of spatial perception and navigation
3. The sensory world of birds
4. Neuronal mechanisms underlying target detection
5. Neural genomics of sociality
6. Evolutionary mechanisms of sensory loss and regain
7. Olfactory symposium – parallel olfactory processing in insects and vertebrates
8. Comparative views of the optic tectum
9. Birdsong
10. *Drosophila* circadian clock
11. Mirror neurons in primates
12. Higher cognitive functions in fish

The Executive Committee was delighted with the list of symposia presented, and all presented thanked the PC Co-Chairs and all of the PC members for building a very exciting and modern congress.

MG expressed his thanks to the Executive Committee, and noted that he and JP have already received much valuable assistance from PN, AS, and JL. Of course, the PC's work is not finished, and MG noted that he and JP will turn immediately to the task of replacing Bill Hansson.

3. ISN Membership

JL reported that the updated total number of members is 422. Concern was expressed regarding the decrease in membership, which was 569 in 2013. JL described mechanisms for contacting lapsed members. Members of the Executive Committee asked if the ISN can make use of modern approaches to marketing and newsletters via Allen Press. JL will investigate. JL then led a discussion of special members. These are non-dues paying members. They are neuroethologists located in counties from which paying dues is very difficult. PN has written a letter asking special members to re-confirm their special status. JL reported that many of the e-mail addresses from the Russian Federation have bounced back – she will continue trying to reach all of our special members, as we value their association with the ISN. PN noted that he has made special efforts to reach out to lapsed members, and will continue to do so.

4. General Business (and Other)

- a. The President has the task of populating the ISN committees well-in-hand.
- b. Minor concern was expressed that the website is not as functional as it might be, but no specific decisions were taken.
- c. The President-Elect will form the nominating committee, following the by-laws.
- d. The Executive Committee discussed planning for ICN 2018 in Brisbane. PN told the committee that Justin Marshall was invited to the Executive Committee meeting, but was unable to attend. AM provided a brief update. A key issue is how to define the relationship to other meetings that might overlap with ICN 2018. This issue will clearly require discussion in the future as the ICN 2018 plans become clearer.
- e. PN provided an update on the Andean School of Neuroethology. This is a two week integrated course in field biology and neuroethology. The field site is in Peru, and the students spend the second week at a university in Peru. Funding of the Andean School was approved by the Executive Committee (via e-mail) in October 2014. All present agreed that having informative proposals and reports for future proposed schools would be a good idea, and that Executive Committee members who will participate in a particular school should recuse themselves from voting on funds for that school.
- f. KM provided an update on the 2015 Neuroethology GRC. The target number of registrations was 110 and that the number is currently 125. It may be possible to increase the count to 140. The GRC is expected to receive \$18,000 from NIH, \$7000 from the U.S. Air Force, and has been invited to submit a proposal to NSF requesting \$10,000.
- g. There was brief discussion of two items introduced at the Council meeting in Sapporo: interactions with SICB and an affiliation with Springer, the publisher of the Journal of Comparative Physiology. There were mixed feelings about the value of working with the SICB annual meeting, although organizing a symposium within SICB might be a good way to begin. There was general agreement that PN should continue working toward the goal of a partnership with Springer.