

ASHG Member Forum & Business Meeting Minutes
December 8, 2020
Virtual

Item 1. Welcome

ASHG President Anthony Wynshaw-Boris welcomed attendees and thanked them for their interest in the Society. This meeting gives members the opportunity to provide feedback to Society leaders, improve member engagement, and ensure that the Society is providing value to members. This year's meeting was presented in a virtual format on Zoom due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Item 2. Approval of Minutes from 2019 meeting

The minutes from the 2019 meeting were approved with 22 attendees voting 'yes' on Zoom.

Item 3. Moment of Silence

Wynshaw-Boris asked the group to observe a moment of silence in memory of ASHG members who has died since the 2019 meeting. They were as follows:

Gertjan van Ommen

Robert (Rob) P. Igo, Jr.

Theodore Namm

William Gessner Johnson

Philip Leder

It was requested that Stephen Goodman be added.

Item 4. Society Updates and Achievements

Wynshaw-Boris gave a brief update on the highlights from this year, when the Society accomplished a great deal in the face of a pandemic:

- *Human Genetics Scholars Initiative program*: a successful first year
- *New communications and program channels with members*: A new website was launched and new communications were developed.
- *Human Genetics and Genomics Advances*: ASHG's open access journal was launched
- *Virtual meeting*: Over 6,000 attendees
- *Work in public engagement and advocacy*: Major public opinion survey was released showing that the public supported genetics. Important statements were also released by ASHG regarding current events.
- *Diversity, equity and inclusion*: ASHG expanded efforts to work towards a more diverse workforce

Wynshaw-Boris encouraged attendees to view the annual report to learn more about the society's work for you. The annual report can be found [here](#).

Item 5. Treasurer's Report

ASHG Treasurer Bruce Gelb congratulated Susan Slaughaupt on becoming ASHG's Treasurer-Elect. He provided an overview of fiscal year 2019-2020 (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020). Revenue was approximately \$8.0 million, and expenses were \$7.5 million, producing an increase in net assets of just over \$500,000. Finances remained sound despite the pandemic. Gelb thanked the Investment Committee, whose work on ASHG's investments allowed this strong position. The Society's reserves totaled \$19.4 million. The Board of Directors had approved use of up to 2.5% of the reserves annually for strategic initiatives.

For the coming fiscal year, the Board of Directors had approved a revised budget with a projected loss given the ongoing pandemic and ASHG's continued focus on maintaining ASHG programming for members and strengthening in crucial areas of member need. The Board of Directors was confident in the Society's financial position and saw this single-year loss as an investment in ASHG's members.

Item 6. AJHG Editorial Report

AJHG Editor-in-Chief Bruce Korf provided a quick update on the Journal's activities, noting an increase in Impact Factor from 9.9 to 10.50 this year. Submission numbers had been stronger this year than in the past 4 years. It is possible that this was attributable to COVID-19 related issues. The number of open access articles published remained steady.

- Transfers accepted *AJHG* to HGGA: 12 (54 offered)
- Transfers Accepted Cell Genomics to *AJHG*: 2 (22 offered)

Korf congratulated the two winners of the Cotterman award: Xiaowen Tian and Andrew Glazer. He also welcomed the new editorial board members: Alexander (Sasha) Gusev, Andy McCallion, Amy McGuire, and Heidi Rehm.

Korf then allowed questions and comments from the attendees. A member suggested that it would be interesting to look at the author gender breakdown of submissions to the journal this year, especially given the potentially different impact the pandemic had on the genders.

A member inquired on the journal(s) activity in looking at issues around authors requirements with respect to research integrity. Korf noted the journals welcome submissions of papers that have appeared on preprint servers. Regarding research integrity, we are in the process of reviewing our instructions to authors, so will be looking at issues of integrity and diversity in this process.

Item 7. HGGA Editorial Report

HGGA Editor-in-Chief Mike Bamshad gave a brief update on the first year of the journal which is a new open access sibling journal of *AJHG* that aims to serve as both a forum and a catalyst for changing scientific communication. He showed the 20-person editorial Board, whose diversity was an ongoing priority for Bamshad. Some priorities for HGGA included:

- Representing diverse interests of the human genetics community.
- Striving for easy submission and fast turnaround time.

The journal received its first submission on May 19 and published its first manuscript on August 24. At the time of this meeting, the *HGGA* website has over 6,000 page views with over 2,500 unique users.

Item 8. Q&A

Wynshaw-Boris opened the floor for questions and comments from attendees.

A member asked about publication costs, wondering if there were a student discount. Bamshad noted that all ASHG members receive a discount. Following member comments on the future of open access and fees to publish, Korf noted that AJHG and HGGA are monitoring the publishing environment closely and carefully including cOAlition S/Plan S.

An attendee asked how many attendees were at the virtual meeting; staff said 6,400 had registered.

Some attendees asked about the ASHG Annual Meeting's format in future years—would it always have virtual components. Was ASHG planning for a hybrid meeting in 2021, etcetera. Wynshaw-Boris said the Board was monitoring the pandemic and with staff, assessing the best and safest way to host the 2021 meeting. Public health and the health of members was the first priority of Board of Directors members. Beyond 2021, ASHG was exploring how virtual components might be incorporated into future meetings.

Following a last call for any questions from the attendees, Wynshaw-Boris thanked everyone for participating and adjourned the meeting at 1:46 p.m ET.