

American Arachnological Society
Duties and Responsibilities of Society Officers
drafted Paula E. Cushing & Al Cady, September 2007

The operational rules of the American Arachnological Society, hereafter referred to as the AAS, are codified in the Constitution and By-Laws of the AAS (posted at www.americanarachnology.org). The purpose of the present document is to codify the duties and responsibilities of the society officers – including duties already codified in the Constitution as well as additional duties and responsibilities as indicated below. This document also identifies the various standing committees and the duties and responsibilities of standing committee chairs.

Elected Executive Committee (EC) Members

President, President-Elect, Treasurer, Secretary, and three Directors

EC Members Appointed by the President with Approval of the EC

Membership Secretary, Archivist, Graduate Student Representative, Parliamentarian,
Journal of Arachnology Editor-in-Chief, and Webmaster

Non-voting Members of the EC

Archivist, Parliamentarian, Graduate Student Representative

Duties and Responsibilities of all EC members:

All voting EC members are expected to attend the annual EC meeting at the AAS conference if possible. All non-voting EC members are strongly encouraged to attend this annual meeting. All EC members are expected to read and be familiar with the AAS Constitution and By-Laws.

President

The duties of the President include:

- all duties outlined in the Constitution
- preside over the annual EC meeting
- preside over the annual AAS business meeting
- appoint standing committee chairs
- work with various committees and officers to promote the society and its products
- prepare letters for new and renewing members of the AAS to be used by Membership Secretary to acknowledge receipt of payments. Letters should include information about annual meetings, society benefits (registration discount, purchase discounts for society products, research and travel awards, etc.). Letter(s) must be sent to Membership Secretary for distribution by December 1st. (Letter templates in Appendix.)
- Keep EC informed by email of new issues that arise between the annual meetings, and arrange voting by email of the EC when deemed necessary.

President-Elect

The duties of the President-Elect include:

- all duties outlined in the Constitution
- preside over the annual EC meeting and/or business meeting in the absence of the president
- assume responsibilities of President in the event of the President's incapacitation
- appoint judges for the student presentation award competition at the annual meeting
- send judges instructions, score cards (that can be given to students as feedback), list of student presenters, and presentation abstracts (see Appendix for these documents)
- contact major advisors of student competitors to request letter indicating extent to which work presented is student's own
- contact student competitors to request their curriculum vita
- arrange future venues and hosts for annual AAS meetings

Treasurer

The duties of the Treasurer include:

- all duties outlined in the Constitution
- maintain separate records for general society finances and society products (e.g., *Spiders of North America* manual)

Secretary

The duties of the Secretary include:

- all duties outlined in the Constitution
- distribute minutes from EC meeting directly after annual meeting so action items can be worked on
- distribute minutes from annual Business Meeting to membership prior to annual meeting so discussion and corrections can ensue at that year's Business Meeting
- create and distribute to all society members two issues of the society newsletter, *American Arachnology*, per year
- create the election ballot with assistance of Directors and help Membership Secretary distribute it before the annual meeting
- update this document (codification of duties) when necessary

Senior Director

- serves as the chair of the nominating committee – seeks qualified and willing nominees for upcoming election (see Appendix for versions of letters sent to potential nominees)
- works with President to select non-Director member of nominating committee
- communicates with Secretary when nominees have been chosen so ballot can be created
- serves as chair of Travel Grant Award Committee for next upcoming meeting(s) – AAS only or AAS and ISA
- selects two additional committee members for Travel Grant Award Committee
- hosts the informal arachnological evening (casual presentations) at annual meeting

Director – past President

- maintains sponsorship file for AAS members willing to sponsor membership from developing country
- matches AAS sponsors with needy individuals interested in membership (works with Membership Secretary to do this)

Director – newly elected

- serves on nominating committee
- serves as a liaison with chair of Marketing Committee to develop strategy for raising organization's profile, attract new members, etc.
- serves as a liaison with chair of Student Research Award Committee to get updates and information about award selection (should be done one month prior to application deadline)

Membership Secretary

- duties as outlined in the Constitution
- reminds President to draft letter to new/renewing members. Reminder sent to President by November 1st
- provide Director (past President) names of individuals seeking AAS sponsorship
- send out reminders to AAS sponsors when their sponsored membership expires to request that they renew their own membership as well as the sponsored membership

Archivist

- maintain* records of past meeting minutes (EC and business meetings)
- maintain* historical records pertaining to society (meeting photos, correspondence, procedural documents, etc.)
- remind Secretary to send documents for the archives
- provide information or copies of documents about the society when requested*
- *AAS material is periodically transferred to the archivist at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. Thus, requests for materials made through the Archivist will be transmitted to the Smithsonian archivist.

Graduate Student Representative

- attend EC meetings
- provide input and feedback on all issues but especially issues impacting graduate student membership
- write a report about graduate student topics related to AAS to be published in the newsletter (e.g., AAS business of direct concern to student membership, reminders to students about AAS products, request for student involvement in AAS committee)
- work with chair of Marketing Committee to increase student membership and involvement in the society
- assist other committees on ad hoc basis

Parliamentarian

- duties as described in Constitution

***Journal of Arachnology* Editor-in-Chief**

- duties as described in the Constitution

Webmaster

- duties as described in the Constitution and By-Laws
- work with annual meeting hosts to advise on and coordinate meeting registration tasks

Standing Committees

Standing committees and goals include:

- Student Research Award Committee (current Chair – Deborah Smith): select student research awardees, including for Vince Roth Memorial awards in taxonomy and systematics
- Travel Grant Award Committee (Chair – Senior Director): select student awardees for attendance at annual AAS meetings and for attendance at ISA meetings
- Marketing Committee (current Chair – Eileen Hebets as of Jan. 2008): raise profile of the society products, raise profile of the journal, work with chair of SNAIM committee to help market that society product, act as liaison for the Society with those proposing new AAS publications or products, develop marketing plans for other AAS publications or products
- SNAIM (*Spiders of North America: an Identification Manual*) Production Committee (Chair – TBD): work with printer, with past SNAIM chair (Paula Cushing), and with Darrell Ubick to ensure that the manual is revised approximately every three years

Duties of standing committee chairs

- Student Research Award Committee: identify reviewers for student research and Roth proposals; produce an annual report submitted to the EC before each AAS annual meeting; submit a list of awardees, their affiliation, and proposal titles to the Secretary for publication in *American Arachnology*
- Travel Grant Award Committee: identify reviewers for travel grant proposals; produce an annual report submitted to the EC before each AAS annual meeting; submit a list of awardees their affiliation, and titles of their presentations to the Secretary for publication in *American Arachnology*
- Marketing Committee: see above, find additional committee members as needed, and produce annual report on activities submitted to the EC before each AAS annual meeting
- SNAIM (*Spiders of North America: an Identification Manual*) Production Committee: secure and maintain the source files for SNAIM, other duties described above, and produce an annual report submitted to the EC before each AAS annual meeting

APPENDIX – LETTERS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

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The American Arachnological Society

Office of the President

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9/14/2007

Dear _____:

Welcome to the American Arachnological Society! We greatly appreciate your support and membership. I want to welcome you and introduce you to some of your membership benefits.

As an AAS member you will receive three issues per year of the *Journal of Arachnology* – the premier journal for the dissemination of arachnological research worldwide. You will also receive electronic copies of our society newsletter, *American Arachnologist*. In addition, you will receive, on the back cover of your issue of the journal, a userid and password that will allow you to obtain free access to electronic versions (in pdf format) of articles published within the last year in the *Journal of Arachnology*. These electronic copies can be accessed via the society website at <http://www.americanarachnology.org>.

Also via this website, you can download order forms to purchase another society product, the book *Spiders of North America: an identification manual*. This is the only reliable manual available allowing the identification of spiders from all North American families down to the genus level. This book can be purchased at a very discounted price for society members using the mail-in order form. It can also be purchased at a non-discounted price at www.amazon.com or from www.bioquip.com.

In addition to these benefits, members (regular and student members) receive a discount on registration costs at the annual meeting of the society. Annual meetings are held in a variety of places throughout North America. In 2008, the AAS meeting will be held in Berkeley, California from June 25-30; in 2009, the meeting will be held in Quebec, Canada; in 2010, the meeting will be held in Russellville, Arkansas; in 2011 it will be in Portland, Oregon; and in 2012, it will be in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

In addition to these benefits, student members and regular members without institutional support are eligible for monetary research awards to support their research and students are eligible for travel awards to provide monetary support for attendance at annual meetings and at meetings of the International Society of Arachnology (held every three years). Information on these research and travel awards can be found on the society website.

Welcome again and thank you for joining!

Paula E. Cushing, Ph.D.
President, American Arachnological Society

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9/19/2007

Dear _____:

Thank you for renewing your membership in the American Arachnological Society! We greatly appreciate your support and membership. I want to welcome you and remind you of your membership benefits.

As an AAS member you will receive three issues per year of the *Journal of Arachnology* – the premier journal for the dissemination of arachnological research worldwide. You will also receive electronic copies of our society newsletter, *American Arachnologist*. In addition, you will receive, on the back cover of your issue of the journal, a userid and password that will allow you to obtain free access to electronic versions (in pdf format) of articles published within the last year in the *Journal of Arachnology*. These electronic copies can be accessed via the society website at <http://www.americanarachnology.org>.

Also via this website, you can download order forms to purchase another society product, the book *Spiders of North America: an identification manual*. This is the only reliable manual available allowing the identification of spiders from all North American families down to the genus level. This book can be purchased at a very discounted price for society members using the mail-in order form. It can also be purchased at a non-discounted price at www.amazon.com or from www.bioquip.com.

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I also wish to draw your attention to our program to sponsor the membership of arachnologists from developing nations who might not otherwise be able to afford to join the AAS. If you would like to sponsor a member, please contact Beth Jakob, Past President (ejakob@psych.umass.edu). You may choose to sponsor either a student or regular member.

Sincerely,
Paula E. Cushing, Ph.D.
President, American Arachnological Society

Judges for Student Paper Competition

2003 (run by Gary):

Beth Jakob
Jason Bond
Jan Weaver
Eileen Hebets
David Sissom
Sandra Brantley
Jeff Shultz
Darrell Ubick

2004 (run by Beth)

Sam Marshall
Jon Coddington
Brent Opell
Debbie Smith
Chris Brown

2005 (run by Beth)

Posters

Marshall Hedin
Doug Gaffin
Doug Morse

Talks

Gail Stratton
Dave Clark
Jeremy Miller
Beth Jakob

2006 (run by Paula)

Possible Judges:

C. Neal McReynolds (talks) – ecology -- confirmed
Victor Fet – systematics (talks) – systematics – confirmed
Rich Bradley (talk) – behavior & biodiversity -- confirmed
Paula Cushing (talk – back up)

Simon Pollard – behavior (posters) -- confirmed
Bruce Cutler (posters) – taxonomy & general -- confirmed
Tsunemi Yamashita – (posters) phlogeography/systematics – confirmed

2007 (run by Paula)

Possible Judges:

Nancy Kreiter (oral) -- **confirmed**

Jon Coddington (oral) -- **confirmed**

Paula Cushing (oral) -- **confirmed**

Bob Edwards (back up oral)

Rick Vetter (poster) -- **confirmed**

Linden Higgins (poster) -- **confirmed**

Ingi Angnarsson (poster) – contacted instead of Bob -- **confirmed**

Greetings:

Thank you so much for agreeing to judge in the AAS competition! I have arranged for two judging teams: one for the student poster presentations and one for the platform talks. I've assigned duties such that no one judges in a competition that one of their students is competing in. I've also made an effort to balance areas of expertise.

Poster judges

name
name
name

Platform paper judges

name
name
name

We will work independently as we view the presentations. Consider yourself undercover until the banquet when the awards are announced. (I suspect the clever students might suspect that the people taking notes are judges but at least we won't make it TOO obvious). Along with this letter, I am sending two additional documents. One, titled StudentPaperGuide gives general information and tips about the student competition (for both judges and students). This document also contains a sample score sheet that you can use or modify if you think it is helpful. Otherwise, you can simply take notes on each presentation and come up with a ranking at the end – whatever works best for you. Please do look over the document, however, as it gives good information about what to look for in the posters and the talks.

Attached is also a list of student abstracts for your particular competition (posters or oral presentations). All the student talks should be demarcated in the program with some sort of symbol. However, it is always a good idea to go through your program and make sure each of the student presenters is highlighted somehow so you don't miss a presentation or poster! I've asked all the students to make sure their students mark the posters with a large black dot in the upper right hand corner of the poster to make it easier for poster judges to find the student posters. However, some students may forget so be sure to find all the student posters.

We will not meet formally until the judging meeting, but I will try to touch base with everyone before then.

I will ask Matt Persons to set aside a time for the judges on the last day (after the last talk). I'm not sure when that meeting time will be but will make an

announcement once I know. It may be over lunch. If judges do not finish making their decision in the allotted time, you may have to meet prior to the banquet.

Let me know if you have any questions at all and thank you all so very much for agreeing to serve as a judge!

Happy travels, and see you in Selinsgrove!

Best,
Paula

STUDENT PAPER PRESENTATION AWARD GUIDELINES

Revised August 3, 2007

Thanks to Linda Rayor!

I ELIGIBILITY

- A. The student should email the President Elect a CV or statement explaining whether the work to be presented is part of a master's thesis, a doctoral dissertation, and whether it is the culmination of the graduate project or just a small component of that project. An abstract must be submitted to the meeting organizer ([see meeting website](#) for deadlines, names and addresses). The major professor or supervisor must email the President Elect indicating the extent to which the work was independently developed and executed.
- B. The presentation must represent a completed body of independent or joint research in which the student's contribution has been substantial. If co-authored, the student must be first author.
- C. Entry is limited to one poster or oral presentation.
- D. Previous winners of the Student Paper award are not eligible. However, runner-ups are eligible, and past poster winners may compete in the oral competition and vice versa.

II JUDGES

- A. The President-Elect will appoint a panel of judges representing different disciplines prior to the meeting and email to them abstracts, judging guidelines, and forms.
- B. To avoid bias or conflict of interest, judges should not have competing students or, if unavoidable, should abstain from voting on their own students.
- C. President-Elect or committee chair of competition must provide one score sheet per student competitor for all judges.
- D. Judges should meet beforehand to review guidelines and afterwards to vote, with at least one hour between the last eligible presentation and the award announcement.

III EVALUATION

- A. Judges should rate presentations as "Outstanding, Good, Adequate, or Poor" based on the criteria listed below. In co-authored papers, the judges will carefully evaluate the student's contribution to the presented research. In case of a tie or very close ranking, the judges may decide on a joint award.
- B. Judges should consider returning score sheets to the President Elect or the competition committee chair so that the score sheets can be provided to students as feedback.

IV CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES FOR A GOOD PRESENTATION

A. Scientific Criteria

1. Introduction:

- a. Was the research problem clearly introduced? Was the importance of the research question explained? Why was the work done? Did the presenter provide background and context for the research? What was the state of the field prior to this study?
- b. Was a clear statement of the hypothesis(es) provided or, in studies that did not test

hypotheses, were the objectives and importance of the research clearly stated?

2. Methods:

- a. Were techniques appropriate and clearly explained?
- b. How creative was the work? If the work employed common techniques, were they used to approach novel issues or novel questions?

3. Results:

- a. Were the results a valuable contribution to the field?
- b. Was the significance clearly demonstrated?

4. Discussion & Conclusions:

- a. Were the results well-summarized and related to the introduction?
- b. Were the conclusions warranted by the data?
- c. Did the results provide a valuable contribution to our knowledge of arachnids or did they merely provide details about a phenomenon that is already largely understood?
- d. Was the research sufficiently independent, unique, or creative?
- e. Were the conclusions placed in a broader context?

B. Presentation Style and Logistics:

1. Were the graphics lucid? Were figures intelligible with clearly labeled axes? Were tables legible and intelligible? Were the graphics designed to be as self-explanatory and informative as possible?
2. Was specialist jargon minimized so that non-specialists could understand?
3. How well did the speaker respond to questions?
4. Did the student project a professional demeanor? Did s/he avoid inappropriate references, private jokes, and making excuses for poor graphics?
5. (oral) Was the speaker clear and logical or confused and disorganized? Was eye contact made with the audience, or was the paper simply read from notes or the screen?
6. (oral) Was the speaker poised? Was the presentation “timed” correctly?
7. (poster) Was the poster clearly organized and well planned? Was the poster clearly arranged with minimal text for maximal effect? Were the visuals used appropriate for the point being made? Was the font large enough to be easily read from a distance? Was the poster visually appealing and not overly busy? Did the student try to cram too much information on the poster?
8. (poster) Was the oral presentation (to the judge) succinct, clear, and focused?

V ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES

Traditionally, the award is announced at the society’s banquet. Students are strongly encouraged to attend the banquet since this is an ideal setting to “schmooze” with established

arachnologists and to see George Uetz, auctioneer extraordinaire, and his minions at their best.

VI AWARDS

The top ranking and runner-up individuals traditionally receive a monetary award.

SCORE SHEET (Judges, consider providing this to committee chair to give to student for feedback)

Name of Student and co-authors: _____

Title: _____

OVERALL RATING ____/60 total.

Rank as 1 (poor); 2 (adequate); 3(good); 4 (outstanding). Comments welcome.

Abstract

1. ____ Good summary, especially results.

Introduction

2. ____ Broader conceptual framework & overview of previous work.

3. ____ Hypothesis(es), goals, or predictions clearly stated.

Methods

4. ____ Clearly presented, appropriate to question.

5. ____ New or new use of techniques.

Results

6. ____ Clearly presented.

7. ____ Valuable, significant contribution.

Discussion

8. ____ Conclusions well supported.

9. ____ Work extended beyond advisor's other projects vs. minor increment to work.

10. ____ Placed in broader context.

Presentation style (oral or poster)

11. ____ Clear, well organized, eye contact.

12. ____ Lucid graphics (meaningful, clearly labeled; legible tables).

13. ____ Minimal jargon, no verbal "ticks," no inappropriate humor, not read.

14. ____ Responded well to questions.

15. ____ Met time limits [talk] or minimal text for maximal effect [poster].

Dear XXX:

On behalf of the American Arachnological Society, we would like to know whether you might be willing to be nominated for the position of President-Elect for the AAS. Section 7 of our constitution describes this wonderful two-year position: The President-Elect shall assume the duties of the President in his or her absence at business meeting, and shall become the President in the event of death, resignation, or disability of the President. In the event of the absence of both President and President-Elect at a business meeting, any member of the Society duly chosen by the members present ought to preside. The President-elect is also in charge of the student paper/ poster competitions and rounding-up future meeting sites. And are you ready for the best part of all? - The President-elect then goes on and serves as president of the AAS for two years, then as a Director for two more.

This is an exciting opportunity to become a key person on the AAS executive; it is not a terribly onerous position, but is very important and insures the long-term and continued success of the AAS. This is an extremely important position for our society, and I sincerely hope you will consider our request. In all honesty, I think you've got the right personality and experience to handle the position with ease.

We look forward to your response, and if you are willing to be nominated, we will subsequently ask you for a short-paragraph to describe yourself, your research interests, and your interests in the AAS, and in the position as the president-elect. Members will be voting soon on this position, and we hope your name can be on the ballot!

Thank you,

Chris Buddle and Jason Bond,
Nomination Committee for the AAS

Dear XXXX,

On behalf of the American Arachnological Society, we would like to know whether you might be willing to be nominated as a director for the AAS. This is a two-year term. The main duties are to be involved with the nominating committee for new officers; to liaison with the chair of the marketing committee in order to develop a strategy for raising the organization's profile, attract new members, etc.; to liaison with the chair of the student research award committee to get updates and information about award selection (done one month prior to application deadline); and to sit as a voting member of the executive committee for the society. You would also be expected to attend meetings of executive committee, held each year in conjunction with the annual AAS meetings. This is an exciting opportunity to become involved with the AAS in a formal manner, and insure the long-term and continued success of the AAS. It's not an onerous position, but is important for the society.

We look forward to your response, and if you are willing to be nominated, we will subsequently ask you for a short-paragraph to describe yourself, your research interests, and your interests in the AAS, and in the position as a director. Members will be voting soon on new directors, and we hope your name can be on the ballot!

Thank you,

Jason Bond & Chris Buddle
Nomination Committee for the AAS