

34th Annual Gibbs Conference on Biothermodynamics

Minutes: Business Meeting, October 9, 2020

Virtual Zoom Meeting

Officers: Kathleen Hall, President; Brian Baker, Past-President; Aron Fenton, Treasurer; Liskin Swint-Kruse, President-Elect; Andrew Herr, Secretary

Long-Term Board Members: Vince LiCata, Madeline Shea

Current Organizers: Roberto Galletto & Karen Lewis

Poster Organizers: Jim Horn (& Lydia Kisley, not present)

Saturday Night Thermo Organizers: Vince LiCata (& Susie Pedigo, not present)

Other Past Organizers in Attendance: David Bain, Elisar Barbar, Dorothy Beckett, Sarah Bondos, Jannette Carey, Clay Clark, Patricia Clark, Jim Cole, Trevor Creamer, Nick Fitzkee, Karen Fleming, Ernie Fuentes, Jim Horn, Tim Lohman, Aaron Lucius, George Makhataдзе, Chiwook Park, Ana-Maria Soto, Steve Whitten

1. Call to Order: Kathleen Hall, President

2. Report from the Gibbs34 Organizers: Karen Lewis and Roberto Galletto

Karen and Roberto reported on the planning that went into Gibbs34, which was decidedly unusual due to COVID-19 concerns. After picking the speakers and meeting with the Board at the Biophysical Society Meeting, everything was up in the air due to the pandemic. With the support of the Board, they set up a poll in April-May to assess interest in holding a virtual Gibbs meeting. Based on the overwhelming poll responses, it was decided that we would hold a 2-day virtual meeting. A virtual poster session committee was assembled, led by Jim Horn and Lydia Kisley along with trainees to help organize. The feedback on the poster sessions was overwhelmingly positive.

There was a total of 352 applications and 325 unique attendees during the main platform sessions. On Sunday, there were 268 total attendees, with approximately 215 ± 10 at steady state. On Monday, there were 260 total attendees, $\sim 193 \pm 5$ at steady state. The posters were split into two sessions per day, with 119 and 120 people respectively attending the two sessions on Sunday and 166 and 103 people attending on Monday. At the virtual social hours, there were approximately 40-50 people participating, but they didn't get an accurate count. Reports from trainees indicated that they enjoyed interacting with the speakers in these sessions. Overall, there were 96 labs that registered, including 115 PIs, 55 postdocs, 7 staff scientists, 146 graduate students, and 24 undergrads. The balance of male to female was not captured this year on the application since housing was not an issue; in the future we will want to be sure this is included in the registration form to capture information about representation. Five vendors registered, and it seems that all of them attended at least part of the virtual meeting. For virtual Saturday Night Thermo, 61 trainees registered after approximately 232 were invited (there is some uncertainty as to how many got invites). Between 66-77 trainees participated.

This year, there were 6 talks by PIs, with 2 male and 5 female speakers (Wendy Shaw and Nathan Baker split time in one presentation). Eight talks were given by trainees, with 6 male and 2 female speakers. There were 84 posters presented virtually, along with 6 SNT flash talks. Sixteen different institutions were represented in the talks, and approximately 60-70 institutions in the poster sessions.

In terms of finances, there were 2 contributors from companies in addition to Jack Correia and the Timasheff Memorial Fund started by Jim Lee. We spent very little this year since the meeting was virtual; sending out the survey cost \$13. Aron confirmed that we were not required to pay any penalty to Touch of Nature for canceling the meeting, since ToN was closed down as well.

Karen and Roberto sent out a survey after the meeting. At the time of the business meeting, there was a ~40% response rate (133 responses). This year they switched the scoring system to make it similar to an NIH study section scale (e.g., 1 is best). Some of the early conclusions from the survey include:

- There were some concerns expressed about the timing of the virtual meeting—some wanted all events to take place over the weekend, others preferred everything during the week. But the way we did it was probably the best overall—it worked for both extremes, at least in part.
- The visual abstract for posters was a huge hit; people liked seeing what the presenter would talk about, what type of techniques were used, etc.
- The breakout rooms for posters were a big hit; it really helped people to hear clearly.
- Accessibility was very well received, people who haven't been able to attend recently due to distance or other commitments were very grateful to get to attend. We even had some international participants from Argentina, Singapore, Vietnam, etc.
- Both long-time Gibbsians and newcomers said it felt like Gibbs, had a great feel.
- One thing that people missed this year is the 10-15 min breaks between sessions. The organizers tried to avoid scheduling an 8-hour block of time overall. Karen Lewis felt that maintaining the 10-15 min breaks will be important in future meetings. For virtual meetings, perhaps we could provide 20-30 min breakout room where people can talk with speaker between sessions.

Related discussion among everyone:

- The Gibbs talk lengths were perfect; other recent online meetings featured 40-min talks, which were too long.
- Something to consider going forward: are there elements that we recommend to maintain even when we're in person at ToN, such as online aspects to the meeting? There were many comments made about how much people enjoyed being able to actually hear the poster presenter online, with much less background noise compared to the typical in-person Gibbs poster session. Furthermore, streaming some talks online was suggested so that people could watch off-site.
- There were Gibbs attendees this year from overseas who specifically asked if we could have something online, either concurrent or before/after main mtg.
- The virtual poster abstracts were very popular this year. In the future, we could reduce the number of words allowed for abstract. Could put the visual abstracts in the program book, with same number of pages. These also could be made available online via a password-protected website.
- Online confidentiality is an issue that has to be considered. This year, the organizers decided to email links and use a Google drive since the university website used to host the meeting website didn't have the option for password protection. However, the new Gibbs website will allow us to set up password-protected pages.
- At ToN, we always have a limitation on space, and have to make decisions on how many can go. If there were an online option, it would be nice for others who don't get to attend in-person and also for undergrads who can't go due to courses.
- The downside is that putting presentations online will crush the idea of people presenting unpublished data. One idea was to ask people to volunteer for their talks to be broadcast and put all of those in same session. Another suggestion was to only livestream the Keynote and Ackers lectures.

- The issue of bandwidth at ToN was raised. There was back and forth about whether we can tie into the ethernet and not use wifi, or whether there would still be a bandwidth issue. Someone involved with live streaming a video feed on a weekly basis pointed out that not that much bandwidth is actually needed, as it can be done using a phone wifi connection.

3. **Report from the Organizers of Saturday Night Thermo: Vince LiCata**

Vince reported on virtual SNT; he said the biggest change this year was the involvement of trainee organizers, Ari Paiz and Kacey Mersch. They were great: gung-ho, hard workers. They chose 2 of 3 of the career panelists and one additional panelist volunteered. The SNT team ended up emailing all trainee registrants ahead of time, and they had a maximum of ~70 who attended, with a somewhat smaller number attending the career panels. The flash talks went well, with high quality presentations and good questions. For the career panel, Vince was surprised that there was only a single question from the audience. Kacey and Ari kept things going for about 30 minutes by asking questions and getting panelists to talk among one another. They would wait to allow time for questions, but there was still silence from 65 people. The panelists seemed to enjoy themselves overall. Maybe in the future we should plant some questions ahead of time. Perhaps it's just too long to have the entire panel and then have a question session on Zoom? Maybe in the future do talk, Q&A, talk, Q&A, etc.

Related discussion:

- Maybe in the future we could have a few more trainees involved and assign them to look up info on the speakers.
- The survey results will have feedback from those who attended SNT that could help us to understand why there were so few questions from the audience. The Zoom format is difficult and awkward. We can also talk to our own trainees, informally survey them and try to find out more.
- Since setting up one breakout room per poster worked well, maybe we could apply this idea to SNT as well?
- The polling function in Zoom can really help with participation as well; we could implement this for the next SNT. For example: (to trainees) do you know what you want to do eventually for your career? Can someone who said industry say why they want to do that? What are your preconceived notions? Then the speakers could come back and say No, industry's not like that at all...
- It was also noted that there were very few questions in the main sessions. Doing it online is sort of a passive experience.

4. **Report from the Organizers of the Virtual Poster Session: Jim Horn**

Jim reported that it was a pleasure working with Lydia Kisley and the trainee organizers, Suman Shrestha and Ashley De Lio. They all felt that an ideal virtual poster session would mimic a regular Gibbs meeting. Free movement between breakout rooms was a new feature only added in the very recent Zoom software update. That really helped make it work well. They had some extra breakout rooms inserted afterward that were not assigned to a specific poster. One group of students met in a room and were able to simply talk together. In the future this would be a good idea to do again, but perhaps it would be best to name these extra rooms ahead of time (the rooms can't be named once the event starts). They really stressed to all presenters to be sure to only include data that they're happy to make public. This year the visual abstract had asterisks to highlight poster presenters that were looking for a postdoctoral position or

for advice/collaboration on a technique; this worked very well. The presenters had the opportunity to post a web link to the poster. There was some confusion as to how this worked, but about 10 people added a link so people could download their poster. This was supposed to be finished by the 1st day of Gibbs. Jim and the poster organizing team checked to make sure all the links worked. For the poster presentations, there were different ways people approached it. The organizers stressed that presenters should show a single slide, so that people who entered the room halfway through the presentation could still understand the whole picture (like an in-person poster session). Jim thought it would have been neat to have video on a virtual poster, but didn't see anyone do it. There were very few times that a person was alone in a poster room. Often there were between 2-10 people per room. They heard feedback from a trainee who was really happy to present the poster this way and felt that there was less of a barrier compared to a typical poster session at Gibbs. The consensus is that this is a good thing to continue in the future.

5. Financial Report: Aron Fenton, Treasurer

Aron reported that most of the work this year was canceling plans that had been set up earlier in the year. As for sponsors, New England BioLabs and Bruker still contributed, as did James Lee (with the Timasheff fund) and Jack Correia. Most of the costs incurred were due to switching to the new website design. We have a current balance of approximately \$61,000, which is in line with what was intended. Nick Fitzkee has done a great job of keeping our Paypal account going; there is a modest fee for that each year. The soundproofing at Touch of Nature was supposed to be spread over 3 years, but we did not contribute this year. Due to tax rules, that payment must be incorporated into facility usage, so it makes difficult to do this year since there was no on-site meeting. Everyone Aron has spoken to among the vendors was very understanding about the situation this year and they were willing to start working with us again in the future. Our reserves are still sufficient to pay for one year's meeting. We can't bring in too much revenue in a given year due to our tax-exempt status. Aron's not worried about having too much or too little in the bank at this point.

Touch of Nature wants to do all catering through ToN services rather than outside vendors from this point on. Back when Aron was an organizer, ToN had stopped doing any catering on their own, so the organizers found outside vendors. Now ToN is working things out to be able to do more on their own. Last year ToN did the coffee and snacks but other food was from outside. Then ToN said that the new policy is that they would charge the caterer to use the ToN kitchen and charge an extra \$3,000–5,000 for that. So this really means that we have to go through ToN now. ToN has catered for even larger groups than our meeting. They have upgraded their kitchen a lot, and Tom gave Aron a personal tour. Aron expects that all vending services will go through ToN in the future. They can also do a buffalo tro and may even put extra salad dressing on salads, etc.

6. Announcement of Gibbs35 Organizers: Kathleen Hall, President

Kathleen announced that the Gibbs Board of Directors will organize the Gibbs35 Meeting.

7. Election of 2021 President-Elect: led by Liskin Swint-Kruse, President-Elect

Aaron Lucius was elected as President-Elect of the Gibbs Society.
Congratulations!

8. Migration of Gibbs Society website: Andrew Herr, Secretary

Andy thanked Karen Fleming for her many years of faithfully maintaining the Gibbs website and associated information. Our new website can be found at <https://www.gibbssociety.org>. Thanks to Chiwook Park and Sarah Bondos for designing and implementing new site.

9. Items from the floor – Liskin Swint-Kruse, President-Elect

- Kudos to the organizers, Karen L and Roberto; they did a really excellent job with virtual Gibbs34!
- The Biophysical Society meeting will also be virtual this year.
- We need think about whether Gibbs needs to have a real Zoom account. Roberto and Karen found that Zoom's corporate people were not very responsive; they went weeks with no response. Be aware of limitations with numbers of attendees, bandwidth, etc, as we go forward.
- We need to have shared drive space to work consistently on documents together.
- The Gibbs Society was targeted by a phishing scam before the meeting. They went through the Gibbs websites and had a lot of details. This is an issue since we make our documents publicly available. We don't actually have to make them available all the time; instead, we can make it so that people must request information. Everyone should be aware in case people receive weird emails.

10. Addendum

The agenda for the 2020 Gibbs Business Meeting is attached.