

Program Committee

Committee Members: K. C. Bell, B. R. Blood, M. J. Hamilton, J. D. Hanson, L. E. Helgen, S. A. Jansa, J. E. Light, S. C. Loeb, V. L. Mathis, R. N. Platt, M. A. Revelez, M. H. Schadler, W. P. Smith, K. A. Speer, C. W. Thompson (Chair), P. A. Zollner.

Mission:

The Program Committee is responsible for the solicitation and acceptance of proposals for symposia and workshops, for advertising the meeting to other scientific societies, for soliciting bids to host meetings, and assisting meeting hosts in preparing for annual meetings. [In 2011, the Committee was charged with venue selection, organizing the Annual Meeting, the solicitation and acceptance of proposals for symposia and workshops, and advertising the meeting to other scientific societies.]

Information Items:

(1) *Sponsors & Exhibitors*

2015—Sponsor and exhibitor solicitations was headed by Jessica Light, John Hanson, and Marcy Revelez. Nearly 120 businesses, government agencies, museums, and universities were contacted. This resulted in 19 sponsorships (monetary and in-kind) and one anonymous donation. In addition, a partnership with BioMed Central was created to advertise our meeting on their media sources in exchange for advertising in our meeting program. However, sponsor retention has proven to be difficult and an unstable source of meeting income. Dialogue has begun with the Development Committee to establish long-term relationships with companies that have histories with the Society (e.g., H.B. Sherman, Tomahawk, etc.) and have interest in benefiting the Society and the Annual Meeting long-term.

2016—Solicitation efforts will continue for the Minneapolis meeting with hopes to retain sponsors. The short version of the 2016 brochure will be distributed to sponsors and exhibitors at the 2015 meeting along with a thank you letter signed by the Society President. With the return to a university campus, efforts also will focus on local businesses with university connections.

(2) *Website*

2015—Kayce Bell assisted with website design. The entire meeting website was modified to WordPress, which required substantial organizational changes. However, the meeting website was live by December 2014 with additional information added as it became available. The meeting website also included a Twitter feed.

2016—Efforts will be made to have the meeting website live by December 2015.

(3) *Registration*

2015—Early-bird student member registration rates were reduced to 2010 levels without any increase in regular member rates. All non-member rates were increased to approximately twice the cost of annual membership. Links to the Society membership webpage were provided on the meeting registration webpage to encourage membership to non-member participants. Also, the registration process had some difficulties with a large number of presenters deferring payment and not paying by the April 15th deadline. This proved problematic for abstract acceptance, as well as being able to enforce the administration fees for cancelled registrations.

2016—Additional registration categories (e.g., Developing Countries and Early Career) are being considered for 2016. Later registration deadlines are also being discussed. The hope is to have early-bird registration coincide with the abstract submission deadline, and potentially move both back to April 1st. K-State Conference Services also is working to find a solution to streamline the registration process by linking registration and payment into a single process and not two as it currently stands. The abstract submission link will only be available to those that have registered and paid.

(4) *Travel and Lodging*

2015—The mechanism for finding roommates, which was added in 2012, was used again in 2015, as was the email link for non-US attendees to request a confirmation letter for visa applications.

2016—Cheaper housing options are being pursued for 2016. Dormitory space and meal plans are being negotiated with the University of Minnesota for meeting participants.

(5) *Abstract Submissions*

2015—Kayce Bell, Brad Blood, and Meredith Hamilton managed abstract submission and revision. This year, potential presenters were asked to submit a fully formatted abstract, following the guidelines of the *Journal of Mammalogy*. For the most part, submissions went well, although limiting submissions entirely to web-based forms is being considered to enforce word limits. However, the separation of the abstract submission process from the registration and payment proved problematic. A large number of potential presenters (~75) had not registered and paid by the April 15th deadline. This presented problems when finalizing the meeting program, as nearly 30 presenters withdrew their abstracts within the final 2 weeks leading up to the deadline for publishing online and printing.

2016—The abstract submission process will require prior registration and payment by all potential presenters. K-State Conference Services is working on solutions. In addition, synchronizing the early-bird deadlines with the abstract submission dates are being considered. Also, interest in the printed Abstract Booklet continues to decline (<20) and removing abstract submissions altogether is being evaluated (e.g., Evolution). Presentation titles, authorlines, and author affiliations could be used, streamlining the scheduling process greatly.

(6) *Program*

2015—Susan Loeb assisted with the program organization. The program features two plenary sessions (seven student award speakers and four senior award speakers), two symposia, three thematic sessions (all opposed), three pre-meeting workshops (one supported by iDigBio), three field trips, and two teacher workshops. In addition, a town hall meeting and special seminar were included. Unopposed time continues to be a problem and a common complaint in post-meeting surveys. To reduce unopposed time, thematic sessions have been scheduled opposite the regular technical sessions. The free printed program also was discontinued and instead offered as an a la carte item during registration. This effort allowed for a \$20 reduction in student registration and continues the Society's efforts to go green. The program was made available online as a PDF and as a mobile app.

2016—Symposia and workshops were solicited and vetted by Neal Platt, Lauren Helgen, and Margaret Schadler. Currently, two symposia and one pre-meeting workshop are being planned. In addition, opposed thematic sessions are going to be self-organized by members through the abstract submission process. A vetting process through the Program Committee will be used to determine the appropriateness in the program. Continued development of a mobile app will occur.

(7) Receptions & Socials

2015—Extensive efforts were made to reduce the costs of the picnic and “banquet”. Prices are \$30 and \$20, respectively. In addition, the banquet was restructured to be a closing social and awards ceremony. The hope is to make the event more inclusionary. Also, the donor reception was removed from the program to lengthen the New Members/Attendees Social prior to the Opening Social.

2016—Social opportunities are being pursued on and nearby the University of Minnesota campus.

(8) Auction & Run for Research

2015—Winston Smith, Meredith Hamilton, and Kelly Speer assisted with the solicitation of items for the auction. A PDF of the auction item donation receipt was available on the meeting website. Tony Ballard organized the Run for Research course, and Patrick Zollner will handle onsite organization.

2016—Sharon Jansa (local host) will organize The Run for Research course with support from the Program Committee.

(9) Media, Social Networking, and Public Relations

2015—With coordination with the Informatics Committee, the Society's media resources were used extensively to promote the meeting, including Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. The hashtag #ASMJax was used to create a Twitter feed on the meeting website. The meeting announcements also were sent via the membership lists through the business office. The meeting media policy again was posted on the meeting website. K-State Conference Services also will

provide photography and video services to help leverage social media resources and provide podcasts of plenary and capstone speakers.

2016—The addition of a Society YouTube channel could help recruit new members. In addition, streaming presentations are being considered as a possible way to incorporate a broader community into the Annual Meetings. The “Virtual Meeting” may increase participation and meeting revenue.

(10) 2016, 2017, and 2018 Meeting Venues

2016—The 2016 meeting will be held June 24th-28th at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. Sharon Jansa will present an update on the meeting to the membership.

2017—Two proposals (one university and one non-university) will be presented to the membership for the 2017 meeting to be held in the western region. Winston Smith assisted in site visits.

2018—The 2018 meeting will be held in the northeastern region. Members interested in university bids are already in contact. Conference center/hotel bids will be pursued if no university offers are received.

Action Items:

(1) The Program Committee requests approval of the following budget items, which will support workshops, symposia, and capstone speaker travel to be held at the 2016 Annual Meeting:

WORKSHOP—How to be a good peer-reviewer: what editors and authors need from you (Fairbanks and Merrick)

REQUEST: \$0

SYMPOSIUM—Big data meets Mammalogy: how to discover existing datasets and save your data from extinction (Reid and Wang)

REQUEST: \$5,000

SYMPOSIUM—Morphometric approaches to studying mammalian evolution and ecology (Fox and McNulty)

REQUEST: \$4,000

CAPSTONE SPEAKER—The capstone speaker is to be selected by the Vice President.

REQUEST: \$1,500

TOTAL REQUEST: \$10,500

(2) The Program Committee requests approval of the budget item to support expenses associated with site visits for the selection of future meeting venues.

REQUEST: \$8000

(3) The Program Committee requests approval of the budget item to support the costs associated with Society administrative activities that take place during the Annual Meeting (e.g., Board of Directors meetings, Members Meeting, etc.).

REQUEST: \$4000

(4) The Program Committee requests approval of the budget item to support expenses associated with the 2016 Annual Meeting.

REQUEST: \$8000

(5) The Program Committee requests approval for the use of 2015 meeting residual funds to support expenses associated with the 2016 Annual Meeting, particularly relating to keeping registration affordable and funding requests for support of meeting activities and speakers submitted after the meeting budget has been finalized.

REQUEST: TBD

TOTAL REQUEST: \$30,500

Respectfully submitted,
Cody Thompson, Chair
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