

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

October 2006

Submitted by Gary White

The Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) was formed during the summer of 2005 to review science issues and make recommendations to the Board of Directors of the American Iris Society when appropriate. Following is a summary of the committee's activities from the May 2006 AIS Board meeting to October 9, 2006.

PROPOSALS FOR FUNDING IRIS-RELATED RESEARCH

Discussion: The former Grants/Scientific Research Committee of AIS was incorporated into the new Scientific Advisory Committee after that committee's term ended in July 2005. Dr. Bill Shear, chairman of the former Grants/Scientific Research committee is now serving on the Scientific Advisory Committee, as is Dr. James Waddick, who also was a member of the former Grants Committee. The last grants to be awarded by AIS after recommendation by the Grants/Scientific Research Committee were in 2004. Due to lack of sufficient monies for grants funding, there were no grants awarded in 2005, though two grant proposals were submitted to the Grants committee for consideration. The current Scientific Advisory Committee has had no submitted proposals for funding and none were sought for calendar year 2006.

Cooperation between the Scientific Advisory Committee and the AIS Foundation has twice in the past year resulted in members of the SAC reviewing grant proposals submitted to the Foundation for funding. The reviews by members of the SAC focus on scientific soundness, qualifications of the investigator, budget adequacy, and value of the project. The Foundation trustees then use these written reviews to assist with their determinations on grants funding.

Status/Recommendation:

1. Three members of the SAC responded to a request from Dr. Robert Hollingworth to review a grant proposal submitted to the AIS Foundation for funding by the Foundation. Those reviews are now in process and will be forwarded to Dr. Hollingworth by November 1, 2006. The grant request is from Dr. Noland H. Martin at Texas State University-San Marcos, and if approved, funds would be to assist with his work on 'Reproductive Barriers Between *Iris fulva* and *Iris brevicaulis*'.
2. Status of current grants awarded by AIS.
Dr. Alan Meerow's AIS funded research on 'Population genetics of *Iris hexagona* using microsatellite DNA': The final payment of \$2500 for this grant was made in July of this year. This completes the financial obligation of The American Iris Society for this grant. Dr. Meerow has subsequently requested a "no-cost" extension of his grant through April of 2007. The AIS Board of Directors voted to approve the requested no-cost extension of this grant. The final report from Dr. Meerow will be expected upon the completion of his study in the spring of 2007.
3. The SAC is currently having discussions about re-focusing the AIS scientific grants program and the possibility of joint funding of high priority projects by the AIS and the AIS Foundation.

SCIENTIFIC REVIEW OF AIS PUBLICATIONS

Discussion:

1. **Scientific Articles in the AIS Bulletin.** The SAC has developed a method for reviewing manuscripts of science-related articles submitted to Bruce Filardi for publishing in the AIS Bulletin. The SAC reviews the manuscripts, comments on scientific soundness, suitability for publishing, and offers suggestions for improvements to the manuscript. Recommendations of the committee are then forwarded to the author of the manuscript and to the Bulletin editor. Incorporation of these recommendations from the SAC is at the discretion of the author and the Bulletin editor. The Scientific Advisory Committee, however, is available for further assistance, if requested.
2. **Other AIS Publications.** The committee would coordinate the review & revision of other science-related educational and informational AIS publications.

Status/Recommendation:

1. Scientific Articles in the AIS Bulletin.

a) ‘Anthocyanic Vacuolar Inclusions and Iris Genetics’, by Chuck Chapman

This article was reviewed by the SAC and appeared in the July 2006 issue of the Bulletin. A companion piece, ‘A Peek at Pigments’ with a photo essay was not reviewed by the committee, and appeared in the October 2006 issue of the Bulletin.

b) ‘Iris Breeders: Beware of Apomixis!’, by B. Charles Jenkins, Arizona

This manuscript is currently being reviewed by the committee and is slated for inclusion in the January 2007 issue of the Bulletin.

2. Other AIS Publications.

The Basic Iris Culture (BIC) booklet, which the committee began reviewing last spring, has had no further work by the SAC. This effort was tabled last spring, pending further discussion by the AIS BOD on the booklet’s future use, and the possibility of other publications for promoting irises to the general public.

Project Funding

Discussion:

As noted above, the Scientific Advisory Committee is in discussions about re-focusing the scientific grants/scholarship program to be more pro-active and more applicable to iris growers and breeders. In addition, there has been interest in assisting with the development of a Chromosome Counting Service. Other projects may include scientific publications on a variety of topics. The possibility of joint funding of suitable projects with the AIS Foundation is also being discussed.

Status/Recommendation:

The SAC is requesting that an amount of \$5000 be budgeted for applicable projects in 2007. The exact nature of these projects will depend on the outcome of the re-focused grants/scholarship program, feasibility/priority of other practical applications, and funding available.