

Executive Committee Meeting - Agenda

Davis, CA, June 28, 2022

In-Person Attendance: Andy Roberts, Brian Patrick, Cara Shillington, Deb Smith, Eileen Hebets, Greta Binford, Hannah Wood, Linda Rayor, Paula Cushing, Ryan Jones

Remote Attendance: Brent Opell, Daniel Gloor, Kasey Fowler-Finn, Sarah Rose

Regrets: Brent Hendrixson, Lenny Vincent, Mark Harvey, Petra Sierwald

Motion to accept EC minutes from 2021:

- 1) **Summary of EC/President actions in past year:** Brian moved and Deb 2nded. Unanimous approval of 2021 minutes.
 - a) Approved return to In-Person conference 2022, with virtual options.
 - b) DEI committee established; Mercedes Burns (chair) plus four additional members
 - c) Appointed new Student Representative; Welcome R. Ryan Jones!
 - d) Approved webpage security and system updates
 - e) Participation in “The Future of Scholarly Meetings” project organized by ITHAKA S+R, JSTOR Labs, and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. Stemming from the rapid move to fully virtual conference formats and the slow return to in-person and mixed-model conferences, leadership representatives/teams from 17 US-based professional societies are collaboratively working on establishing “best-practices” for future conferences.

2) **EC Reports:** supporting documents attached

a) **President** (Andy Roberts)

- i) Future of Scholarly Meetings Project : Andy is representing AAS w/ a Ithaca SK and Sloan Foundation project to determine best practices of virtual meetings moving forward. Meet every 2 months. Includes several diff societies. Trying to decide on current best practices.

Most societies recognize value of virtual components for expanding reach of a society. Many of suggestions from larger societies won't work for AAS. Parallel meetings (virtual components) supplemented by online activities are probably most pertinent and useful for society the size of AAS.

Another model that is gaining some interest in some societies is one large meeting w/ smaller regional meetings. May not be viable for AAS at the moment but we may want to discuss some model like this in the future.

Mercedes pointed out that representatives at these meetings are probably self-selected to want to include some level of virtual components and not go back to the in-person only model.

Andy will circle back to EC once larger group completes its meetings and once he knows more from the committee and whether we want to accept suggestions from that committee.

b) **President Elect** (Linda Rayor)

- i) 2022 AAS conference Cornell University : could not get anyone to host meeting next year (Baja host had to cancel for personal reasons). She decided to host at Cornell. Matthias Foellmer will co-host with Linda. Linda is working with Cornell conference services and has already reserved the conference hall. But is having trouble getting agreement in writing from the Cornell conference center.

Andy has a back-up hotel conference center in Ohio that is similar in price to the offer Cornell has put together.

Need people to help manage and plan – program organization, finding judges, virtual components, etc.

Deb asked for general categories where help is most needed. Has spoken with people at Davis about what to do and how to do it. Travel grants need to be earlier. Need to decide budget earlier.

Eileen asked if EC could consider creating a position that is a program officer whose job is to help organize the meeting. Mercedes thought this was a big ask for a volunteer. Eileen envisioned everything beyond business as usual.

Brian thought we weren't utilizing website to its full potential.

Linda said Cornell is happy to set up website and post abstracts. They will organize housing.

- ii) Future meeting sites : Yann Henault is interested in hosting in southern Mexico in June 2024. Sarah Boyer might be interested.

c) **Treasurer** (Cara Shillington) (report requires motion to approve) : See separate report submitted. This year is not a great year financially. AAS had some major expenditures including website development costs. We are making some money in SNAIM account so Cara shifted some of that into the Schwab investment account – but with the country's financial situation, we may not see a positive result from that investment for awhile.

Nadia Ayoub has a check of money (about \$6 – 7K) leftover from last in person meeting that will help shortfalls.

This 2022 meeting may not be as much of a shortfall as originally projected. The silent auction, this year, will be big (lots of items).

Cara also need input about major tax issues. Last 2-3 years she has paid taxes on time. But this year, IRS said they had not received our tax payments.

Wants to move towards online submission. She needs advice on a good online system for doing our taxes.

Andy said that the IRS only just posted the 2020 taxes.

Andy also said he is working with Allen Press to get a refund on taxes they have been charging us for many years (probably since 2018). May have been due to a change in personnel w/ Allen Press.

Vote called for approval of the Treasurer's Report. Brian made a move and Paula seconded. Unanimous approval.

d) **Secretary** (Paula Cushing)

i) Election results (preliminary): Two positions up for vote in 2022: Secretary and Director : Paula Cushing won the Secretary position. Edmundo won for director.

ii) PR report : see report. Add Sebastian Echeverri to the CC line for distrubting the Press Releases so he can tweet it out.

iii) Newsletter report

iv) SNAIM report

e) **Director(s)** (Kasey Fowler-Finn) : Sarah Stellwagen was asked but she said she could run in the future. See Director's report for travel grants. Committee has recommendations for improving travel grant applications. Andy communicated that the Travel Grant committee can make any changes they feel is necessary to increase equity and access and increase pool of applications that includes those who are in need. Just need to come to EC for total amt available to distribute.

f) **Membership** (Brian Patrick) : Membership is at 448. It is down from the past couple of years. The 448 will increase – 15 – 20 members were added since report was submitted. He doubts we will get to #s we reached in 2020 or 2021. In 2020 people were very excited to see the virtual meeting and some connection with the society and the programs.

There is a group of sponsored members who have never created a profile so Brian has dropped them from the rolls. He also has lifetime members who have never created a profile.

Greta asked if some of dropoff of 15 sponsored members and 10-11. Society sponsored members will be dropped from the rolls since they are not responding at all to Brian.

Lifetime members – it was recommended that hard copy letters be sent to the lifetime members as a last ditch attempt to get them back in the roll and to get it set up so they can continue to receive their JoA.

There is a handful of people who are not creating profiles. Brian will continue to work on these people.

g) **Graduate Student Representative** (Ryan Jones) : Sent results of student survey. Everyone wanted digital platform and improve connection with Latin American colleagues. Created a digital platform as requested and there are 40-50 members. Has become an effective platform for students.

Hosted early career panel – not great attendance but those who did attend liked it. Student night out at the meeting was well-attended.

- h) **Journal of Arachnology** (Deb Smith) : see report. After getting a full issue behind during covid, she is caught up and back on track. Yael Lubin joined as new Subject Editor for Animal Behavior, replacing TJ (happened last year). Mark Harvey stepped down as editor for small arachnid orders. Sarah Boyer took on that role. Producing 50th anniversary volume this year. Has a gold cover for this year's anniversary issue and an AAS logo with 50th. Covers will represent events in history of JoA. 1st issue of the volume had reproduction of the very first issue photo. Used World Arachnid Catalog to get the current taxon name for this photo. Discovered that covers are not available online. We are slowly working back in time to add all the covers.

Switch this year to continuous publishing. Don't wait until whole issue is assembled. As soon as articles are ready and paginated, they are posted online and that is the official publication date.

Getting more people to submit Orcid #s. Might look into adding clickable Orcid symbol next to articles. Also adding doi #s on 1st page of each article.

Have a very high bill coming up. Deb started checking average page charge for 2021 when we had a big disconnect with costs higher than income. Page charges were lower but because we are publishing more pages. Could bring down to income by figuring out how many pages we can afford to publish.

Need a system for paying page charges. We don't send out invoices. We rely on authors to reach out to see if they owe \$. Still wants to be able to provide waivers for page charges for authors from UN developing nations.

Officially page charges are \$75 / page for non-members. Started a \$10 / page charge for members. That is being implemented w/ manuscripts submitted as of March 2022. Proposed page charges to editors and there was considerable pushback.

Greta said that last year we discussed going completely online. Was rejected as a viable option because of species / taxon descriptions. There was a plan for the editorial board to meet and put together a proposal to deal w/ financial problems w/ journal.

Have we thought about just going to one issue a year (from Brian). Deb did not think this would help. Brian also said that he has heard from three diff authors that single species descriptions are not accepted by JoA. This is an issue that can be re-visited by the editorial board.

Kasey – what is the turnaround time from submission to publication. This info is on each published paper. Deb has started including submission, revision, and publication dates. The two slow-down points are getting reviewers and digging into backlog. Generally looking at a year.

Impact factor is 1.01 – up from previous rankings.

- i) **Webmaster** (Daniel Gloor) : See report.

j) **Archivist** (Lenny Vincent) : see report.

3) Committee and Award Reports: supporting documents attached

- a) **Common Names Committee** (Sarah Rose) : Sarah was focused on producing her new fabulous book – photo fieldguide of North American spiders. That process was intensive. Common names committee ground to a halt as a result. Has a draft of a form for submitting new common names. Ray Fisher joined for mites and ticks. He has been working on this list – taking longer than he expected. Holding off putting anything on the website until everything is ready to go. Changing a common name is diff process than adding a common name for something that doesn't have one. Ray could be able to complete mites & ticks in next few weeks. Still coordinating efforts w/ Entomological Society of America common names committee. Is also trying to coordinate with BugGuide and iNaturalist for common names. iNat does not want Sarah to send entire file at one time – just 15-20 at a time to update. Sarah will comply. Is still processing common name requests already received. Once has new listing, will separate doc so list can be updated quickly.
- b) **DEI Committee** (new 2022) (Mercedes Burns) : Has established committee. Is working on a demographic survey that can be submitted to AAS. Shahan D., Roin McGinley, Rich Bradley, and one other (see report). Created mission statement that could be sent to membership. Also learned about NSF's BioLEAPs program – Leading scientific change in scientific societies. Is in the process of putting this proposal together with Andy representing AAS. And Nathaniel Swigger (political scientist) is serving as external person. Familiar with social science data. Deadline for grant is Friday (this week). Even if this grant is not successful, demographic survey has to happen. We should still be able to put such a survey together.

Additions to best practices for neurodiverse folks who are asking for a quiet room, directions for meetings, etc (relatively simple things). Andy pointed out that DEI committee has the power to make simple edits to existing documents and send to President, President Elect and Secretary. Things that will easily benefit neurodiverse community.

Code of Conduct – needs updates to ensure inclusivity. Once grant is over, Mercedes suggested that she and her committee can review sections of Code of Conduct. Have to have some sort of reporting mechanism for things that happen at meetings. Also what is permissible for social media.

Eileen has been working on this for 2 years for Animal Behavior Society. With diversity survey, Damien Elias did this work with social science committee so talk to Damian. ABS did not have a procedure for reporting incidents.

Concerns were raised about the need to make people aware that the society has an existing Code of Conduct and that if untoward behaviors are observed at this meeting, as a stop-gap measure, we will post the code of conduct in the morning announcements and that the presidential triumvirate: Andy, Greta, and Linda as well as the chair of DEI,

Mercedes, will serve as the committee to receive any concerns or reports of incidents that occur at this meeting.

- c) **Engagement and Outreach Committee** (Eileen Hebets) : See report. Lots added to new business that the committee needs guidance on.
- d) **Herb Levi Memorial Fund for Arachnological Research (HLMFAR)** (Petra Sierwald) : See report.
- e) **Norm Platnick Award** (Mark Harvey) : Presented by Hannah. Four people applied, narrowed to one winner. One discussion point, we have had two winners from Brazil, no women have applied. It would be great to have more people apply. Maybe cost of being a member just to apply may be prohibitive for applicants.

Brent said that the award was set up by Norm Platnick's son. Must have a strong component in morphological taxonomy.

Greta said that the criteria (except membership) was thought to be the best way to honor Norm (morphological taxonomy).

The EC suggested that the membership criteria be reviewed by the committee and that the committee consider not including this as a criterion for either the applicants or the nominators.

- f) **Student Research Grants** (Brent Hendrixson) : See report.

4) **Old Business** supporting documents attached

- a) Progress on 2021 Action Items (refer to 2021 Exec Committee Minutes)
- b) Code of Conduct revisions to include data integrity? (If yes, need ad hoc committee to consider language) : DEI committee needs to remember to include some action regarding data integrity.
- c) AAS business account at Dropbox?
- d) Donation to Vince Roth Fund from Cameron Estate – how best to use? : EC was contacted by estate of Don Cameron. His estate left \$5K to earmark for Vince Roth fund. Not enough for an endowment. What is best way to use that \$5K? Suggestion made to be an action item for new development committee.
- e) Proposal to form a new committee for Advancement/Development. Roberts has been asking for names for such a committee, but most of the names submitted are not current members of the society. See membership issues below.
 - i) Committee to include at least one, ex officio EC member (probably president or treasurer) and one non-US member. Others?
 - ii) Potential items committee may be tasked with
 - (1) Revision/refinement of “Donations Page” to include other options/funds
 - (2) Develop guidelines regarding society expenditures

- (3) Establish and conduct annual giving campaign to coincide with membership drive
- (4) Establish estate planning process (for monetary and material donations)
- (5) Reorganizing annual auction(s) to better align with shifting interests and DEI
- (6) Evaluate membership and fee structure, and in collaboration with DEI and EO committees, propose new membership and fee structure that provides alternative (affordable) options for developing nations members, independent scientists, enthusiasts, etc.
- (7) Consider a % surcharge on future meeting registrations to ensure AAS makes at least a small profit on annual meetings.
- (8) Consider alternative payment methods for international members where paypal is difficult or impossible to use.
- (9) Coordinate with Treasurer to send “giving summary” and “thank you” letter to all donors to include nonprofit number for donor tax purposes

DISCUSSION regarding item (e): General agreement that we need such a committee to tackle member recruitment. Wants to see students involved. Wants proactive suggestions for increasing new members or pulling old lapsed members back into the fold.

Would this be a membership or development committee or some combined tasking?

Person should look at entire financial structure of the society, plug holes, and find way to stabilize funds, funding, and finances so we can invest in priority issues/tasks.

Is there a way to open it up to volunteers so we can stop going to the same people?

Can we open it up to volunteers at the business meeting?

There have been consistent people who have volunteered for directorship every year who seem willing to step up and are not winning the election – may be good to ask them to serve in some capacity in this role.

Maybe in combination with someone who is senior and who is financially savvy. Maybe Sean Walker. Someone who is good at thinking about organizations and how they operate financially. Jon Coddington is another possibility to talk to about donations, endowments, etc. Maybe George Uetz. Jason Bond is another possibility.

Eileen said that every person recommended is an old white male. Not the way to diversify a society. Needs to be a way to bring in more diverse membership.

Kasey suggested finding someone who maybe doesn't know society well – someone who can bring a new perspective and more objective eye. Has to be someone who wants to do this – need to find volunteers. Someone who is financially savvy.

Brent suggested Cheryl Hayashi – she is a prominent arachnologist and a provost of the AMNH – someone who can see the big picture.

Andy will make announcement at business meeting for volunteers who can serve in this capacity.

5) New Business supporting documents attached

a) Proposed Revisions to By-Laws

i) Article 2, section 16, sub-section 16b

(1) Change name of DI committee to DEI committee?

(2) Revise charge of DI committee to better reflect actions of the committee (text to be proposed by Burns et al.)?

(3) Revise charge of EO committee to reflect subcommittee duties?

(4) Remove (defunct) Schlinger Fund? : EC agreed to remove this. Andy moved to remove Schlinger fund language from bylaws; Brian seconded. Passed.

ii) Article 3, Section 6

(1) Revise to include registration fee waiver for Grad Student Rep. : Andy proposed that Grad Student (non-voting member) be included in group for which registration fee is waived to annual meeting. Paula seconded.

Action: If these changes are just to the bylaws – reflects actions of the committee – then the committee just needs to propose required changes and they will be implemented by the Secretary and President.

Motion for these changes to go to chairs of respective committees to propose changes to the Executive Committee. Andy made motion, Greta seconded. All in favor. Motion passes.

Discussion: Eileen wants to wait until discussion happens before making any changes. Not a problem.

b) AAS 2023 support. Linda Rayor is doing us a huge favor hosting the meeting in 2023. AAS 2023 likely needs a hosting committee to help with meeting details. Continued development of online/virtual programming for annual meetings reinforces this need as a long term society commitment. Proposal to form a hosting and virtual content committee in addition to the host document?

Discussion: Greta suggested that we review how well the virtual content implemented this year was received and whether it was considered successful. Eileen recommended this get folded into discussion about outreach committee. May be that it will be recommended that the virtual components be handled by the DEI committee. Mercedes said that we don't even know what people want. Linda pointed out that this year's organizers felt the virtual implementation this year was very time consuming. Andy has already crafted significant portion of survey regarding virtual content. Might go for funding in the future to implement some type of virtual components in future meetings. Greta suggested posting to the society opportunities to help organize next year's meeting. Linda can request volunteers at the business meeting.

c) Request from ICA 2023 Organizing Team (Gonnet and Aisenberg; Uruguay; March 2023)

- i) The organizers would appreciate help from AAS in the form of travel grants for students, and possibly help with coordinating some online content (streaming of plenaries and symposia).

Discussion: We cannot provide much monetary support. Brian suggested requesting more specific request for help. Might be able to solicit donations from our membership to bring in targeted funding to help with travel grants. Andy suggested that he pursue how to solicit donations to support them. Brian said that if we reach out for ISA, it should be reciprocal.

- d) Request from ESA: Establish formal, cooperative, reciprocal arrangement with European Society of Arachnology (and other societies?) for waiver of registration fees for student competition winners to attend other meetings at reduced cost.

Discussion: This needs to be tabled. Recommendation of the EC is to turn this down. We would like to establish formal, cooperative, reciprocal arrangement with European Society of Arachnology (and other societies?) for waiver of registration fees for student competition winners to attend other meetings at reduced cost. Linda seconded this proposal. Brian abstained. All other members of EC voted nay.

- e) Request from RAEL/AAS members: American Arachnological Society is not truly “American” in the sense that it is not representing non-USA American Arachnologists well.

- i) Proposal to add Google Translate Button to website (projected cost ~\$300) : EC approved this action.

Discussion: Andy proposed that we add Google Translate button; Paula seconded. Approved unanimously.

- ii) Members of the EC should actively discuss what languages the presentations and labels on slides should be in at the annual meetings. Should the presentations be only in English, English and Spanish, or English, Spanish and Portuguese? How does this compare to the language decisions being made by Uruguayan colleagues planning the International Congress of Arachnology meetings, and what languages are represented by the AAS membership in this hemisphere? What is the impact of non-English presentations by student competitors on judging?

- iii) Better integrate web presence?

- iv) Establish “branches and sections” of AAS similar to Entomol Soc Am?

- f) The Directors suggest changes to the travel grant application formatting to have more lines in the budget so that students do not forget to budget in all expenses. We also suggest fundraising and an increase in the maximum, as well as a standardized rubric. We worked on a minimal rubric this year with a priority category being time to graduation. However, it would be good to have a pointed effort to increase diversity of the society through these awards. Gathering background information on candidates would be very helpful to this end.

Discussion: EC indicated that the Travel Grant committee is able to make any changes it sees necessary to the travel grant application process without needing EC approval.

g) Membership issues.

- i) AAS should make concerted effort to recruit new members into the society. Discuss mechanisms for recruitment.
- ii) Lapsed memberships. AAS should reach out to scientists whose work focuses on arachnids, but whose membership either has lapsed or who have not considered membership in the AAS a priority.

h) Engagement and Outreach Committee

- i) The social media subcommittee was not able to move forward to pull together a twitter team this past year. We would like to ask for this commitment again this year. We are requesting a team of 6 (committee chair + 5 members) who would receive (i) free membership for 1 year and (ii) free registration to the 2023 meeting. If this is approved by the EC, we would like to request a time at the upcoming meeting (either during a morning/afternoon announcement or at the business meeting) to advertise this opportunity to the membership in attendance.
- ii) EC to consider a paid team that actively tweets summaries/promotion of new research in the JoA, and engages our existing community and beyond by fielding questions and running scicomm games and/or events.
- iii) We suggest institutionalizing professional development opportunities and outreach and engagement activities associated with the annual meetings, similar to the science communication training and Eight-Legged Encounter event for AAS 2022. Many other societies have workshops/training the day(s) prior to the start of the conference. We suspect that there are many people in the society that may be interested in running or arranging such workshops and opening up opportunities for members to apply to host workshops could be a great way to increase member engagement in AAS. This might be something that one of the current EC members could coordinate, or the EC might consider adding another position – e.g., “Program Officer” – that works with local hosts on program development. Perhaps the EC can consider a longer-term vision for outreach and engagement activities.
- iv) EC to consider developing a more formalized way to move forward with summer meeting planning and programming; especially any programming that goes beyond the “traditional” meeting (e.g., public-facing BioBlitz’s, professional development opportunities, virtual programming, etc.).
- v) EC to consider if/how funds might be secured to run a yearly “science communication/community engagement” grant competition.

Additional discussion (new) business:

EC recommended that if membership wants the society to draft a statement in direct response to a societal issue, such as the recent Supreme Court decision, that the member should draft a

societal response and submit it to the Executive Committee to review and wordsmith to ensure that the issue fits within the constitutional purvue of the society and fits within the recognized mission of the society.

Brent's suggested wording to honor organizers of meeting:

- Whereas Jason, Joel, Lisa and their team have remained committed to hosting this meeting for three long years
- Whereas this meeting has reinvigorated Arachnological networking
- Wheras Jason has, so far as we can tell, retained his cool demeanor throughout the meeting
- Whereas the team has given new meaning to the term "wining" such that it now includes cabernet and chardonney
- Be it here resolved that we unanimously acknowledge and appreciate the major effort to host this 46th annual meeting of the American Arachnological Society.