Proposed revisions of the Statutes of the International Committee of Systematics of Prokaryotes

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Abstract

The following revisions of the Statutes (Labeled D, Whitman WB. Int J Syst Evol Microbiol 2015;65:1093–1100) are proposed by the Executive Board of the International Committee of Systematics of Prokaryotes (ICSP) to eliminate some internal inconsistencies and address other issues as discussed below. Comments may be sent to the Secretary of the ICSP, Lenie Dijkshoom at L.Dijkshoom@lumc.nl for distribution to the delegates at the Plenary Meeting in Valencia, Spain, on July 7–9, 2017.

Revision of the Statutes of the International Committee of Systematics of Prokaryotes (ICSP) requires publication in the International Journal of Systematic and Evolutionary Microbiology (IJSEM) 90 days before a vote by the ICSP to allow for public comment and deliberation by the members. Comments on the proposed revisions may be sent to the Secretary of the ICSP, Lenie Dijkshoom at L.Dijkshoom@lumc.nl for distribution to the delegates at the Plenary Meeting in Valencia, Spain, on July 7–9, 2017.

Following discussions at the inter-congress meetings of the Executive Board of the ICSP in 2016–2017, five changes in the Statutes are proposed to remove inconsistencies in the Statutes and clarify the terms of members and officers. The proposed revisions of Article 2a and Article 4 deal with the terms of members and the officers. Because the 2015 Statutes [1] enabled the ICSP to conduct business between congresses, the revisions are proposed to clarify ambiguities concerning membership during the inter-congress periods. Revisions of Article 7 and Article 10.(2) are proposed in response to changes introduced in the 2015 Statutes [1] that removed the officers of the ICSP from the Judicial Commission (JC). The proposed revision of Article 7 makes it consistent with these changes. The proposed revision of Article 10.(2) lowers the number of votes for a favourable decision by the JC, which under the 2015 Statutes [1] has fewer members. Lastly, the proposed revision of Article 13b.2 is intended to clarify its meeting.

ARTICLE 2A. TERM OF FULL MEMBERS

(P. 1093; [1])

As written, the Statutes appear to be contradictory with regards to terms of the members. As it is written now, the term of the members ends after the conclusion of the ‘next’ ICSP Plenary Meeting, which would be the meeting immediately following their appointment. This would prevent members from conducting business with electronic media (Article 9) after the meeting and before their reappointment, which is usually 3 years later.

Moreover, paragraph two suggests that the delegates serve during the inter-congress period and are appointed for at least two meetings. The proposed changes will clarify that the term of the Members extends from the time of appointment through the first Plenary Meeting, through the inter-congress period and until the beginning of the next Plenary Meeting. In addition, the proposal removes the requirement to report the membership to the Bacteriology & Applied Microbiology (BAM) division of the International Union of Microbiological Societies (IUMS).

Proposed changes are underlined.

Current

‘Article 2a. Full Members. A request for the appointment of a representative to the ICSP will be issued by the Executive Secretary of the ICSP to the Secretary of each Member Society immediately following each Plenary Meeting of the ICSP, and a list of such nominated members forwarded to the Secretary Treasurer of the BAM Division of the IUMS.

A Member Society is not obliged to appoint a representative and such positions will be considered to be vacant until a representative is appointed.

In the event of a vacancy arising in the Full Membership during inter-congress periods, the Executive Secretary shall request the Member Society to appoint a replacement and shall advise the Secretary Treasurer of the BAM Division of
the IUMS of such replacements. If a society fails to appoint a representative within 90 days of a request, that position is considered vacant until after the next Plenary Meeting.

The tenure of a Full Member is for one term. A term begins upon appointment by a Member Society until the conclusion of the next ICSP Plenary Meeting. Full Members shall be eligible for re-election by his or her Member Society for an indefinite period. The nomination must, however, be renewed after each Plenary Meeting.

Revised

‘Article 2a. Full Members. A request for the appointment of a representative to the ICSP will be issued by the Executive Secretary of the ICSP to the Secretary of each Member Society prior to each Plenary Meeting of the ICSP. A Member Society is not obliged to appoint a representative, and such positions will be considered to be vacant until a representative is appointed.

In the event of a vacancy arising in the Full Membership during inter-congress periods, the Executive Secretary shall request the Member Society to appoint a replacement. If a society fails to appoint a representative within 90 days of a request, that position is considered vacant.

The tenure of a Full Member is for one term. A term begins upon appointment by a Member Society and ends either upon appointment of another delegate by the Member Society or until the beginning of the second ICSP Plenary Meeting following their appointment. Full Members shall be eligible for re-election by his or her Member Society for an indefinite period. The nomination must, however, be renewed before each Plenary Meeting.’

ARTICLE 4. TERMS OF OFFICERS
(P. 1094; [1])

Currently, the Chair and Vice-Chair hold office until the close of the next Plenary Meeting (article 6). However, there are no similar provisions for the terms of the Secretaries, Treasurer and other members of the Executive Board (EB). Thus, it would be possible to interpret this to mean that the terms of these officers would end at the conclusion of the meeting in which they were elected, when they no longer were members. For this reason, it is proposed to clarify the terms of the EB by the following addition to Article 4 (see underlined text).

Current

‘Article 4. The EB-ICSP. The membership of the Board shall be: the Chair and Vice-Chair of the ICSP, the Executive Secretary, the Secretary for Subcommittees on Taxonomy, the Treasurer of the ICSP, and two other Full Members. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Judicial Commission shall be ex officio non-voting members of the Executive Board. No single member may hold more than one function or cast more than one vote. The office of Treasurer of the ICSP may be combined with that of the Treasurer of the ICSP. Business of the EB-ICSP may also be conducted electronically given 7 days of notification and consent and agreement by at least five members’.

Revised

‘Article 4. The EB-ICSP. The membership of the Board shall be: the Chair and Vice-Chair of the ICSP, the Executive Secretary, the Secretary for Subcommittees on Taxonomy, the Treasurer of the ICSP and two other Full Members. At each Plenary Meeting, the ICSP shall elect the members of the Executive Board, who shall hold office until the close of the next Plenary Meeting. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Judicial Commission shall be ex officio non-voting members of the Executive Board. No single member may hold more than one function or cast more than one vote. The office of Treasurer of the ICSP may be combined with that of the Executive Secretary on the recommendation of the EB-ICSP. Business of the EB-ICSP may also be conducted electronically given 7 days of notification and consent and agreement by at least five members.’

ARTICLE 7 (LAST SENTENCE, P. 1095; [1])

The proposed revision deletes the underlined phrase to make the article consistent with the first paragraph of Article 10a, which is also below.

Current

‘The Secretaries will serve ex officio as voting members of the Executive Board of the ICSP, the Judicial Commission and the ICSP.’

Revised

‘The Secretaries will serve ex officio as voting members of the Executive Board of the ICSP and the ICSP.’

ARTICLE 10A

Organization

‘The Judicial Commission shall consist of 12 members (commissioners) elected by the members of the ICSP. No member of the Judicial Commission may serve as a voting member of the Executive Board, and members of the Executive Board may not serve on the Judicial Commission.’

ARTICLE 10. (2) (P. 1096; [1])

Proposal to lower the number of votes to seven for the JC to issue favourable decisions. Before the 2015 Statutes, the JC had 17 elected and ex officio members, and 10 votes were required to issue favourable decisions. Seven of 12 favourable votes is about the same proportion of the JC as required in the statutes before 2015.

Current

‘10. (2) To consider all Requests for Opinions relative to the interpretation of the Principles, Rules, and Recommendations of the International Code of Nomenclature of Prokaryotes where applications are doubtful. An Opinion shall be issued when ten or more Commissioners vote in favour of
issuance. All Opinions shall be reported to the ICSP. Opinions can be rescinded by the majority of those voting in the ICSP, until published, at which time Opinions are considered final.’

Revised

‘10. (2) To consider all Requests for Opinions relative to the interpretation of the Principles, Rules, and Recommendations of the International Code of Nomenclature of Prokaryotes where applications are doubtful. An Opinion shall be issued when seven or more Commissioners vote in favour of issuance. All Opinions shall be reported to the ICSP. Opinions can be rescinded by the majority of those voting in the ICSP, until published, at which time Opinions are considered final.’

ARTICLE 13B. (2) (P.1099; [1])

The intention of this proposal is to clarify the meaning of this paragraph on the EB for the IJSEM, which may appear to concern itself with the International Code of Nomenclature for Prokaryotes (ICNP). However, the JC is the for the ICNP.

Current

‘(2) The functions of the Editorial Board shall include the implementation of the wording of the Code, including the General Considerations, Principles, Rules and Recommendations. Reference is also to be made to appropriate aspects included in the Appendices.’

Revised

‘(2) The functions of the Editorial Board shall include implementation of the Code, including the General Considerations, Principles, Rules, Recommendations, and the appropriate aspects of the Appendices, within the IJSEM.’

SUMMARY

The proposed revisions are intended to make the Statutes more consistent with the major changes introduced in the 2015, which included the ability to make decisions during the inter-congress periods and separation of the JC from the EB-ICSP. Comments for distribution to the delegates at the Plenary Meeting in Valencia, Spain, on July 7–9, 2017, should be sent to the Secretary of the ICSP, Lenie Dijkshoom at L.Dijkshoom@lumc.nl.

Reference