

ACA Members' Business Meeting
27 May 2014
Hyatt Regency, Albuquerque, NM

Call to order

Meeting was called to order by President Martha Teeter at 5:10 PM, with approximately 57 members in attendance. Attendees also brought 47 proxies that were obtained in advance of the meeting, so the requirement was met that at least 100 members or their proxies be present.

Agenda Item 1. Review of the current agenda

There were no additions to the agenda.

Agenda Item 2. Review of minutes from last years' meeting

No changes or corrections were offered.

MOTION	Move to accept the minutes of last year's meeting; Toby/Stevens, unanimous.
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Agenda Item 3. President's report

A full copy of the text of the President's report can be found in the current edition of Reflexions. Teeter mentions some highlights:

- Candidates for next year's Association officers have been identified
- The 2015 meeting will be held in Philadelphia.

Agenda Item 4. Vice-President's report

Vice President Chris Cahill notes the importance of the ongoing strategic planning initiative, but states that discussion of this topic will be deferred until later in the meeting.

He calls the members' attention to opportunities relating to the ACA's relationship with the AIP. Cahill encourages everyone to examine what AIP has to offer, with an eye toward how it can enhance the ACA. For example, the ACA can influence the contents of *Physics Today*, which means that we could suggest ACA members as potential authors of articles in this journal, or topics that the *Physics Today* editorial staff might wish to take on. A special issue on crystallography is one possibility.

Agenda Item 5. Treasurer's report

Treasurer James Kaduk reports that the ACA has two principle cost centers, operations and the annual meeting. Last year, the ACA lost money on operations but made money on the meeting. All told, the ACA lost a small net amount (~\$43K) last year. The organization's goal should be to make each item positive, every year. He notes, however, that small deficits, while deserving of attention, are not critical. A more important long term problem is the decline in the ACA's membership; he is assembling a committee to consider this issue. He stresses that we as an organization need to create a coherent statement of the value of membership—he asks for help from current members in this task.

He recognizes Jessica Addiss, the new ACA bookkeeper, as a great new addition to the business office.

Kaduk reports that he has done an analysis of how this year's income and expenditures varies from normal. Things, overall, look good, which reflects in part concerted efforts on the part of the business office to cut costs associated with the annual meeting. These efforts provide an explanation for certain aspects of the meeting that have been criticized (e.g., coffee running out quickly at breaks). He projects a small loss on this year's meeting, but not a catastrophic one. He notes the organization's total assets are \$1.16 million; he further points out that this sounds like a lot, but the

organization could use more. Hence, while the ACA is not in desperate straits, it is also not yet comfortable. There is a need to increase the meeting reserve in particular. He urges devoting attention to increasing reserves over next few years.

H. Bernstein comments from the floor: Is it feasible to go to less expensive meeting venues? This might increase membership. He also suggests electronic participation in meetings (i.e., allowing people to attend the meeting “virtually,” without traveling). Teeter responds that exhibitors provide income; exhibitors might not be able to participate in meetings in less expensive (e.g. university) venues. Ferrara notes that vendors need space and access to attendees, but they don’t need fancy setups.

F. Bernstein observes that the European Crystallography Association does not meet during IUCr years; a similar approach might spare the ACA poorly attended meetings in such years. Kaduk notes that the ACA was not allowed to participate in the organization of this year’s IUCr Congress, so without our own meeting our interests could not be represented.

Joe Ferrara states that this year’s meeting has been bad for the vendors—no traffic. Other vendors, however, had a better experience.

Frederick Hollander makes a comment about membership: He sees from the data that 3 classes of members are not decreasing in numbers—the three least expensive. This implies that regular members are not seeing financial value of membership. Would reducing the cost of membership increase the number of members? Also, he notes that the majority of attendees tend to think of themselves as crystallographers; however, in the past, non-crystallographers would sometimes also buy memberships to attend meetings. Thus, he suggests we are seeing a fall-back to the core constituency of the organization. To increase membership, it is necessary to reach out beyond the core membership.

John Helliwell notes that the attendance at the BCA spring meeting was also lower than previous years; this prompted an analysis of the previous twelve years’ attendance data, which revealed that in the past the BCA did not see an “IUCr effect,” wherein meeting attendance dipped during years when the IUCr Congress was held. Rather, the BCA has seen a gradual decline in attendance, essentially paralleling what the ACA is seeing. One response that the BCA is trying is to have more parallel sessions, to expand the catchment of attendees. Also, they trying an “invite a friend” campaign.

Kaduk concludes by stating that continuing as we have in the past is not a viable choice; the ACA needs some creative new approaches.

Agenda Item 6. International Year of Crystallography.

President Teeter reports that she and four young crystallographers attended the IYCr14 opening ceremonies, thanks to donations from the USNCC and various individuals—an excellent networking opportunity for the young members. The ad hoc IYCr14 Task Force has been busy. A website related to these efforts is about to be unveiled at the following URL: iycr2014/aca/home.

The website lists many events, and members can add new events. Crystal-growing and video contests are underway. She urges members to talk this up.

George Phillips points out that there is a “Donate Now” button on the ACA home page, which can help support such outreach efforts.

Agenda Item 7. Old business

Journal update. George Phillips presented an update on the ACA Journal, *Structural Dynamics*. He notes the journal has a booth at the meeting. The AIP has been very helpful in setting up the journal. He points out that the topics covered span many interest areas, from materials to chemical crystallography to biomolecules. The first 50 papers are free; after this threshold is reached, ACA members will receive a discount on page charges. About 15 papers have been published, and more are in the pipeline. He challenges the membership to contribute topics for thematic issues. As an example, he notes that an XFEL meeting scheduled for January will likely provide ~20 excellent papers.

Strategic planning update. Past President Cheryl Stevens reports that the members of the strategic planning committee are Stevens, Phillips, Teeter, CEO Bill Duax, CFO SN Rao, Judy Flippen-Anderson, and Director of Administrative Services Marcia Colquhoun. The committee has had many conversations, including some with Fred Dylla from AIP, who acted as a facilitator and shared his experience with the AIP’s own strategic planning process. The mission statement has been re-visited and re-affirmed. A vision statement has been drafted; a copy was provided to attendees of the business meeting. Stevens stresses that the committee needs input from members—every SIG, every committee, and other stakeholders such as exhibitors and ACA Fellows. The committee would like to know: Where do members think the ACA should go, and how should it get there?

Ferrara asks if it would be worthwhile to send a general survey to the membership. Phillips notes that surveys are hard to construct around open questions; Allen Oliver responds that surveys can be very successful if people are interested, and cites some examples from his own experience. Stevens states that a survey is certainly of interest, and also notes that there are many other mechanisms to solicit feedback, in addition to surveys. Andy Howard offers the information that his university has a group specializing in constructing surveys; he suggests that he can obtain a discount for their services for the ACA, if there is interest.

John Rose asks how much money is actually saved by not providing coffee in the afternoon “coffee breaks”—a quick survey of the room shows strong support for having coffee in the afternoon as well.

Agenda Item 9. New business

George Phillips notes that the ACA rules currently state that we need a quorum of 100 members at business meetings—this is hard to achieve. Therefore he offers the following motion:

MOTION	The ACA should modify rule 2, section 3 to read: “At all meetings of members for the transaction of business, a quorum shall consist of one-third of the members or fifty members, whichever shall be less, present in person or represented by proxy, except as otherwise provided by law.”
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The motion is seconded by A. Howard.

Discussion:

Ferrara—We should seek to increase attendance, rather than lower the bar.

Deschamps—We shouldn’t change the rules in this way, since most members of the ACA are not present at this business meeting. Phillips reads the relevant portion of the ACA rules, which states

that amendments to the rules can be proposed at business meetings by any member, and approved by a 2/3 majority of those present. Therefore, his motion is perfectly consistent with the rules of the organization.

Marilyn Olmstead raises that key point that in order for the ACA to retain its nonprofit (501-C3) status, it must conduct a valid business meeting every year. Thus, in order to meet the requirements of our charter, it is important to have workable rules regarding quora.

Amy Serjeant asks if it would be possible have a virtual quorum, wherein members participate via some kind of internet mechanism (either live or delayed). She also asks what specific actions require a quorum, to which Phillips responds that approval of minutes, rule changes, and by-law changes all require a quorum.

Hollander states that the rules for the business meeting are defined in the By-laws for 501-c3s, so the ACA could have virtual business meetings if the organization so chose.

Peter Mueller asserts that members should take responsibility for their ACA, so if members don't show up for the business meeting, they don't deserve a vote. He also wonders if the number required for the quorum could be pegged to the number of registrants, perhaps as a flat percentage of all members registered for the annual meeting.

Eric Montemayor asks if this topic could be included on the ballot along with the Fall elections, to give people time to discuss it. Phillips responds that the rules stipulate this such changes need to be considered at a duly-called meeting, and historically the business meeting is the one meeting duly called by the organization during the year.

Judy Flippen-Anderson notes that changes have been made in the NY state laws governing 501-C3s, which means that ALL of the ACA's rules should be reviewed to ensure compliance. Therefore, she suggests, this particular rule change may be premature.

SN Rao adds as an aside the he doesn't think the ACA has filed our current (revised) by-laws with NY state; this should be done.

Action Item	Colquhoun and Duax should ensure that a current version of the ACA by-laws is filed with NY State.
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Phillips agrees that the rules and by-laws need to be reviewed and revised if necessary to be consistent with the strategic plan *and* be compatible with the law. However, this will be a long-term process; the proposed motion represents a short-term fix for an immediate problem. Furthermore, the proposed rule change is by no means irreversible.

The vote is then called. There are 40 aye votes from members present in the room; an additional 45 proxies are voted aye. There are 19 nay votes (including one proxy). Thus, the motion carries, with the support of 85 of the 104 members present or providing proxies (81.7%).

In other new business, Krystal McLaughlin asks if the ACA can obtain data about demographics. She serves on diversity board with AIP, and notes that such information would be valuable. Specifically, she asks if the meeting registration form can be modified to allow registrants to voluntarily and optionally provide demographic information. Teeter notes that this is in line with some other

suggested changes that would gather demographic information on the registration, and states that Council will take up this question.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 PM.