**2016 AAS Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

**6-8 PM, July 3, 2016, Golden Visitor’s Center**

**20th International Congress of Arachnology, Golden, Colorado**

**Expected Members Present**: Marshal Hedin, Rich Bradley, Jeff Shultz, Karen Cangialosi, Paula Cushing, Mike Draney, Andy Roberts, Brent Opell, Bob Suter, Alex Sweger,Lenny Vincent, Deb Smith, Petra Sierwald

**Regrets**: Charles Griswold, Jan Weaver,

1. **Approval of minutes from 2015 Executive Committee Meeting -** Marshal Hedin

Minutes unanimously approved.

2. **Reports:**

* Membership – Jeff Shultz

There is a decline in membership. Hidden this year because of all he international students who joined to take advantage of our generosity. 11% decline this year relative to last year and a 41% decline over the last 10 yrs. Several members joined to take advantage of our AAS perks. Continued reduction in institutional members but compensated for by income from JStor and BioOne.

* Treasurer – Karen Cangialosi

In line with drop in membership, membership income is declining (< $30K) but we get > $34K from BioOne. We are doing well financially; partly because of BioOne income. Karen mentioned $31K raised from donors to support attendees at the ICA. Our Schwab acct has been steady. Haven’t made a lot of money but haven’t lost money either. Our total assets are about $203K.

Marshal moved to approve; Bob seconded. Unanimously approved.

* JOA – Bob Suter

We went from email to electronic submission system mid-Dec 2015. Authors and editors love it. BioOne: our journal continues to get lots of hits and go up more than the average journal does. Cost of publication: we are almost breaking even. We should not spend out all our extra money just because we get income from BioOne.

Cost for moving to electronic = $1500 one-shot and $28 per paper. Went down from a mean of 12 months to publication to a mean of 8 months. Have stayed at about 8 months.

Peer track is the expense for going electronic.

**Action Item: Karen will send Bob invoice for Peer Track so he can see what Allen Press is charging us for.**

Peer track allows subject editors to track mss easier. Sends them reminders about where papers are in the system. System has only had minor flaws – overall a good thing.

Turnaround time for review (Brian Patrick)? Hard to assess because switch to Peer Track has been more recent – so there are still mss in the old non-electronic system. So hard to tell if there is faster return.

Jeff Shultz asked if increase in impact factor was due to invited reviews. Review papers never jump into the realm of garnering lots of hits. Bob thinks it is more important to keep quality of journal solid rather than making an attempt to increase impact factor. Journal fills specific niche so hard to determine how to increase “impact” of the journal.

* Future meeting sites – Rich Bradley: *2017 Yucatan Mexico; 2018 Eastern Michigan; 2019 possibly UC Davis or Auburn University?*

Rich has not identified new possible hosts. Other much less expensive housing options in Mexico might make that site more do-able. In 2018, Cara Shillington and Anne Danielson-Francois are going to co-host – haven’t decided on the site. Joel Ledford interested in hosting it in Auburn. Jason Bond interested; but not during ICA meeting year. So perhaps could switch Jason’s meeting and Joel’s meeting since Joel did not seem overly concerned about hosting AAS during ICA year. But Jason may have been confused about what year the next ICA would be (2019).

* SNAIM – Paula Cushing

Deb criticized the key to families because it was too focused on genitalia.

Paula recommended that Deb email Darrell and Paula to suggest an abbreviated family key (more user-friendly) for the 3rd edition.

Jeff suggested a multi-access key in addition to a dichotomous key.

Karen said that we may need a separate teaching key.

Bob asked if we were staying with status quo in terms of selling thru Bookmasters and we are. Brian pointed out that it does well with serious amateurs.

People liked idea of speed key.

Brian said that he has heard good feedback about the utility of the illustrations right next to the keys.

* Common Spiders of North America – Rich Bradley??

Price has been increased from $60 - $85. And electronic copies are terrible and links don’t work. Kindle version thru Amazon is fine. Increased price, Rich thinks, has depressed sales. Sold about 500 this year. Last year sold about 600 – 700. Peaked year after the year of introduction. Probably corresponds to libraries acquiring the book.

Rich not happy with publicity by UC Press.

New science editor has expressed a genuine interest in producing a smaller paperback book that would be cheaper. But no decision has been made yet. Right now chugging along at about 500 copies a year.

[PEC note: AAS members still receive a 30% discount when purchasing the book]

* AAS/ICA Travel Grant reports – Karen Cangialosi, for Kenneth King Foundation & Schlinger grants; Mike Draney for student travel grants [and ask Mike to get a brief report from Damien Laudier]

Kenneth King and Schlinger Reports: funded 6 retired arachnologists. Funded about $3600. Some of the Schlinger money went to support the Kenneth King Foundation which supported people from developing nations. Got 35 applications and were able to fund 13 people.

Mike chaired student travel grants. Had 62 applications and were able to pay out $16,000. The membership criteria is also tricky. Hard to know if students are members. Some of them join the same day that they submitted the application. Maybe criteria should be that they need to be a member for one year. The grants are a great recruiting tool for the society.

Mike’s suggestions: Committee was allowed to have a lot of leeway for funding. Committee had no oversight. Would have been helpful to have more specific guidelines. Would have been useful to have more criteria.

Paula presented Laudier report. Committee recognized Damien’s incredible generosity. **President of the society will send formal letter of thanks.**

Some of issues raised should be moved to new business to deal with issues raised by grant committees (Mike’s and Karen’s).

* Schlinger Fund update – Lenny Vincent [see above]

Lenny is not certain of the future of the Schlinger fund. CAS had two chairs of arachnology. Lot less money available now. Maybe “old fart” fund should be general travel grant. There are two new directors of Schlinger Foundation.

Lenny’s suggestion is to convert Schlinger to general travel grant support. Not necessarily for emeritus. This will be tabled for new business.

* Archivist Report – Lenny Vincent

Great stuff from Vince Roth’s correspondence; from Gertsch and others. Concerned that now with email correspondence is not saved. Lenny is going to try and get Robin Leech and maybe Levi. MCZ may want to have Levi’s material deposited in their archive.

* Website update – Jan Weaver

Committee read.

* Grad Student Representative report – Alex Sweger

Alex does not get good response thru email. Alex will spend some of this ICA meeting to network with students.

Alex wants to improve on what students need – undergrads and grads. Some of that includes making connections (networking). For undergrads it means increasing their access to information and papers.

Problem is all we have is AAS website but Facebook may be better. Might be good to create something like ResearchGate for disseminating papers. Doesn’t know how to incorporate that into website, but is pondering that.

Thinks should separate undergrads and grads for competition awards. Maybe create separate awards for those categories. Students also want feedback.

Judges at their meeting – Rich suggested providing verbal feedback but not return actual forms. General feeling was that students should be given feedback but not on form.

Alex thought a formalized process for feedback would be good.

Alex is trying to find grad student replacement. He wants to make announcement.

Rich suggested posting to Facebook page.

Brian suggested announcing at Banquet, on Facebook, before plenaries – several times and several ways.

* Press Relations Officer – Paula Cushing

Some got picked up; some fell flat. General feeling was that this is par for the course for PRs.

**Action Item: Brian wants links to actual articles resulting from release of PRs.**

* Election Results – Paula Cushing

Eileen Hebets is our new Director. Thanks to great candidates.

Marshal made motion to go to committee as a whole. Seconded.

3. **Old Business:**

* Update on new changes to Student Research Grants (e.g., changes in committee make-up, increased award amounts, new deadlines) – **Deb Smith**

Application deadline was moved later. Got triple the usual # of applications. Most wanted $1K. And there was only $5K to give out. #s in past years usually were about 10. Usually more AAS than Roth. Had 10 international and 22 from the US.

Committee was Deb, Bruce Cutler, and Al Cady. Did not succeed in drafting another committee member.

Deb wants advice on maybe posting a request for those willing to review student research grants. Or nominate more people for the committee one way or another. One person has to take all reviews and aggregate them. Deb spent about 4 hrs per proposal. Al and Bruce have so many reviews to do, that is time-consuming. All students received feedback; particularly unsuccessful candidates.

Would also be good to get more money to distribute.

Usually can fund about 2/3 of proposals if they are good. Avg award this year was between $300 - $400. By and large they were good proposals and it was difficult to eliminate some or not fund at a larger level.

Response date by which committee sends decision to students should be something besides May 1st. Committee needs to decide on a good date.

Bob asked if there was a discussion in the committee about how to allocate the funds besides just dividing up the available funds. Deb felt dividing it too finely would not be helpful to the students. Deb felt they were more or less of equal merit. At least for AAS grants.

For Roth, decisions were more “formulaic” since committee could just verify that students were using particular methods.

Bob suggested that if some committee assesses decisions made for all the grants, that the committee also consider how funds are allocated so that funds are not just equally distributed.

Faced with a situation where we are losing membership but financially healthy. We don’t want to just trust that our finances will remain healthy.

Jeff felt that we should provide funding for arachnological research regardless of membership.

Marshal – we should come up with a number for an increase in the funding pool and see how it goes.

Jeff – can increase funds without mandating that all the funds be spent out.

Marshal suggested increase to $7500 and decrease the max for grants to $750.

Karen – committee should not feel compelled to spend out all available funds.

Karen prefers to set the fund max at the higher amount of $15K.

Mike proposed that the student research fund be set at $15,000 but leave max award at $1K to allow us to fund more proposals with the understanding that the entire fund need not be spent if not all the proposals are worthy of funding.

Deb is considering approaching former recipients to see if she can recruit more committee members that way.

Deb will make an announcement at the business meeting.

Brian Patrick (new membership secretary) will also send out request to members.

When this goes to business meeting, worth adding language that says that this fund is one of the important things the society does to support the next generation of arachnologists and we want to recruit new committee members to carry out this important work.

* Newly established Herb Levi Memorial Grant for Arachnological Research – **Petra Sierwald**

She submitted report.

4. **New Business:** *Go to committee as a whole*

* Discuss how AAS budgetary decisions are made, removing burden from Karen.

Karen does not want to be the decision maker for requests about what the society should or should not spend money on.

Mike said that the decision should be based on vote by the EC.

How should we audit our books? Suggestion was that a sub-committee of the EC to review books as part of the EC would be good.

Marshal suggested it be added to the job of the membership secretary since membership secretary also deals with income.

Brian asked if it made sense for the two people most responsible for income be the two people reviewing the budget.

Brent said that proposal should be: EC suggests that an officer be appointed to serve as an auditor. Membership secretary would not be good because s/he also deals with income.

Suggested that auditor should be the past-president.

But the original issue – how to deal with requests for the society to spend more money on certain things. If treasurer or anyone else proposes an expenditure, the person should be asked to draft a formal proposal that will be submitted to the President. The President will ask for a vote if he/she agrees that the proposal is worthy(?) and sends deadline for a vote.

* JoA revised goals & mission statement – Mike Draney

There was a discussion of Mike’s proposal.

To what extent should AAS be guiding what JoA publishes and what editorial decisions are made?

Bob Suter feels that the body of editors should be allowed to make decisions about acceptance, rejection, and what articles should be considered.

General feeling among editors is that they want journal to publish with highest standards it can achieve. And to do this, certain kinds of articles (e.g., range extensions of single species, single species descriptions, faunal lists) do not achieve this goal. But there is great leeway in making decisions about articles.

Would seem strange to receive directive from the EC about what kinds of articles should be considered by the journal or what people’s papers (e.g., members) should be considered as authors.

Mike – made point that that is the conundrum is that the JoA should both be a good journal and serve members.

Rich made point that American Arachnology (newsletter) used to be a source for small articles that JoA might not take.

Editors are aware that there is dissatisfaction with the way the scope of the journal is being applied. From Bob’s perspective, it is uneven, but it is within the purview of the panel of editors and is carried out carefully.

Jeff feels there should be more consistency in decisions that are made.

Discussion ended and we will probably table it.

* Donation of Matt Greenstone journal subscription
* Use of Schlinger Foundation funds – Lenny

Motion made to come out

Four proposals:

Raise Student research funds to $15,000 per year.

Motion made; unanimously approved

Motion made to add function of auditor to position of past president duties. Motion made and seconded. Approved.

Anyone requesting budgetary expenditures and submitting these to treasurer or to any individual on the executive committee should be required to submit a formal proposal directly to the President of the EC. The president will propose it to EC and will set deadline for a vote. A majority vote means that the EC approves the expenditure.

This motion passed.

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**ACTION ITEMS – Please act on these items before January 2017**

* **All EC Members (by Sept 1st):** Review applications from four students interested in serving as new Grad Student Representative on the EC and send your choice to Marshal by September 1st. CVs and letters of interest emailed to EC members 10 August 2016.
* **Jan Weaver:** add logo and correct information about 2017 AAS meeting in Mexico (as per Paula’s emails); make other corrections as sent by Paula and Brian in the last month; correct information about AAS EC members (remove Mike Draney as Director, move Andy up list, add Eileen Hebets, remove Jeff Shultz and replace with Brian Patrick); create links to 2016 ICA meeting site (part of ISA website); remove dot under “future meetings”; correct links to other society websites (as per Brian’s email).
* **Karen Cangialosi:** Karen will send Bob invoice for Peer Track so he can see what Allen Press is charging us for.
* **Andy Roberts:** Senior Director to assess rules and criteria for AAS student travel grants.
* **Marshal Hedin:** President of the society will send formal letter of thanks to Damien Laudier for his generosity: provided $10 K support for students presenting on histology/morphology and provided monetary prizes for winners of Arachnid FilmFest. [Damien Laudier, Laudier Histology, P.O. Box 78, New York, NY 10025; [dmlaud@gmail.com](mailto:dmlaud@gmail.com)]
* **Lenny Vincent:** Head of Schlinger Fund (Lenny Vincent) to re-assess whether fund should continue to be used only for emeritus or for general travel support. Criteria will be evaluated and new criteria for Schlinger fund travel awards posted online.
* **Alex Sweger:** Current Grad Student Rep (Alex Sweger) will work with new grad student rep to develop items of interest to students. E.g.:
  + Process to provide feedback for students participating in student presentation competition at the meetings.
  + Effective means of connecting with AAS Student members (Facebook?)
  + Additional networking opportunities for students.
  + Improved mechanisms for disseminating research to students.
* **Paula Cushing:** Use ICA meeting to solicit new Grad Student Rep [done and four candidates have sent letters of interest and CVs: Rebecca Wilson, Will Wiggins, Julia Cosgrove, Anthony Auletta]
* **Paula Cushing & Brian Patrick:** Brian wants links to actual articles resulting from release of PRs. Paula will work with Brian to figure out a good way to disseminate this information to members.
* **Deb Smith & Brian Patrick:** Deb Smith will work with Brian Patrick to find additional members to serve on Student Research Grant committee. Deb to draft a solicitation for new members that Brian can send to members. Or Deb will reach out to former grant recipients to try and convince them to serve on the committee.
* **Student Research Grant Committee:** AAS EC approved increasing pool of money available for Student Research Grants to $15,000 total. Committee will decide on any revisions to criteria or revisions to maximum award amounts per grant.
* **Charles Griswold:** New job added to Past-President Director: society auditor. Charles Griswold will work with Karen C. to carry out an audit before the end of 2016.
* **Paula Cushing:** Paula will add auditor task to job description of the Past-President Director and will send updated pdf to Jan to post on AAS Governance page.
* **All AAS Members:** It was decided that any requests for AAS expenditures (new requests; not established funds or grant pools) should be written as a formal request and submitted to the AAS President. These requests for new expenditures (e.g., for newly established grants, new projects to be supported by the society) will then be submitted to the AAS EC and will be voted upon from henceforth.