

Human Diversity Committee

Committee Members: R. P. Anderson, J. R. Burger, A. S. Chavez, L. J. Dizney, J. H. Douglas, J. D. Hanson, D. M. Kaufman (Chair), D. W. Kaufman, T. J. Orr, I. M. Ortega, K. C. Rowe, and C. W. Thompson.

Mission:

The purpose of the Human Diversity Committee is to ensure active participation in the ASM by all members, regardless of gender, race, ethnic background, age, physical disabilities, or sexual preference. Further, we remind all ASM members that our ombudspersons (R. W. Thorington and F. A. Smith) are available to listen, mediate, or advise on issues regarding discrimination, inappropriate conduct, or other unprofessional behaviors (see *Journal of Mammalogy* 78:268 [1997]).

Information Items:

(1) The HDC continues its efforts to promote and support diversity in all aspects of the ASM. Last year, at the request of an ASM member who wanted to facilitate a discussion about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) issues, we helped coordinate a “Diversity in Science: LGBT and Friends Roundtable and Mini-Mixer” (held at the 2012 Annual Meeting). This initial gathering was directed towards (1) facilitating discussion and increasing awareness, (2) providing a supportive environment where attendees could meet others interested in LGBT issues and others who wanted to ensure that ASM is welcoming to all forms of diversity in science, (3) understanding challenges related to being LGBT in science and gather information about potential solutions, (5) discovering perceptions about academic and professional environments and attitudes (e.g., in the workplace), and (6) gaining insights into whether scientific societies (such as ASM) present themselves as welcoming and what approaches might reinforce positive aspects or address any concerns. More than 35 ASM meeting attendees were present at the roundtable and there was an lively group conversation about concerns, experiences (both positive and negative), viewpoints about LGBT issues, and expressed appreciation for ASM making an overt step towards providing an explicitly welcoming and open environment. After about an hour of group-wide discussion, participants broke up into small informal groups to continue individual conversations.

(2) The HDC continues to work towards understanding the pressing issues that must be faced for ASM to better handle diversity issues in the Society and in science. Currently, in an era when “taxonomic” societies are generally experiencing membership declines, the ASM as whole is seeking to find new approaches to maintain and expand its membership. Not only does the Society seek to increase its total membership, but it needs to continue to promote the level of diversity of its overall membership, as well as to increase the diversity of members who are able participate in ASM governance and in the major activities associated with the Society and/or the Annual Meeting. Not only would increased diversity continue to serve the overall goals of fairness and equity in science, but mechanisms focused on increasing diversity likely would also serve as a means to help retain current members and recruit new members. Our committee

meetings always are open to meeting attendees, but this year we **strongly** urge anyone who is interested in diversity issues to attend our scheduled committee meeting.

(3) We hope to open a dialogue about what diversity concerns you have and how the ASM can best meet those concerns—*particularly in this age of changing technology and increased electronic interaction*. We will be discussing the role of ASM and mammalogy in diversity issues and how the Society can adapt its approaches to addressing diversity needs (7 pm on Saturday, 15 June—*location to be announced*). Specifically, we would like to (1) identify the diversity-related concerns, challenges, and potential solutions you have and (2) establish what the Society is or should be doing, as well as to (3) hear about how we can best provide a conduit for the discussion of diversity issues and resolution of diversity problems. In conjunction with efforts to develop a potential suite of initiatives to broaden ASM’s diversity and increase the opportunities for those underrepresented in the ASM, mammalogy, and science, we welcome broad participation—especially by members who have specific ideas and suggestions—and invite any interested attendees to share their ideas with us, either by attending our committee meeting or by contacting individual members of HDC.

Action Items: None.

Respectfully submitted,
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