

Report of the president

In 2005-2008 the ISG has focussed on the following activities:

- (i) Producing our quarterly journal 'Gerontechnology';
- (ii) Extending individual memberships and increasing the number of library subscriptions;
- (iii) Improving the financial position of ISG;
- (iv) Establishing master classes;
- (v) Establishing regional chapters; and
- (vi) Organizing the 6th International Gerontechnology Congress in Pisa in June 2008 and ensuring continuity for future international congresses.

Some of the issues will be discussed in more detail below and will also be further discussed at the society's assembly at the Pisa conference. The board over this period has had to accommodate the limited availability of its secretary-general due to illness, as well as the departure of the treasurer and of his immediate replacement.

Our quarterly journal 'Gerontechnology' has steadily improved: it is qualitatively better, appears more punctually, is widely disseminated, and has been accepted by a number of abstracting services. This fine result is due to the contributions of many and has come about under the ever-active leadership of our editor-in-chief. For more detailed information, see her separate report below.

The financial situation of the ISG has been difficult since the launch of our journal. However, it has steadily improved and last year we managed to cover almost 90% of the cost of the journal. This improvement was due to an increase in ISG membership, a gradual increase in library subscriptions, and the first two commercial associate membership. This year we expect to break even. The accumulated losses are covered by a low interest loan from a friendly foundation. Under the terms of our agreement the loan will be paid back gradually starting in 2008. With the exception of the formatting, printing, and shipment of the journal, all work has so far been unpaid. It is noted that this situation cannot continue indefinitely.

Membership fees have not increased since the launch of the journal. However as the Euro has gained in strength this has translated into an increase for members in some non-EU countries.

The first master class for PhD students took place in Eindhoven, the Netherlands in 2006, with subsequent master classes in the following years. Another first master class on a yearly basis was held in Nan Kai, Taiwan in 2007, and a further one will take place in Volterra, Italy in 2008. Teaching includes interdisciplinary scientific content, methodology, and practical applications, as well as some helpful tools. Students also have the opportunity to seek advice and discuss their specific projects. These master classes have proven to be an effective way to improve the quality of research and development in gerontechnology. Several senior ISG members ('masters') have invested much time and effort in teaching and advising students and a special issue of our journal is in preparation to provide an inventory of their expertise and to consolidate the content of the programme.

The creation of regional chapters for regions with an ISG membership of 25 or more was discussed during the Nagoya conference in 2005. Regional chapters can organize gerontechnology workshops and conferences adapted to the regional situation and in the local language, but still supported by the ISG network. Japan established the first regional chapter in 2006, followed last year by Taiwan and by the Dutch speaking region consisting of the

Netherlands and Flanders (Belgium) combined. The establishment of a regional chapter in France is currently under consideration.

The present international gerontechnology conference in Pisa was organised in collaboration with our Italian colleagues. In particular the conference themes, scientific committees, the dissemination of information, a book of abstracts, and similar matters were discussed during a number of fruitful meetings. We are proud that gerontechnology has been so actively promoted by the famous Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna and we thank our Italian colleagues for all their efforts. They have also been instrumental in adding biorobotics to the active multidisciplinary themes of gerontechnology.

Experience has taught us that a three year time lapse between congresses is too long to keep up the momentum. Therefore we would like to propose to the ISG general assembly that from now on our congresses will take place with two-yearly intervals. We think a bi-annual congress is feasible as three institutes have already come forward to express their willingness to host the 2010 and 2012 congresses.

I would like to end by expressing my deep thanks to all our ISG colleagues who have worked steadily and hard toward realizing the goal of Gerontechnology: that older people in our societies may benefit fully from the tremendous opportunities that technological innovation offers.

H. Bouma, ISG president

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