



Canadian Society for Molecular Biosciences Société Canadienne pour les Biosciences Moléculaires

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As president of the society I would like to thank you for your continued or new support. The CSMB serves a large constituency of scientists at the graduate student, postdoc and faculty level and we continue to work hard to offer you value for your loyalty. The most pressing issue on the mind of scientists right now probably is operating grant funding bringing me to the number one priority of my mandate as president, followed by other developments outlined below.

1. Advocacy for increased funding for research. Over the last two years the CSMB has organized letter writing campaigns suggesting that recently funded scientists thank the government, thereby underlining the importance of funding for research. The board has also submitted responses to the Minister of Industry consultation on Canadian Science, Technology and Innovation policy and to the pre-budget consultation of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance. These letters have attracted attention, but the board of the society will do more and so should you! The next federal election will happen in less than one year from now and the government will set the tone for the election campaign with the next budget in spring 2015. The Canadian government projects an important surplus, but many will ask for a piece of the pie and so should we as scientists. In its submission to the pre-budget consultation, the CSMB proposed 3% annual increases of the CIHR and NSERC budgets, the continuation of support for the CFI, the reinstatement of the NSERC RTI grant program and a marked increase of the indirect cost program supporting research at institutions. The president and the board will continue communicating these requests to decision makers, but we have just a few voices. In the pre-election period it is you as citizens who can make a difference if you speak up to decision makers, to those who are in government now and to those who want to be after the next election. The board will soon make suggestions that may inspire your communications, but we can not replace your involvement since it is the number of letters, emails and other communications received that count for politicians.

2. National and international conferences. The CSMB will organize a very interesting series of conferences, beginning with the “Lipids: The membrane and beyond” conference in Halifax (2015), followed by the international conference in Vancouver in 2016, organized conjointly with the International Union of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (IUBMB) and the Pan-American Association for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (PABMB). In 2017, we will organize a Conference on Translational Systems Biology, Membrane and Organelle Dynamics in Ottawa followed by two conferences in 2018, the Membrane protein conference in Banff and another international conference in Vancouver, organized with support of the International Congress of Genetics and the Genetics Society of America (GSA).

3. Trainee involvement. As of this year the board of the CSMB was enlarged to include trainee representatives at the postdoc and graduate student level. Both are working on exciting projects aimed at increasing trainee implication into the operation of the society and at improving our offerings, e.g. via career days at CSMB-sponsored meetings. Combined with our ongoing support for graduate student events, we hope to motivate the next generation of scientists to get involved in the society and to shape what we do for them.

4. Website and social media. Our web communications have been enlarged by social media components (Facebook, Twitter) and our website will be refreshed early in 2015. Stay tuned!

I hope that this letter reflects the dynamic environment of our scientific society that works for and with you. We are certainly facing challenges, but considering the progress in scientific discovery and its applications. I am convinced that “there was never a better time for being a scientist”, to cite Janet Rossant, the Arthur Wynne Gold Medal recipient at the 2014 CSMB Conference in Banff. We should all work together towards getting the

support we need to do our work and to pay back to society by breaking new grounds in basic and applied research in the molecular biosciences.

To help us continue our work in your interest we would greatly appreciate if you renewed your membership, and even more so, if each of you motivated one or two of your fellow students or colleagues to join the CSMB. Having more members would give us more authority to speak up in your name. Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Christian Baron', written in a cursive style.

Christian Baron
Professor and Chair, Université de Montréal
Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Medicine
President of the Canadian Society for Molecular Biosciences