

# The (Slightly Revised) SBML Development Process

Michael Hucka *and the rest of the*  
SBML Team *and the* SBML Editors

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# Goals of the SBML Development Process

- A written, explicitly-defined, transparent process for evolving and refining SBML in a way that promotes the development of high-quality standards based on community consensus among all stakeholders
- Features valued in the process definition:
  - ◎ Transparent, well-defined procedures for extensions and changes to SBML
  - ◎ Mechanisms and steps for handling errors in SBML specifications
  - ◎ Self-sufficient community—independent of any organization or individual
- The process is focused on development and publication of specifications and guidelines for SBML and its use, with an eventual goal of seeking ratification of some SBML specifications by a standards-making body

# About SBML specification *Levels, Versions, & Releases*

- **Levels:** stratification of complexity and functionality
  - ⊙ Enables everyone to gain experience with large feature set changes in a progressive fashion
    - Contrast: suppose we tried to define L2v3 right from the start
  - ⊙ Eventually, interest in a given Level diminishes and work begins in earnest on the next higher level
- **Versions:** adjustments within levels to features
  - ⊙ Version may change syntax but in a limited way
  - ⊙ Motivation: hard to predict all wanted features, or their interactions
- **Releases:** corrections to errors within a Version specification
  - ⊙ E.g., corrections to typos or contradictions in the specification
  - ⊙ Releases do no change syntax within a Version of a Level

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- New: Chair of the SBML Editors/Editorial Committee

# SBML Forum

- Community of people sufficiently interested in SBML that they take the trouble to observe and (hopefully) participate in discussions
- Only 1 requirement for being a member of the SBML Forum:
  - ⊙ Must subscribe to **sbml-discuss@sbml.org**
  - ⊙ (Can do more of course—attend meetings, be on sbml-discuss, be members of Architectural Board and/or be an Editor, etc.)

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This is already in place



# SBML Architectural Board

- Members of the SBML Forum who are interested in directly helping to influence the form and development of the SBML language
- Principal role: create & evaluate formal proposals for changes to SBML
  - ◎ Assess requests from the SBML Forum
  - ◎ formulate proposals for features & extensions
    - (We still need to define the structure of a formal proposal)
  - ◎ Evaluate errata reports & proposals for revisions
  - ◎ Vote on which proposed SBML changes to make
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# Architectural Board membership

- Membership is free, but:
  - ⊙ Membership carries responsibilities which may entail financial obligations
  - ⊙ Members must actively participate in the SBML development process
- Members will be publicly listed on [sbml.org](http://sbml.org)
- Members can nominate themselves or be nominated
  - ⊙ Some explanation must be provided about experience
- Nominations can come at any time
- Twice a year, a public electronic vote will be announced on [sbml-discuss](http://sbml-discuss) and held regarding all nominees since the last vote was held
  - ⊙ Voting will be held open for 3 weeks
  - ⊙ To be elected, nominee must receive at least X% of votes cast, subject to limits on number of people from same group
    - X difficult to determine right now

# Number of A. B. members

- No total number limit on size of A. B.
- Limits on composition from any one group:
  - ⊙ Not more than 10% of the A. B. membership can be from a single group
    - ─ Number is rounded up to whole integers
  - ⊙ Exception: SBML Editors and the Chair of the SBML Editorial Committee (who are always considered part of the A. B.) do not count in this assessment

# “Good standing” rules for A. B. members

- Must vote on issues that come to a vote
  - ⊙ Chair of the SBML Editorial Committee will keep track of voting histories
  - ⊙ A member who does not vote for 2 consecutive votes will be placed on probation, such that they must vote on the next occasion or be removed
- Must make effort to attend SBML Forum and SBML Hackathon meetings
  - ⊙ Missing two meetings in a row is again grounds for being put on probation
  - ⊙ This is the source of the financial obligation for A. B. members
- Probation rules
  - ⊙ If member performs duties on next occasion, they are taken off probation
  - ⊙ Members can petition A. B. for excuse due to extenuating circumstances
  - ⊙ If a member is dropped, they can request to be returned after 1 year

# SBML Editors

- Elected for 3 years
- Can serve more than one term, but not consecutive terms
  - ⊙ If an editor can't serve a full term, a special election will be held
- 5 total editors
  - ⊙ The Chair is not elected and not counted as one of the SBML Editors
- At SBML Forum meetings, candidates may introduce themselves
  - ⊙ Voting will be held electronically and anonymously
  - ⊙ The Chair of the SBML Editors will tally and report vote
- Q: should voting be open to all SBML Forum or only SBML A. B.?

# Two more editors are needed for 2008

- Andrew Finney & Michael Hucka's terms technically end in 2007
- But have small problem with Hucka
  - ⊙ PI on SBML grants and head of SBML Team (thus needs to be involved)
- Proposal: elect 2 new editors as planned, but make the SBML Team leader be a 6th member of the SBML Editors, as "Chair of the SBML Editors"
  - ⊙ In voting involving editors only, Chair's vote carries less "weight" than the others (thus, no tie possible)
  - ⊙ Conversely, if ties arise in votes by A. B., Chair acts as tie breaker

# Next steps

- Sign-up sheet for SBML Architectural Board membership (October)
- Call for nominations for SBML Editors (November)
- Voting on 2 new SBML Editors (December)
- New Editors take on roles beginning in January