

No. 14

Education Section

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**EDUCATION SECTION
AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY**

Annual Report to the Governing Board

TO: John Boreman, President, AFS

FROM: Michael Quist, President, Education Section

DATE: July 17, 2013

I. Motion Report

- (A) Recommended motion: None
- (B) Minority view: None.
- (C) Background for motion: None.

II. Activity Report

Charge or Annual Program of Work: None defined.

Goal 1: Global Fisheries Leadership

To support the objective of providing information and technical resources for the sustainability of fisheries resources, the Section continues to solicit and support internationally recognized book projects. Recent and upcoming book projects supported by the Section include: *Fisheries Techniques* (3rd edition; A. Zale, D. Parrish, and T. Sutton, eds.), *Scientific Communication for Natural Resource Professionals* (C. Jennings, T. Lauer, and B. Vondracek, eds.), and *Foundations in Fisheries Science* (M. Allen and G. Sass, eds.). Because many of these projects have been recently completed or will be completed in the near future, the Section will be actively pursuing new project ideas.

Goal 2: Education/Continuing Education

Enhancing educational opportunities and promoting academic excellence are primary missions of the Education Section.

The Education Section has been busy organizing the Best Student Paper and Poster (BSPP) Symposia for the 2013 annual meeting in Little Rock. The number of oral and poster presentations varies by year, but this year the paper symposium will consist of 16 presentations by students who were selected from an application process to compete for the best student paper award. Two poster presentations will be included in the Best Poster Symposia. Following the symposia, judges will deliberate and announce the award winners for best student paper and poster at the 2013 Society business meeting. The committee was led by Melissa Wuellner, Dan Magoulick, and Craig Paukert. An important change to the structure of the committee is that the President-Elect of the Section now serves as a co-chair. The reason for the change was to increase continuity among years and provide institutional knowledge of the process in the Education Section's leadership (i.e., officers). The new structure will be followed on a trial basis for several years and then evaluated. In an attempt to increase participation in the BSPP symposia, Wuellner and Fisher published a manuscript in *Fisheries* (38:88-90) that described the structure, purpose, and process associated with the symposia. Due to the large number of changes in the symposia over the last 5 years, we thought such an article would help reduce confusion regarding the symposia. The Section and Student Subsection continue to discuss ideas for promoting and enhancing student presentations; ideas include posting award-winning presentations and posters on the Section web page and(or) sponsoring student colloquiums and web-based presentations focused on effective presentation styles and formats. Students will be able to use these resources to help develop and enhance their scientific presentations.

The New Initiatives Committee was developed several years ago as a place for new ideas associated with education to emerge and as place where those ideas could be discussed and presented to the membership for action. The committee has been largely inactive in recent years, but has recently been reinvigorated with Mike Colvin as the chair. The committee has been deliberating among potential new initiatives. The committee has decided to pursue developing short "modules" regarding: (1) educational media: 10-30 minute online videos that cover a variety of topics (e.g., common analyses, certification, getting into grad school), and (2) potential means to facilitate and support distance education opportunities. We are currently discussing the best process for implementing the initiatives.

The John E. Skinner Memorial Travel Award is administered annually by the Section and is one of the most prestigious Student awards offered by the Society. The 'Skinner' committee, chaired by Dan Daugherty, received 29 applications (2 BS, 17 MS, and 10 PhD) and will offer 10 awards and five honorable mentions. Award winners and Honorable Mentions will attend the Education Section and Parent Society business meetings, as well as the AFS awards luncheon. Daniel Daugherty will chair the committee for 2014 and will work to develop and test an applicant management and scoring program.

The Excellence in Fisheries Education Award, a Society-level award, is administered annually by the Education Section. In 2013, the Award committee, chaired by Jason Vokoun, selected Dr. Frederick Scharf (University of North Carolina--Wilmington) as the recipient of the award. Scharf was recognized for his accomplishments and dedication to fisheries education and will be formally presented the award at the AFS business meeting. Vokoun will remain as chair of the committee in 2014.

Goal 3: Value of Membership

The Education Section continues to be active in enhancing participation of students and professionals at all levels of the Society to assure recruitment, retention, and leadership development into the future. In the past several years, the Section provided financial support to the Student Subsection for regional, student colloquiums held at various institutions across North America. Last year, the Section supported a colloquium at Oklahoma State University. Over 15 students (undergraduates and graduates) attended each colloquium, where they presented research findings, networked with students from other universities, and built lasting professional relationships. The Section also supported the 2013 Pacific Ecology and Evolution Conference.

The Young Professional Travel Award was developed by the Section in 2011 to provide up to \$800 in travel support for a young professional (within three years of graduating) to attend the annual AFS meeting. The award in 2013 was presented to Michelle Walsh. The award committee was chaired by Jesse Fischer.

The Section continues to work closely with the Student Subsection to provide opportunities at the Section and Society level. The energy and expertise of student members is a major component of several Section functions. Student newsletter editors provide a critical service to our membership by producing well-designed and informative newsletters. Landon Pierce and Cari-Ann Hayer are the current newsletter editors and continue to produce one of AFS's best newsletters. The Subsection, in coordination with the Education Section leadership, has established an ad hoc committee to discuss an undergraduate travel award. The notion of such an award was discussed at the Section's 2012 business meeting. Although the membership was largely supportive, a number of issues were raised by the membership. The committee has been actively corresponding over the last year. We had hoped to have recommendations ready for the 2013 business meeting, but additional discussion is needed.