

ACB Council November 2006

Professor Gemmel Morgan

It was a sad start to November's Council meeting. Dr Graham Beastall, ACB President, delivered a brief eulogy on the life and work of Professor Morgan who died on 31st October 2006. The late Professor left a huge legacy at Glasgow where he worked. He was a proud Member of the ACB, holding the offices of Chair (1982 – 1985) and President (1985 – 1987). Council stood in silence for a few moments in remembrance.

Council Agenda Items

Both Council and Executive have, as part of their agenda items, "Topics of the Day". These are topics that are currently relevant to the ACB and require in-depth discussion at one, or both, Committee meetings. Council Members, especially Regional Representatives, are encouraged to enter open discussion on the topics. Each topic is discussed for between 30 and 60 minutes. The Topics of the Day for the November Council meeting were:

- Association Structure
- Immunologists
- Foster and Donaldson Reports

all of which are reported on below.

Immunology

Following discussions between ACB Executive and senior Members of the Association of Clinical Scientists in Immunology (ACSI), the latter have decided to dissolve the ACSI and become Members of the ACB. It should be noted that many of our colleagues in Immunology were already ACB Members.

Professor Michael Kerr, Chair of ACSI, had been invited to attend this Council meeting. Dr Ian Watson, ACB Chair, welcomed Professor Kerr to Council, and welcomed the ACSI Members to the ACB. It was proposed that an Immunology Professional Committee would be created within the ACB. The lines of responsibility and accountability of this Committee would be decided later. Dr Watson and Professor Kerr are to write an article for ACB News.

Association Structure

The proposed re-structuring of the ACB had previously been sent to the membership for comment. Approximately 20 Members responded, most of them positively. At Council a previously circulated, and brightly-coloured, organogram (*noun – a chart showing graded arrangement of personnel in an organisation. Chambers Dictionary*) was discussed. The main thrust of the re-structuring would be to create a Council and Executive that are appropriate bodies for the ACB in the 21st Century. Council approved the proposed new structure which can be seen via the ACB website. Members' views are encouraged, to Council (via your Regional Representative), to Executive (via Dr McCreanor secretary@ACB.org.uk) or to ACB News.

There is much work yet to do in finalising details and deciding rule changes to the Constitution that must be scrutinised by the ACB's solicitors. Dr Gwyn McCreanor (ACB Secretary), Dr Steve Smith (ACB Treasurer) Dr Ian Watson

and Dr Graham Groom (Senior ACB Administrative Officer) will be very busy on this over the next few months.

Foster & Donaldson Reports

The Department of Health (DH) has issued two reports for consultation, the Foster Report and the Donaldson Report. These reports address the regulation of Healthcare Scientists and Medical staff, respectively. Dr Beastall and Mr Geoff Lester, Chair of the FCS, have co-ordinated responses by the ACB and FCS. There are far-reaching implications for the profession in the reports which can be viewed via:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Closedconsultations/DH_062974

- Download Healthcare professional regulation: public consultation on proposals for change (PDF, 807K)
- See Good doctors, safer patients report; Regulatory Impact Assessment; and Costings
- See the regulation of the non-medical healthcare professions

The ACB and FCS responses can be viewed via the ACB website.

Reference Ranges

This item comes under the categories of “old chestnut” and “guaranteed to elicit a lot of discussion on the ACB mailbase”.

At Council it was an issue that cropped up with regularity in several agenda items and covered “equivalence” of test results, commonality of reference ranges and commonality of reporting units. The ACB Scientific Committee, under the Chairmanship of Dr Denis O’Reilly, will be taking this forward, but Dr O’Reilly conceded it is a huge task. Dr Julian Barth, Consultant Chemical Pathologist at Leeds, has been asked by ACB Executive to address some of the issues in liaison with the Scientific Committee. Dr Barth and Dr Ian Watson have reported in ACB News on a Consensus Meeting on Units for Reporting Drug Concentrations. Mr Andy Bufton, Corporate Members’ Representative, said that, for many commercial companies there are global issues that can limit what companies can achieve in terms of e.g. “equivalence” of test results. The impending Wales electronic handbook, reported by Dr Gethin Roberts, Wales Region Representative, will make commonality a very pressing matter.

Trainees

The Trainees may be enjoying a practical-based session at a future ACB training Course. Keep an eye on ACB News for further information. Dr Stephanie Barber is demitting office as Chair of the Trainees Committee which, Council agreed will henceforth be known as the Junior Members’ Committee. Dr Watson thanked Dr Barber for her work. Council look forward to Miss Katy Cooper joining future meetings as Dr Barber’s replacement.

Steve Goodall, Assistant Secretary