

Minutes of the Montana Academy of Sciences Fall 2009 Board of Directors Meeting
24 October 2009, 11 am, Pintler Room, Montana Tech, Butte

Present: Keith Parker, Tom Lewis, Jim Barron, Laurie Henneman, Phil Jensen, Carmen Hauck, Doug Coffin, and George McRae

1. Review of minutes from April 2009 meeting

There was a discussion of making officer position election more formal (as per constitution). **Doug Coffin** suggested a two-step process: 1) send an email to the general membership before the spring meeting to ask for nominees for officers, and 2) have a year-long vote in April to confirm those nominated. **Jim Barron** will send **Doug Coffin** the current list of officers and board members.

Keith Parker confirmed that he fixed the problem with the MAS corporation dissolution due to failure to pay dues to the state, by paying back dues. MAS is now reinstated as a 503(b) non-profit corporation. There is a continuing annual payment of \$35, due in January of each year. He also confirmed that he made a donation to the San Francisco Exploratorium of \$250.

2. Budget Review

a. **Keith Parker** distributed a summary report for January 1-October 23 2009. It has been a typical year, in that we are currently at -\$1130.35 for the year, and the total loss for the year is expected to be about \$3700. The current checking balance is around \$1000 with \$500 to go to our accountant, and \$2000 for Junior Academy travel to the National Academy of Sciences meeting.

The goal is to eventually break even for the annual meeting - this year, we had a loss of \$659.75. The hope is also for investment income to be fairly stable at \$5000 per year, which would cover the minigrants.

Parker suggested letting the current account expire when it runs out of money before the end of this calendar year, which he will finish out as treasurer. Then a new account can be opened by the new treasurer at his location. **Tom Lewis** of MSU-Billings agreed to be the incoming treasurer.

b. Vanguard account - **Jim Barron** explained that we left UBS because we didn't like our investment advice, and had an opportunity to close the account for free when UBS was sold. Our investment was transferred to Vanguard, and the account manager is Fred Stewart of Stewart & Associates in Missoula. Their fee is a straight 8.5% annual percentage of the value of the portfolio, so we don't have to worry about conflict of interest with the account manager, or separate fees if we want to move money around. The September 30

2009 statement showed a portfolio value of \$128, 750, which fortunately is significantly higher than what it was last spring.

Doug Coffin will set up an online account with Vanguard so that statements can be downloaded each month and emailed to board members. Hard copies of statements will continue to go into the investments binder kept by **Barron**. There are checks on the account that can be used to transfer money to the working checking account, when necessary. (**Barron** wrote a check for \$2000 to Big Sky High School for high school travel to the National Academy of Sciences meeting and gave it to **Carmen Hauck**.)

3. Board membership and officers

a. New members are **Jim Berardinelli** (MSU) and **Phil Jensen** (Rocky Mountain College). We still hope to get a board member from the University of Great Falls - Diane Lund is our contact there. **Dan Gretch** from Carroll College was a no-show but it was assumed he is still on the board.

b. Officers and terms - these will be dealt with as suggested by **Doug Coffin**, described earlier in the minutes. We will simply have officers and board members-at-large, with no section vice presidents, because we currently do not have any break-out sessions by section. We will do the formal officer election in April.

(George McRae arrived at 12:05 pm.)

4. Mini-grant program review

a. MAS funded six \$500 grants, down from original goal of ten (due to reduced finances). The money was delivered to grant accounts at the home campuses of the recipients, controlled by the faculty advisor. The money can be used any way a student wants to support his or her project. There were some bureaucratic issues setting up the account at MSU, but now that it is done, we presume there will not be problems in the future. (We need to make sure that we continue to indicate on the call-for-proposals that no indirects are supported by these grants.)

Barron will get awardee information up on the website. The hope is that the program will lead to increasing attendance at MAS meetings.

b-c. The procedure for this year will be: Call for proposals will go out in January, with an application deadline of March 1. Then we can all review the applications in time to make awardee decisions at the annual meeting, and can announce winners in the Friday evening session. We will fund a minimum of six proposals, with the option to add more, based on our financial condition and the quality of proposals received.

d. We are still looking for more personal contacts at the tribal colleges and UGF to whom to pass on the grant announcements. There was no response from these

institutions to last year's announcements, sent to department chairs.

5. Junior Academy Business - awardees were as follows: Allison Stringer, Sentinel High School, received the Alexander Award (to be used as a \$400 college scholarship for Portland State). Katherine Michaels, Big Sky High School, won the Cusker travel award, \$800 for travel to the National Academy of Sciences meeting. Third place was Derrek Parrot, Sentinel High School, and fourth place was Rose Dickson, Big Sky High School (they are alternates to attend the national meeting, if there is a cancellation). The Harkins faculty travel award of \$800 will go to Jim Harkins if he can attend, or to **Carmen Hauck** if he cannot.

It was proposed that the Junior Academy have its own web page on the MAS site, with junior academy information, and where awardees can be listed.

Five students participated in Senior Sectionals in 2009 (probably a bad year because it was Easter weekend).

Hauck is working on reaching out to more science teachers throughout the state. She needs any contacts that any other board members have. Several members agreed to email her names. Perhaps announcements regarding the junior academy can be made on the Montana Science Teachers Association site.

A high school seminar series has been initiated at UM Missoula by Rich Bridges. They are Wednesday evening seminars, with faculty presenting a paper to high school students. EPSCoR is paying for honoraria and receptions. **Hauck** would like to have the academy associated in some way. Perhaps at least MAS could be mentioned on a title slide. **George McRae** thought that could be done and it would help give some publicity to MAS.

Travel awards for the junior academy totalled \$2000 this year, and are being supplemented by high schools and parents. Currently, junior academy registration is being paid by EPSCoR - students are not paying dues. More funding seems needed to cover students outside of western Montana. It was discussed how to recruit more students, but top science students already go to a lot of science fairs to compete for scholarships, including the State Science Fair and the Intermountain Symposium at the University of Utah, which about 30 Montana students attend every year. **Jim Barron** suggested that it would be good to have a source of income from the junior academy through dues. Right now, participation is minimal by high school students because they become members just so they can come present.

--- Break for lunch, reconvened at 1:20 pm ---

6. Annual Meeting Preparation - the National Conference for Undergraduate Research is in Missoula, April 15-17 2010. There was a consensus that April 9-10 were good dates for this year's annual meeting of the MAS.

Moving the meeting to the fall was discussed in detail. There are fewer competing meetings in October than in April. If MAS moved to October, **George McRae** suggested that we should keep the April 2010 meeting in place, and then have the next meeting the following October, so as not to lose momentum. **Phil Jensen** argued that it would be an advantage for undergraduates, especially seniors, to get feedback on their projects earlier in the year so that they can use it to improve their projects. **Carmen Hauck** thought that we might lose some high school students, because they would generally have to present work from the previous year, so those completing their work senior year could not participate. However, it was brought up that we might be able to recruit high school students earlier that way, and that the high schoolers are currently overextended with all their spring science fairs, music competitions, etc. **Jim Barron** pointed out the advantage that junior award winners could attend the National Academy of Sciences meeting the same school year with an October meeting. **Hauck** will check into high school issues and get back to the board.

b. Will there be a symposium in 2010? A decision must be made by someone to organize it December 1, and it must be organized by February 1 for it to happen. **Rick Douglass** (who could not attend this meeting because of the flu, but promised to do whatever task the board assigned) will be in charge of the attempt to organize a symposium. Suggested topics are the Berkeley Pit, or wolves/large carnivores. A minimum of ten speakers are needed to give 30-minute talks for a day-long symposium.

c-d. **Barron** will email everyone in February asking for award nominations. Laurie Henneman said she would convince Rob Thomas at Montana Western to be the keynote speaker.

e. The board discussed the joint meeting arrangement with Sigma Xi and decided to continue, even though Sigma Xi does not have a large Montana presence outside of Missoula. **Jim Barron** is looking into a more formal relationship with Sigma Xi.

f. Abstracts from the 2009 meeting still need to be submitted to the Intermountain Journal of Science. **Barron** is still planning to do that.

7. Board members can fill out forms at the meeting (or after) and get reimbursement checks from Keith Parker.

8. Other business - Annual dues to National Academy need to be paid - **Barron** turned that over to **Parker**, who will send it in. **Barron** sent a blurb for the national newsletter, and told them about our new mini grant program. Apparently they do not publish such blurbs without a head shot of the president (**Barron**).

The board discussed establishing a permanent address for MAS. For now it was decided to make the permanent physical address the department of biological and physical sciences at MSU Billings, because the president and treasurer are now there. Then perhaps when those offices change, documents can be forwarded from MSU Billings to the current address.

Laurie Henneman suggested setting up a listserv to provide easier communications among board members. **Doug Coffin** will try to set one up using the same hosting service that we have for the MAS website.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm.