

## **President's Report – 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Business Meeting – BSEC**

6/6/09

As of May 19, our Bioethics Society has officially been in existence for 3 years! We should be very pleased with our growth. Since our very successful Bioethics Forum and Annual Business Meeting in Grenada last October, BSEC has continued to achieve its objectives as stipulated in our Constitution. Spearheaded by our hard-working Vice President, Prof. Cheryl Macpherson, our BSEC Newsletter – *Bioethics Caribe* – was circulated to our membership as well as posted at our BSEC website within 2 months of our ABM. The Newsletter contained highlights of the presentations made at last year's Bioethics Forum, as well as other pertinent information for our members.

Our Newsletter and our website still remain the primary vehicles through which we achieve the first three Objectives in our BSEC Constitution – to provide a forum to exchange ideas and address problems in bioethics, to promote the teaching of bioethics, and to promote research and publication of ethics-based information. In addition, I have made three quarterly written communication updates to our members since our ABM last October.

In December of last year, our new Honorary Secretary, Mrs. Shereen Dawkins-Cox, circulated my quarterly communication to our members by email as well as information on other pertinent matters. Subsequently, we informed that BSEC had achieved another of the objectives I had targeted in my acceptance speech as President in 2006 – that of establishing National Bioethics Committees in the Caribbean. We informed that Ms. Cheryl Brown, Director of Graduate Research at the UWI, Mona, and a member of BSEC, had been elected as Jamaica's representative on the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee of UNESCO. Further, after 1 ½ years of preliminary planning, in February of this year, the Jamaican Minister of government with responsibility for the UNESCO office, had officially appointed the fourteen recommended members for the first National Bioethics Committee for Jamaica. Five of the fourteen members are members of BSEC.

We also informed that efforts to establish a national bioethics committee in Trinidad & Tobago were being spear-headed by BSEC members Dr. Grace Sirju-Charran and Dr. Donald Simeon.

At our BSEC Executive meeting in February of this year, held in Kingston, we approved a collaborative effort proposed by Vice - President Cheryl for a 2-day workshop on Pain Relief (along with EPEC) for Caribbean health professionals and officials. Also, BSEC's Northern Representative, Dr. Anthony Frankson, who was present at that meeting, informed that he was switching his job location from UWI, Jamaica to UWI in the

Bahamas, and would be seeking to actively recruit additional members for BSEC from that location, in addition to those already existing there.

In addition to the foregoing, over the past year, our Executive has given as much support to the local organizers of the Bioethics Forum in Trinidad as is possible from our various widely dispersed locations, and would like to commend them highly and most heartily for the detailed planning and organization that has culminated in such a success over the past 1 ½ days. We now look forward to our next Forum and ABM, which hopefully will be in Guyana next year.

In closing, I would like to heartily thank the hard-working members of our Executive: Vice-President Cheryl, Shereen, our Secretary, Treasurer Donald, Regional Reps. Tony and Eileen in Jamaica, and Eastern and Southern Regional Reps. Paul and Merle located in Dominica and Guyana respectively, who – despite their inability to attend Executive meetings in Jamaica, are always quick to respond to discussions and make suggestions by email.

I have had a wonderful team to work with, and I thank you all for the privilege of serving as your President over the preceding year. I look forward to future work as a member of our budding Bioethics Society.

*Derrick Aarons*

*President – 2006/2009.*