

MINUTES OF THE SASBMB GENERAL MEETING

*held at the Bio-08 Conference, Olive Schreiner Hall, 1820 Settlers' Monument, Grahamstown
on Friday 25 January 2008, 16h30 – 17h30*

1 Welcome and Introductions

Nhlanhla Msomi opened the meeting at 16h40 and welcomed everyone present.

2 Present and Apologies

Present: Stephanie Burton, Nhlanhla Msomi, Johann Rohwer, Rosemary Dorrington, Theresa Coetzer, Simisha Pather-Elias, Brett Pletschke, Donita Africander, Hanél Sadie, Laura Roden, Les Mampuru, Ross Wadsworth, Willem Oelofsen, Ryno Naudé, Heini Dirr, Graeme Bradley, Francois van der Westhuizen, Piet Pretorius, Petra Gentz, Susan van Dyk, Jessica Lawson, Brendan Wilhelmi, Jacky Snoep, Aileen Boshoff, Clive Dennison, Edith Elliott, Ed Sturrock, Brenda Wingfield, Marilize le Roes-Hill.

Visitors: Bongani Ndimba, Tshepiso Seobi

A quorum was established.

Apologies: JPD Goldring, AF Boulangé, P Vukea, TR Anderson, Carminita Frost, Ann Louw, Janet Hapgood, Nicci Illing, Fourie Joubert, Chris Whiteley, Hugh Patterton, Anabella Gaspar, Fimmie Reinecke, Don Cowan

3 Acceptance of minutes of meeting held on 4 July 2006 at UKZN

The minutes had been circulated in advance on the SASBMB email list. Some members expressed concern at not having received the minutes – Nhlanhla Msomi suggested that members be given seven days to raise possible issues electronically. With the above proviso, the minutes were accepted (motion for acceptance by Brett Pletschke, seconded by Les Mampuru).

4 Matters arising from minutes of meeting held on 4 July 2006

4.1 *Item 6.4: website management*

It was confirmed that Fourie Joubert is a co-opted member of Council responsible for management of the society's website. Rosemary Dorrington pointed out that an old version of the SASBMB website still exists on UCT's web servers and that this needs to be taken off-line.

5 Announcement of Council members

5.1 *Retiring council members*

The terms of the following council members expired with the Bio-08 conference: Don Cowan, Edith Elliott, Anabella Gaspar, Janet Hapgood, Les Mampuru, Petra Gentz, Fimmie Reinecke

5.2 *New council members: nominations and voting if necessary*

5.2.1 The following nominations had been received before the meeting: Rosemary Dorrington, Nhlanhla Msomi, Stephanie Burton, Theresa Coetzer and Susan van Dyk (student member).

5.2.2 Because Iqbal Parker is a co-opted member of council, there are two more vacant positions available on the council and nominations from the floor were requested.

5.2.3 Laura Roden was nominated by Nicci Illing and seconded by Marilize le Roes-Hill.

5.2.4 Heini Dirr was nominated by Graeme Bradley and seconded by Ryno Naudé.

5.2.5 No additional nominations were received and Laura Roden and Heini Dirr were thus elected to council unopposed.

5.2.6 Because student members need to be nominated from the student body, a separate call for nominations for the second student member will be sent out electronically, with the deadline to be announced.

5.2.7 Stephanie Burton tabled a proposal for a new council structure to be incorporated into the SASBMB constitution, whereby the Vice-President would automatically become the President in the next term, and stay on as Immediate Past President (as a co-opted member). This would improve continuity in the management of the Society. The proposal would be voted on at the next General Meeting.

5.3 *Portfolios for 2008-2009*

Honorary Secretary: Johann Rohwer

Honorary Treasurer: Stephanie Burton

Vice-President: Brett Pletschke

President: Nhlanhla Msomi

Immediate Past President: Don Cowan (co-opted member)

6 President's report

Stephanie Burton presented the report on behalf of Don Cowan who could not attend the meeting. Attached as

7 Treasurer's report

Stephanie Burton presented the Treasurer's Report (Annexure B) and Income Statement and Balance Sheet (Annexure C). Theresa Coetzer asked whether the high travel costs are sustainable in terms of the membership fees levied by the Society. Stephanie Burton mentioned that FASBMB/IUBMB travel had been included in the expenditure item, but that this was an exceptional cost and local travel was easily sustainable. Support was also required for NSTF attendance, as Stephanie Burton is the Vice-President and Chairman of SETAG. She also represents SASBMB at the NSTF and SASBMB supports her travel to the SETAG meetings. Finally, it was also noted that the conference income from the 20th Conference in Pietermaritzburg had not yet been included in the statement.

8 Student matters

8.1 Petra Gentz (resigning student council member) thanked the council for the valuable experience she gained by serving as a student member. Graeme Bradley thanked both Petra Gentz and Fimmie Reinecke for the efforts they put into the student database, and encouraged the work to be continued by the incoming student council members.

8.2 Student travel to Bio-08 will be reimbursement on a sliding scale depending on distance travelled. The Secretary will send out an announcement by email to SASBMB members calling for supervisors to email details of their *bona-fide* students who have attended the Bio-08 conference to Stephanie Burton. The deadline for applications is 30 April 2008.

9 Newsletter

Les Mampuru had left the meeting by the time this agenda item was discussed, and therefore no feedback was given. Nhlanhla Msomi acknowledged that the Society had failed in not being able to produce a newsletter. Ed Sturrock questioned whether this was due to a lack of news or a lack of capacity for collating the news. Nhlanhla Msomi reiterated that it is definitely a lack of capacity. Graeme Bradley recalled that it was decided previously that the Newsletter became an additional council portfolio. Rosemary Dorrington offered some suggestions in terms of agenda item 10 below, i.e. to get an outside person to coordinate and produce the newsletter between different societies (e.g. Genetics, Microbiology, and Biochemistry), as this would provide a greater critical mass. Graeme Bradley proposed that Rosemary Dorrington follow this up as newly elected council member. Stephanie Burton mentioned that compiling a Newsletter is a difficult task requiring someone who is dedicated to it. Clive Dennison queried the distribution of the newsletter in electronic format vs. hard copy, whereupon Graeme Bradley replied that the response to a paper version is very important. Edith Elliott suggested the allocation of a nominal stipend as incentive for someone who takes on the task of producing the newsletter.

10 Umbrella structure for SASBMB/SASM/other biological societies

Rosemary Dorrington had been mandated by SASM to propose the formation of a Federation of Biological Societies. This would not be a merger, but a loose federation whose main function would be to improve cooperation between the societies, e.g. through the coordination of conferences to avoid clashes. The presidents of all biological societies would sit on this committee to coordinate activities and cooperate where possible. Edith Elliott seconded the proposal. Clive Dennison supported the coordination and communication but had reservations about continually having joint conferences due to a lack of venues of a suitably large size. Laura Roden suggested that specialised subject conferences may crystallise out of such a collaboration. Brenda Wingfield mentioned that this could be part of SETAG mandate and should serve as an agenda item for their next meeting (SETAG could then be asked to coordinate such activities).

11 National SASBMB Conferences

11.1 20th SASBMB Conference 2006 (UKZN): final report

Theresa Coetzer presented the final report on the UKZN conference. She reiterated her thanks to all the sponsors of that meeting. A total of 24 exhibitors had stands at the conference. 375 delegates had attended, of whom 55% were postgraduate students. There were 7 international plenary speakers and 69 short oral presentations, as well as 155 posters. The Roche prize for the best Honours student of 2005 was also awarded at the conference. The conference had made a net profit of R 236 467.51 which would be paid back to the Society. The total income was R 713 779.17 of which the largest proportion was registration fees (R 402 200.00) and exhibitor fees (R 205 130.00). The total expenditure was R 477 311.66 of which the largest proportion went towards accommodation (R 113 685.83), function expenses (R 125 536.33) and meals (R 80 416.30). Stephanie Burton thanked Theresa Coetzer and her organising committee for all the effort they had put into making this a successful conference.

11.2 21st SASBMB Conference 2008 / Bio-08: report on status

11.2.1 Rosemary Dorrington presented an overview of the conference statistics. The combined Bio-08

conference hosted 695 delegates across 5 days. On average 500-550 people were present on the conference site per day. More than half of all delegates stayed on for all 5 days – clearly the back-to-back formula is very attractive.

- 11.2.2 Financially, the prediction is to at least break even. 50 exhibitors and sponsors were present with 125 delegates attending (exhibition space was sold out in May already, additional space to be made available). Major sponsors (Gold Sponsors) were: DST – R 100 000, NRF – R 40 000, Merck – R 80 000, Beckman Coulter, Scientific Group, Roche. Rhodes University offered the services of its conference organising office without cost. In terms of income, R350k had been received through sponsorships, and R250k from exhibitor fees. Registration fees were kept as low as possible. Rosemary Dorrington explained that a separate student registration fee would have been difficult to implement due to lack of membership lists for some societies, and difficulties in verifying student status. Also, Biotech SA was not a registered society. Seed funding (R20000 each) from Biotech SA and SASBMB would be returned. Prize money for best posters (R6000) was donated by Inqaba and CLC Bio. A total of R 66 000 was allocated for student support. The financials were handled by Rhodes University auditors.
- 11.2.3 On the academic side, 450 unsolicited abstracts were received (with a 2 – 3% attrition rate). There were 480 presentations in total, with about 150 posters each for SASM and SASBMB, and 75 for Biotech SA. The back-to-back format establishes critical mass.
- 11.2.4 The conference was not affected by ESKOM load shedding due to availability of backup generators.
- 11.2.5 A new innovation was the 10 minute short poster orals. Feedback was requested on how this worked.

11.3 *Announcement of Next Conference*

Council had not been approached with suggestions or volunteers for hosting the next conference. Greg Blatch was asked to canvass for a possible host. An announcement will be made in the next few weeks.

12 **Regional SASBMB-affiliated symposia**

- 12.1 *Report on Eastern Cape Biochemistry Symposium (26 Oct 2007)*
Graeme Bradley presented his report (Annexure D).

13 **IUBMB meetings**

- 13.1 *Report on FASBMB meeting in Nigeria (Nov. 2006)*
The report by Greg Blatch was noted (Annexure E)

14 **SASBMB Awards 2006-2007**

- 14.1 *Best Honours student 2006*: Mr J van Heerden (UCT)
- 14.2 *Gold Medal Award*: Prof G Blatch (RU)

15 **General**

Graeme Bradley mentioned that communication is a problem with people not receiving notifications. Fourie Joubert is in charge of the email distribution list. Members are encouraged to check up for themselves whether they are on this list and contact Fourie if they are not. Brett Pletschke mentioned that email addresses may have changed due to recent university name changes.

16 **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held at the next conference, which will be announced in the coming weeks.

The meeting was adjourned at 18h15.

Minutes approved by: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Annexure B

SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY OF BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY

TREASURER'S REPORT, JANUARY 2008

*Presented at the national meeting of the SASBMB held in Grahamstown,
January 22-26.*

This report covers the period from the start of the 2006/2007 financial year (1 April 2006) up to the present (17 January).

At present (as of 17 January 2008) the SASBMB has funds in the bank amounting to **R 237174**, the majority of which is held in an investment (money market account: R 218 014) to which interest accrues. A smaller amount (R14 160 at present) is held in the current account, operated by the Treasurer as necessary.

We have supported attendance by council members at DST functions, NSTF and ICSU meetings, the FASBMB conference, and we have provided seed funding for the present SASBMB conference.

To date we have not received the excess funds from the last conference but we understand that this will amount to some R236 000.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE:

**Reporting for the period from April 2006 to January 2008
(as of Jan 17, 2008)**

Income: R 87 910

of which R 29 790 was membership fees (Apr 07 – Jan 08)
R 44 608 was membership fees (Apr 06 – Mar 07)
R 28 335 was interest on savings (Apr 06 – Jan 07)

Expenditure: R 148 490

Covering costs for:

Travel: Representation at national meetings and international meetings:	R 77 926
Conference grants and expenses	R 33 058
Membership fees (IUBMB, NSTF)	R 15 231
Administration (postage, auditing, financial administration) (R 2375 + R 12000 + R 4108)	R 18 483
Bank charges	R 3792

MEMBERSHIP:

Members total:	402
Members - new	40
Members - student	257
Members – paid	145
Members – not paid up	276

The membership subscriptions are a major source of income to the society and while it is problematic to increase the efficiency with which membership fees are paid, every effort is being made to ensure that members are informed of the status of their subscriptions. Invoices of current amounts owing and statements of previous amounts unpaid are sent out during each financial year, and members are urged to pay them as soon as possible to expedite the accounting process.

While it is a rather complex task to keep the records completely current, the Treasurer does have a full set of records of membership fees received and will welcome opportunities to discuss any queries members may have.



S G Burton
Hon. Treasurer

Annexure C

THE SA SOCIETY OF BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY

INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY FOR THE PERIOD:

	2007/2008	2006/2007
	R	R
INCOME	43,302.52	44,608.23
Membership fees rendered	29,790.00	29,785.00
Membership unpaid subs 1999		
Interested received	13,512.52	14,823.23
Congress Income		-
Sponsorships for advertisements		-
Newsletters		-
Refunds congress expenses		
	<hr/>	<hr/>
EXPENSES	41,805.79	113,941.73
Auditor's remuneration	2,098.50	2,010.00
Advertising & Promotion	-	-
Accommodation		
Bad debts/cancellations	3,700.00	3,554.50
Membership pre Feb 98 W/O		
Bd Membership fees pre Feb 99		
Bank charges	1,273.26	2,519.14
Congress grants and expenses	22,868.69	10,190.00
Interest paid	-	-
Honoraria (regional conferences)	-	-
Meetings and simposia	-	-
Donations	-	-
Membership fees (IUBMB, etc)		15,231.80
Postage, stationery and copying	1,165.34	1,210.28
Secretarial duties	6,000.00	6,000.00
Entertainment	-	-
Travel	4,700.00	73,226.01
Diverse	-	-
NET SURPLUS/ DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	R1,496.73	R(69,333.50)

THE SA SOCIETY OF BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY

BALANCE SHEET

Financial Year	2007/2008	2006/2007
	R	R
Balance 1 March	301,059.75	370,393.25
Net surplus/deficit for the period	<u>1,496.73</u>	<u>(69,333.50)</u>
	<u>302,556.48</u>	<u>301,059.75</u>

REPRESENTED BY

CURRENT ACCOUNT	19,361.76	54,851.05
FIXED DEPOSIT	-	-
MONEY MARKET ACCOUNT	236,489.57	213,093.55
DEBTORS pre 1997/1998		
2006/2007		33,115.15
2007/2008	50,405.15	
	<u>306,256.48</u>	<u>301,059.75</u>

Annexure D

EC-SASBMB Symposium November 2007

The Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology at the University of Fort Hare hosted the 16th symposium of the Eastern Cape Division of the South African Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (SASBMB), on 26th October 2007. The first symposium was held in the late 1980s and was established as a forum where the honours students from the three institutes would present the results of their research projects. It has since been extended to include Masters and PhD students. This year 88 delegates, including honours to post-docs and lecturers from Rhodes, the University of Fort Hare (UFH) and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) and 20 company representatives, spent a full day immersed in oral presentations, poster presentations and discussions focusing on post-graduate research undertaken at the three institutes. The keynote speaker was Dr Victoria Longshaw, a graduate from Rhodes University Biochemistry Department and currently working for Von Seidels Patent Attorneys while studying to become a patent lawyer. Her talk titled "Biotechnology Business Patenting – Get Smart" outlined the three rules for patenting:

Rule1 – At ignition of brain activity – apply duct tape to mouth

Rule2 – Upon activation of mouth – report such activation to your patent attorney

Rule3 – Patent first – publish second

She then discussed both advantages and obstacles facing the business of biotechnology in South Africa within the context of promoting available research funding and with reference to recent developments in IP law and practice, with references to several case studies to highlight the fundamental points.

The organisers would like to thank all the sponsors for their generous support, including sponsorship of several prizes. The three "Beckman Best Honours Oral Presentations" were awarded to Chandapiwa Tidimane, Luanne Spies, Khairunisa Yahya Suleiman all from NMMU. Maranda Esterhuizen (NMMU), Marli Vlok (RU) and Thulani Sibanda (UFH) were the recipients of the "Millipore Best MSc Oral Presentation per Institute". The "Best Overall Oral Presentation", sponsored by Whitehead Scientific and Inqaba Biotech, was awarded to Marli Vlok (RU).

Sponsors were:

Analytical and Diagnostic Products

AEC Amersham

Analytical Science Technologies

Applied Biosystems

Biocom Biotech

Bio-Rad

Inqaba Biotech

Merck

Microsep

Roche Diagnostics

Separation Scientific

The Scientific Group

Whitehead Scientific

SASBMB.

The Katberg Hotel provided an excellent service within the quiet country side of the Katberg mountains. Prof Graeme Bradley, who organised the event, was thanked by all the delegates for "having organised an excellent and interesting meeting". The next symposium will be hosted by NMMU in 2009.

Prof Graeme Bradley

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**Report on the 5th Congress of the
Federation of African Societies of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (FASBMB)
Abuja, Nigeria 21-24 November 2006**

FASBMB Congress activities:

The conference was hosted by the Nigerian Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (NSBMB) and organized by a congress organizing committee under the chairmanship of the President of NSBMB, Prof GI Ekeke (University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria). The President of FASBMB, Prof Vincent P K Titanji (University of Buea, Cameroon), also played a major role in the organization of the conference. SASBMB was represented by Prof M Iqbal Parker (University of Cape Town, and also an IUBMB representative), and Prof Gregory L Blatch (Rhodes University), who were both invited to present plenary talks at the congress. On the first day of the congress we were treated to a number of excellent plenary talks by Prof Titanji on molecular epidemiological approaches to studying and treating *Onchocerciasis* and malaria, by Prof Gerald Pollack (USA; TWAS-funded lecture) on a gel-sol approach to understanding how cells function, Prof Karel Wirtz (Netherlands; FEBS-funded lecture) on approaches to photodynamic therapy (PDT), and Prof EO Farombi on chemoprevention and cancer. The second day was highlighted by a talk by Prof Mohammed on the problems and solutions to undergraduate and postgraduate biochemistry teaching in Africa. In particular, he highlighted the online literature resources by comparing and contrasting Hinari, AJOL (African Journal Online), and PubMed. The second and third days were filled with talks by local researchers with a strong emphasis on the extraction and analysis of natural products for medicinal applications. The conference ended with a FEBS presentation by the FEBS representative Prof Wirtz, an IUBMB presentation by the IUBMB representative, Prof Parker, and the NSBMB Council Meeting.

General Assembly of FASBMB:

The 5th General Assembly of FASBMB was held on Wednesday 22 November 2006, at which the business of the FASBMB was discussed. Unfortunately, there were only 5 countries represented, and as a result quorum was not established. As a consequence, new office bearers of the FASBMB Council could not be elected. Consequently the Council still stands as is until further notice:

President:	Prof V Titanji (SOCAB)
Vice-President:	Prof El Ahmady (ESBMB)
Secretary General:	Prof A Mohammed (SSBMB)
Treasurer:	Prof MI Parker (SASBMB)

Complete minutes of the meeting will be made available from Prof Mohammed, the Secretary General of FASBMB. Prof Titanji presented his President's Report, and congratulated the NSBMB on the organization of the conference despite the various problems with attendance. He also congratulated the NSBMB in being re-admitted to the IUBMB in 2005. Prof Mohammed gave his Secretary General's Report, and congratulated Prof Parker on being elected to the Executive Committee of the IUBMB, a boost for African Biochemistry and Molecular Biology activities. Professor Ekeke presented the FASBMB Congress Report, indicating that there were two key addresses, eight plenary lectures, ninety oral scientific presentations and fifty four posters planned for the meeting. Regretfully, a large number of the presenters did not attend the conference due to various reasons (e.g. funding and visa issues, communication problems, negative image of Nigeria), and a total of approximately 140 people attended the congress. The next FASBMB conference was discussed and it was suggested that the Council select potential hosts for both the 2009 and 2012 meetings; countries put forward as possible hosts included Senegal, Ghana and Tunisia. Prof Parker presented his Treasurer's Report, and advertised the fact that US\$7500 was available through FASBMB for regional workshops and specialist meetings that target the development of young scientists (deadline for 2007 workshops in 28 February 2007). He also indicated that a more rigorous schedule of recovery of membership fees from the sister societies of FASBMB will be initiated in 2007. It was also suggested that the FASBMB Council should consider convening a meeting at the next SASBMB Conference planned for Grahamstown, January 2008.

*Report prepared by Prof GL Blatch
28 February 2007*