

**Minutes of the Business Meeting of the  
Human Genome Variation Society, Inc.**

**25<sup>th</sup> October 2005**

**5:40 PM – 6.45 PM**

**Ballroom C, The Hilton Hotel City Centre**

**Salt Lake City, Utah, USA**

The meeting was opened by Prof. Richard Cotton, President.

**Members Present:**

Auerbach Arleen  
Beckman Jacques  
Beroud Christophe  
Brown Alastair  
Compton John  
Cotton Richard G. H.  
Cox Diane  
Cuticchia A. Jamie  
Gottlieb Bruce  
Greenblatt Marc  
Hadjisavvas Andreas  
Horaitis Rania  
Oetting William  
Paalman Mark  
Povey Sue  
Talbot Jr. Conover  
Vihinen Mauno

**Non-Members Present:**

Brookes Anthony  
Flegg Robert  
Gregg Silk  
Khoury Muin J.  
Taylor Graham

## 1. Approval of Agenda – Presented by R. Cotton

No additions to agenda

Motion to approve agenda  
Moved by Jamie Cuticchia  
2<sup>nd</sup> by Alastair Brown

Agenda passed with no dissention

## 2. Minutes of the previous meeting for approval

No changes to minutes

Motion to accept minutes of 2004  
Moved by Arleen Auerbach  
2<sup>nd</sup> by Bruce Gottlieb

Minutes passed with no dissention

## 3. Matters arising from the previous meeting

(a) HGVS Dues to change from January 2006

Rania Horaitis explained the new dues structure which is:

<b>Regular members</b>	Dues + electronic & printed journal	US\$200 (includes postage costs)
	Dues + electronic only journal access	US\$125
<b>Student members if the Supervisor is a Regular member</b>	No journal	US\$50
<b>Communicating Editors of <i>Human Mutation</i></b>	No journal	US\$50
<b>Spouse of Regular member</b>	No journal	US\$50

(b) HGVS Letter to the Editor

Three HGVS members wrote a letter to the Editor on behalf of the Society and it has been published.

Cotton RGH, Auerbach AD and Oetting WS (2005) A Call for Mutations. *Genetics in Medicine* 7(5): 370.

#### 4. President's Report

Richard Cotton, HGVS President briefly outlined a few projects of the HGVS members' that focus on the Society's objectives such as Johan den Dunnen's open source software for curation of mutation databases (LSDB), Tony Brookes' mark up language for polymorphisms.

The announcement of a World Health Organisation – Genomic Disorders Research Centre co-sponsored meeting on mutation databases to be held in June in Melbourne 2006 was also made. This is a significant and high-profile meeting with the involvement of 50 invited speakers in key areas of mutation, SNPs, informatics and inherited disease and common disease. It is hoped this meeting will raise the profile of mutation databases and the problems of mutation collection, issues that have always been part of the main *raison d'être* of the HGVS.

#### 5. Treasurer's Report

The Society financial status is good despite what appear to be losses in the statement. This is due to the fact that money from the Salt Lake City Meeting has not yet been deposited but some expenses have been paid. We expect a small profit from the meeting to be made.

An audit will be performed at the end of the year and is to be arranged by Rania Horaitis in Melbourne.

Tax reports were sent to the US tax office by Bill Oetting.

#### 6. Office Report

Growth of the Society slowed down in the past year, in fact the Society membership decreased by 15. Many members continue to forget to renew their membership when asked despite repeated reminders. This is one proposed reason for the loss. Only eight new members were recruited to the Society in 2005.

The Society dues have been restructured and now include for regular members the options of electronic only access to *Human Mutation* or access to both the print and electronic versions as before. Details of the dues options were outlined.

A new bank and merchant account has now been established. This is an online based account so Rania is able to process credit cards online which should streamline the process.

#### 7. Publications Report

Mark Paalman the Managing Editor of *Human Mutation* presented the Publications Report. The journal has benefited from a growth in quality submissions. *Human*

*Mutation's* Impact Factor remained within the 6-7 range for the fourth year in a row and now stands at **6.845**, with a ranking of **12<sup>th</sup> out of 120 journals** in the Genetics and Heredity category (Source: ISI's SCI 2004 report). The frequency of citation by the research community has gained momentum as a result of the increased quality of accepted research articles, along with the significant number of high impact "Review," "Databases," and "Mutation Update" articles published annually (mainly solicited by the Melbourne office), and our well-received thematic special issues.

The Journal has seen an increase in author interest due to our highly competitive Impact Factor ranking and a heightened awareness of the Journal's brand as an important venue for publication. The result has been a near-doubling of annual submissions since 2002. *Human Mutation* is on track to receive well over 600 submissions in 2005. Over the past five years, the Journal has maintained stringent acceptance criteria due to the high number of submissions and the journal's need to hold articles to exacting standards. The acceptance rate in 2004 was 37.5%.

*Human Mutation's* scope has broadened to include SNP analysis and functional/structural mutation analysis, which are considered growth areas in the field. Reports on innovative mutation detection methods continue to comprise a significant proportion of our published articles. Articles describing mutation databases have also become an increased focus for the Journal.

## 8. Election of Council Members

Four Board members positions are due to expire on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2005. The individuals are:

- Johan den Dunnen
- Heikki Lehvaslaiho
- Charles Scriver
- Nobuyoshi Shimizu

All four are eligible to stand for re-election if they wish. The nomination committee is to contact them to ask if they wish to re-run for council.

The nomination committee is also to make a call to members at large at the Annual General Meeting and also by email to see if any other nominations are made. A paragraph about each individual should be submitted.

Nominations will close November 15<sup>th</sup>.

The Electronic Ballot will be sent December 1.

Closing of voting will be December 31.

A maximum of four (4) individuals may be voted for by each member. Members can choose to vote for one (1), two (2), three (3) or four (4) individuals. Any votes over four (4) will be deemed invalid.

## 9. Election of Office Bearers

A call for nominations for President-Elect will also be made at the time of Council Elections. The nomination committee will also propose and ask individuals for the election of President-Elect.

The nomination and election procedure will be the same as per the Council Elections in 8.

## 10. Other Business

### (a) Incentives to Join the Society

A few members indicated that possibly some people are not renewing their memberships because it is unclear what they will gain from the Society. They may already receive *Human Mutation*, and so other incentives to join are needed. If it was more obvious what the HGVS was doing in the community possibly more people would be attracted to the Society.

Richard Cotton stated that the Society offers this forum. The previous HUGO Mutation Database Initiative had 600 members and members of this group voted and wanted to form the HGVS.

Tony Brookes suggested that the Society abolish all fees to join, then possibly 1000s would join the Society. He suggested that if a fee was optional, 9 people out of the 22 in the room would pay.

Bill Oetting the Secretary/Treasurer of the Society indicated that if we have a "formal" Society there are some operating expenses that go with it; legal fees, accounting fees, pay for invited speakers, exhibitor's booths, domain name registration, printing etc. Thus, some membership dues are required to operate the Society. As the Society grows, so will the expenses and items needing payment grow.

Bruce Gottlieb stated that he does not believe the money to join the Society is the limiting factor. The Society needs to be made more desirable to join it. A popular topic should be chosen and the Society organize a meeting around it. For example, the Mutation Detection meeting in Santorini this year received a lot of exposure and a meeting write-up in *Nature Genetics*. This is the type of meeting the HGVS should be organising. Mutation Detection would raise the Society's profile; a Society full of database people or meetings full of database presentations is a mistake and limits the membership. Meetings should be organized with a key issue as a theme. We will then attract a certain audience. "Hot" topics should be chosen.

Richard Cotton suggested that the Mutation Detection meetings such as the one in Santorini should be co-branded as HUGO and HGVS meetings. Possibly this would help with exposure of the Society.

Mark Paalman stated that the SNP meetings are organized by top people in the field yet they are not part of the Society. Possibly these meetings are something that could be incorporated.

Bruce Gottlieb suggested a special symposium on “Pharmacogenomics” to be organised by the HGVS.

Tony Brookes suggested “Copy Number Variation” is another area where a special symposium could be organised.

It was generally agreed that a half day on “Copy Number Variation” would be organized with the HUGO Gene Nomenclature Committee in Helsinki and a symposium on pharmacogenomics will be organised at a later date.

Keynote speakers need to be selected and invited early so they may be advertised. The program for the meeting should also be sent out at least 3 months before the meeting.

Rania Horaitis stated that she would love to see the program sent three months in advance but since nobody EVER sends abstracts in until the last minute, there is no program!

Arleen Auerbach pointed out that having a large number of members in a Society who do nothing has no meaning. Those who join should make a commitment to be active and do something.

Graham Taylor stated he was surprised that the HGVS was not more successful. He also does not believe it is an issue of the fees. He suggests associate memberships of HUGO and HuGeNET should be established.

Jacques Beckmann stated that this is mixing memberships with what the Society has to offer. The HGVS should be more visible in the international arena. The Society which is comprised with more than half of its members from Europe is lacking in activities in Europe! There should be a presence at the European Society of Human Genetics. At present, the only European presence is when HUGO has a meeting in Europe and the HGVS has a satellite meeting.

Christophe Bérout noted that at least half the members are European but since they mostly can never attend the AGM at the ASHG meeting they do not renew their memberships! When you join the ASHG all you receive in return is that you believe in it and its goals and that you get your dues back if you attend a meeting.

Marc Greenblatt suggested that the speakers at HGVS meetings over the last four years who are not members should be asked why they did not join and be encouraged to join. He also gave an example of how his other Society the Collaborative Group of the Americas handled the downturn in member numbers. Since people did attend meetings, that Society decided to make anyone who attended a meeting a member. Since non-members paid a higher registration fee, that fee was their membership dues. The membership numbers increased and many people did decide to renew their memberships.

Rania Horaitis noted that with mandatory journal subscription for regular members this model does not work as the extra fee would be a minimum of US\$125. Mandatory subscription would need to be abolished for such a structure.

It was pointed out that only a few Editors of *Human Mutation* are members and come to meetings, even though they have a reduced membership fee since they do not receive the journal. Why won't they join?

In summary:

- A half day meeting devoted to the topic of "Copy Number Variation" will be organized as a satellite of HUGO's Human Genome Meeting with the HUGO Gene Nomenclature Committee in Helsinki on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2006.
- A symposium on "Pharmacogenomics" will be organised at a later date.
- The HGVS should increase its presence amongst National Societies in Europe.
- The Society should raise its profile.
- SNP meeting membership should be encouraged.

**Meeting adjourned 6:45 PM**

Signed by Richard G.H. Cotton as a correct record:

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Date \_\_\_\_\_