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Dear Colleagues:

I am pleased to provide you with an update on the Society's recent activities as President.

We have just completed a very successful Scientific Conference, conducted this year in Whistler, British Columbia. Attendance was very good with many national and international speakers devoted to the theme of epigenetics and genomic stability. Also presenting at the conference was Dr. Jane Aubin, Chief Scientific Officer/Vice-President of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, to update us on the status of the CIHR proposed reforms on open programs and peer review. There will be more about that later but just to say now there was lively debate about the proposed reforms for peer review.

At the Whistler meeting, we awarded Dr. Henry Friesen the Society's Arthur Wynne Gold Medal. Dr. Friesen told us about his experiences in transforming the Medical Research Council to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the genesis of Genome Canada. An important take home message from his presentation was a reminder that each of us should thank the Minister of Health for funding we do receive for health research. When was the last time that you wrote a letter thanking your MP or the Minister (provincial or federal) for receiving an operating grant, postdoctoral fellowship, or graduate studentship? Believe me these letters will be read and will have a positive impact.

Our Annual General Meeting was held in conjunction with the Scientific Conference. In the coming month, Jean-Pierre Perreault will have completed his term as Past-President of the Society, I will move from President to Past-President, and Arthur Hilliker will move from Vice-President to President. Andrew Simmonds will be the incoming Vice-President. Thanks to all the Society Board members for your dedication and service.

During my tenure as President, it has been exciting to be part of the transition to change our Society name to the Canadian Society for Molecular Biosciences. We are one of the largest scientific societies in Canada, with over 1000 members, and our new name better reflects our inclusive nature and the recent amalgamation with the Canadian Society for Genetics.

Our Society continues to provide a forum to voice your collective opinions on important issues such as the proposed CIHR reforms, and supporting outstanding scientific conferences and graduate student activities. I urge you to visit our Web site to review our wide range of activities, many of which will be of interest to you. I also seek your aid in our membership recruitment drive. There are many benefits to being a member, but importantly there is strength in numbers. This is so important in a time when we are in a period of unprecedented restructuring of national and regional life science research funding agencies.

Many of our members are concerned with the CIHR proposed reforms on open programs and peer review. But at the same time, our members supported by NSERC grants have also experienced the consequences of program revisions. These changes in strategic planning, in programming and in peer review should never be viewed as standalone as funding for the life sciences is interdependent. Provincial Health Research funding organizations, for example, will to a certain extent craft their suite of programs to improve the competitiveness of their provincial researchers to secure CIHR operating grants. As with biological systems, which we are all familiar with, radical changes in one component of the food chain have consequences throughout the system.

On our Society Web site, we posted letters responding to the CIHR reforms. Without doubt, there is major concern with the proposed reforms, particularly around the changes to peer review. We strongly request that the membership sends us the comments and letters you sent into CIHR as we would be pleased to include this correspondence on our Web site.

In moving forward, it is our understanding that the University Delegates will continue to be involved in discussions on the CIHR proposed peer review changes with a Face-to-Face meeting in Ottawa in June. I will continue to participate in the discussions with CIHR, providing input towards the adoption of a peer review process that we can all be proud of. The current CIHR peer review system will clearly be revamped so the status quo is not an option. We are putting a call out to our membership to challenge your creativity in proposing a plan for restructuring the CIHR peer review. We will post these plans on our Web site.

As an update, we have formalized an agreement with the Canadian Science Publishing (formerly NRC Research Press). Two of their journals, *Biochemistry and Cell Biology* and *Genome*, publish original manuscripts and reviews. These journals have special issues, which have a collection of reviews from speakers at our Society's sponsored scientific meetings. These journals welcome your original manuscripts and reviews. Canadian Science Publishing has been a strong advocate of Canadian publishing in the life sciences and has contributed financially to our scientific conferences.

With your participation, we have several important goals over the coming year. First, we will continue to support excellent science through our annual Scientific Conference and through other national and international meetings that we co-sponsor (see our website for details). A reminder that our 56th Annual Meeting on Cellular dynamics during development, regeneration and cancer will be held at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario from June 4 to 7, 2013. Second, we will maintain our efforts to grow our membership among researchers and trainees, who are eligible for a variety of awards that are described in the website. Third, we will keep the membership informed

as we learn more about the changes being planned by CIHR and NSERC. Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, we will advocate vigorously in the areas of science policy, public awareness and research funding to help maintain a favorable environment for the research community. Our membership in Research Canada will help to get the message that research matters heard in Ottawa and across the country.

Thank you for your ongoing support for our Society. We look forward to your continuing engagement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Davie".

Dr. Jim Davie
President, CSMB