

2008 FIBER DIFFRACTION REPORT

The Fiber diffraction SIG sponsored one half day session this year at Knoxville:

“Fiber Diffraction and Friends”. The ‘friends’ being techniques complementary to Fiber diffraction experiments, such as: macromolecular single-crystal crystallography, Neutron diffraction / scattering, electron microscopy, SAS and so forth.

The single half-day session was modestly attended with around twenty attendees for some talks. However, the session as a whole was high-quality and the talks gave an excellent account of how far the discipline has come and ways in which it may be advanced further.

The Business Meeting

The SIG meeting followed directly after the SIG session with one single agenda item, the possible dissolution of the SIG. This was a melancholy discussion having followed such an excellent session, however, for many years the fiber SIG has limped along and has had difficulty recruiting SIG officers and speakers for sessions. This is a direct reflection of the fact that the Fiber diffraction national community is very small. After some discussion, it was determined that should it be possible to recruit a chair-elect, the SIG would continue for at least one more cycle. This was inspired in part by the fact that there is a forming cadre of young scientists within the field and on the strength and quality of the afternoon’s session.

Minutes from the June 3, 2008 meeting of the American

Crystallographic Association Fiber Diffraction Special Interest Group

Attending: Joseph Orgel (chair), Gerald Stubbs (past chair), Amy Kendall (secretary), R. Chandrasekaran, Srinivas Janaswamy, Wen Bian, Olga Antipova, Trevor Forsyth, Kenn Gardner, Greg Darnell, James Britten (ACA council), + various and other sundry people

The meeting was called to order at 4:55 p.m. by chair Joseph Orgel.

Dr. Stubbs opened the meeting with a concern about the viability of the Fiber Diffraction SIG; his main issue was the difficulty of finding officers. He also noted that finding speakers for the meeting can be difficult. Dr. Stubbs commented that there are other arenas where this group could convene, including the FiberNet meetings and the Denver x-ray conferences, and that if the decision is made to dissolve the SIG, another SIG (possibly the Small Angle Scattering SIG) might be willing to take over some of our interests.

There was general discussion about the lack of appropriate programming for fiber diffractionists at the ACA and the poor turnout at the meeting (though Dr. Orgel noted that there had been better attendance at the FD sessions than at several others he had attended). There was also discussion about the expense of the ACA meetings.

Dr. Orgel asked whether there was a chair elect, and noted that the 2010 meeting of the ACA would be held in Chicago.

Dr. Gardner suggested nominating Dr. Tom Irving as chair elect.

Dr. Orgel replied that he thought Dr. Irving would prefer someone else be found. He suggested either Dr. Paul Langan or Dr. Kenn Gardner. He also suggested that a younger fiber diffractionist could serve as chair elect, though the meeting might be more difficult to organize for a non-tenured faculty member.

Dr. Stubbs reminded the group of the desire to involve more non-biological fiber diffractionists, and Dr. Gardner commented that the Denver x-ray conferences attract these types of scientists. Dr. Forsyth commented that the Denver meetings are better attended.

Dr. Britten, who will serve on the ACA program council next year, commented that he did not see a problem with a younger person serving as chair elect, though members of the nominating committee as well as those who are up for election must be members of the ACA.

A nominating committee consisting of Dr. Chandrasekaran, Dr. Bian, and Ms. Kendall was proposed. The committee was given the task of nominating a chair elect within two months. The chair elect would be responsible for choosing a secretary.

There was general discussion about how to attract more people to the fiber diffraction sessions. Dr. Orgel felt that the low audience might be in part due to the timing of the session in the afternoon, though he also felt that we needed to be more vocal about what fiber diffraction has to offer. Several people commented that many people are becoming more interested in disorder and that fiber diffractionists have a lot to say on the subject. Dr. Orgel commented that there is a big growth area for collaboration in "spectroscopy-type analysis" using fiber diffraction. The group agreed that these ideas should be pursued.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:30 p.m.