2026 AAS Executive Committee Meeting Agenda

Monday, July 13, 2026, 5 – 8:30 p.m. Room TBD

Present (in person): Jason Bond, Deb Smith, Anne Danielson-Francois, Nina Sandlin, Ella Kellner, Marc Milne, Linda Rayor

Not attending: Alex Berry, Al Cady, Angela Chuang

Motion to accept EC meeting notes from 2025: Mark made the motion; Nina seconded; all approved. Minutes accepted.

Reports (appended):

- **President: Jason Bond:** Slow year; One EC meeting (interim mtg held); A number of meetings re JoA with Deb and Rick; we need project organization – maybe need something like Trello (project management tool) to prioritize needs as the year progresses.
- **President Elect: Anne Danielson-Francois**: Future meetings: Anne Danielson-Francois: List needs to be amended. 2027 Indianapolis (hosted by Marc Milne at University of Indianapolis) June 14-18. 2028, San Diego, California hosted by Marshal Hedin and Shahan Derkarabatian; 2029 in Baltimore Maryland hosted by Mercedes Burns and Andrew Gordus, at Hopkins; 2030 in charlotte, NC hosted by Sarah Stellwagen; 2031 Moscow, ID hosted by Chris Hamilton. 2032, David Nelson, Chattanooga, TN; 2033, Anne is waiting to hear back from Dan Proud at Moravian Univ, Bethlehem, PA. Anne will reach out to Heather Proctor, Sarah Boyer, Sara Ceccarelli at CICESE.
- **Treasurer: Nina Sandlin:** see report. JoA revenue exceeded costs (see report). See report for other details. 2025 expenses for the website actually happened in 2026 for STRIPE system. Stripe required a lot of work on the part of Nina to get it up and going. The TYPO3 platform is a bit clumsy but since it is shared w/ ISA, we just have to live with it. Will continue to reach out to 'members' who have not renewed or reactivated membership. 2025 meeting was expensive because we hired conference manager. But we raised good money w/ merch table and w/ auctions. [Linda suggested we modify letters to lapsed members saying "we want you back! And include a QR Code.] Financially, we are in good shape financially. Complexity and maturity of the organization is growing. Wants to develop a Treasurer handbook. Wants to modernize Meeting handbook as well. Feels like it is critical for one person to serve as both webmaster and treasurer because the two positions are so intertwined.
- **Webmaster: Nina Sandlin:** See report. Stripe Migration – See above. Website usability – this has been a problem always. Nina has tried cleaning up small things. Will change and update some terminology on the website ("organ" to "Journal"). Wants to correct some obvious problems with accessibility and verbiage – continue sending her updates / corrections.
- **Journal of Arachnology: Deb Smith:** See report. We are still using Sheridan/KGL as compositor and Printer. There are parts that are working well and details that need to be straightened out. There needs to be a consistent method for billing authors for page charges – Nina has implemented such a system. We have also initiated a way to waive page charges for authors who cannot pay. BioOne is merging with John Hopkins University Press but (according to BioONe) our contract will remain essentially the same. POD method is working. For print version of the journal, we still have to maintain a minimum page-count

per issue. We do have some # of people who are taking advantage of the POD in various ways (single issues, yearly journal). Thought she would get publication back on track. But says that requires minimum # of pp. Our BioOne Complete IF is 0.9; 5 year IF is 1.2; Journal citation report Ranking 72/110 Entomology journals; Journal citation indicator is 0.41 ("normalized" comparison among similar journals: 1 is avg; > 1 above avg, < 1 below avg. JoA likely grouped with the 110 Entomology journals). JoA is behind in production. Mss submitted in 2025 is 40. Long lag time is the biggest issue. Have had a big drop off in submissions. We are about 50% acceptance rate. Impact factor is below 1. In JoA report, details Things to Do in the coming year including finding replacement for her and for Rick Vetter. Both spend considerable time doing copy editing.

- **Membership: Alex Berry:** See report; membership #s are down across the board. There are 62 lifetime members; 60 last year. We currently only have 1 sponsored member but Nina is updating this. 104 regular members have created new accounts. 306 regular members last year before the switch to the new website. There are only 135 paid members thru 2025. We have 38 retired members; 90 student members. We had 290 listed student/retired last year. We may have more donations this year than last year (depends how and when $ comes in). Alex has data embedded in his report that should be considered as an interim Report.
- **Secretary: Paula Cushing:** See report.
- **SNAIM: Paula Cushing:** See report.
- **AAS PR: Paula Cushing**
- **Election Results: Paula Cushing:** Saoirse Foley won but very, very close.
- **Graduate student rep: Ella Kellner:** See report. 128 student Discord members w/ 59 new members in the last year. Most of the new members (27) are from Arachnids: Science and Husbandry channel (led by Julien Tchilinguirian) as recommended by Angela Chuang. Continued promotion of the Discord channel would be beneficial. DEI representation and the initiative is very important to students. See report for what students want for this DEI committee. Feedback: students want rubric (detailed) for what judges are looking for. Want a specified talk and specified poster criteria. Maybe an example scoring rubric, like the actual score sheet. Also they want feedback returned to all the competitors. Could be sent out afterwards as score sheet with comments. Anne said that in current score sheet there are scores on one side and comments on the other. Ella thought that scores alone might be helpful. Jason was concerned that it is a relative thing – you are evaluating based upon comparison with other presentations. Ella thought that any input outside their own lab grp is beneficial; however it is provided or whatever is provided. Deb asked about presentation style (volume, clarity of communication, etc rather than content). Paula suggested that the person running the student competitions could send formalized email to all participants saying thank you for presenting and sorry you did not win (or congratulations for winning) and if you want any feedback, please feel free to contact me. Deb was concerned that shy students would be hesitant to even ask for feedback. Can be a lot of work. This year there are 21 talks and 21 posters to be judged among 5 judges for the posters and 3 judges for the talks. We should move this mechanism for providing feedback to new business.

- **Director: Marc Milne:** Marc recruited two candidates to stand for Junior Director: Rebecca Godwin and Saoirse Foley. Marc and Angela worked with Nina to update travel grant – see his report for the rest.
- **Student Research Grants: Matt Graham:** see report. 23 student proposals submitted; total research $ available $14,330; 17 proposals fully or partially funded; funding rate 74%. Awards Portfolio is in DB.
- **Norm Platnick Award: Mark Harvey:** No award this year.
- **Herb Levi Memorial Fund: Sean Walker:** No report submitted. Not sure if any proposals were funded. Action item: Jason should reach out to Sean Walker and see if a new chair should be appointed.
- **Common Names Committee: Sarah Rose**: see report.
- **English Review (ELRAW): Shahan Derkarabetian:** See report. Shahan recommends that a new refreshed 'advertising' campaign to increase the reach of ELRAW. Shahan wants to step down. Jason thinks w/ AI it may be obsolete. Marc said that at least one journal wanted a real native English speaker to review and check off on the article. Jason will reach out to Shahan and find out if Shahan thinks this is still needed.
- **Engagement & Outreach: Linda Rayor & Jillian Kurovski:** Linda said that the 1st Inaugural Science comm Lunch went well this year talking about large outreach events. Would like to do such an event every year. Linda will settle the members of the Outreach Committee during this year's meeting. Is working on upgrades that need to be made to the Outreach page on the AAS website.
- **Arachno-Answers: Jerry Rovner:** got 179 questions. July was the busiest month. About 15 per month.
- **Archives: Lenny Vincent:** Nothing to report.

Old business:

- Development Committee (any progress?): Consisted of Linda, Jason, and Andy Roberts. Linda sent around letter to potential donors but is unsure whether that was successful. Linda will develop plan or recommendation to move forward on Development Committee by August 31st.
- Changes to JoA Editorial Board & ongoing publication delays. Jason proposes, to deal with these JoA issues, that by Aug 31st, he will develop a plan for moving forward with the JoA issues.

New Business:

- Travel grant application needs to be streamlined with travel grant guidelines vis-à-vis the eligibility of post-undergraduate but pre-graduate students and post-graduate students up to 2 years past graduation (see Director report). Do we want to provide funding for post-grad/early careers? Do we want to give a grace period for applying for travel grants? Would be a good idea for a two-year grace period. They are looking for a position and attending a meeting may help this process. Particularly given that they had more money than needed this year. Ella thought, particularly given this funding environment, it would be really helpful. Nina said that there is already a fuzzy grace period – if they are a student member, they can apply. Marc thinks it needs to be clarified that there is a two-year grace period post-graduation. There needs to also be a definition of who a student member of AAS is – how is this classified.

Motion: Paula made a motion to clarify the definition of eligibility for AAS student membership to include current students or post-institutional enrollment up to two years and the same wording should be used for those applying to travel grants. Jason seconded. No discussion, moved to approve, approved.

- Earmark funds for the active work of the two AAS subcommittees that possess active roles in the improvement of the Society (DEI Committee and the Engagement and Outreach Committee). Marc said that former chair was concerned that the head of the DEI and Engagement committees needed funding set aside to carry out initiatives. Linda supported this idea generally. Jason suggested we set aside $5K per year as a baseline for supporting DEI and engagement. Marc suggested splitting it to $2500 each. Paula thought they should detail what the request is. Jason thought that if a committee is in place, it can be up to the committee how to spend that set-aside funding.

Jason: Made a motion to set aside $2500 for DEI committee and $2500 to Outreach committee that those committees can use for their activities that they will then report on at the EC meeting. Motion approved. If committees do not feel that this is enough, they can come back to the EC.

- Define the role of the DEI Committee Chair (reviewed by Greta Binford, former AAS President and Mercedes Burns, former AAS DEI Committee Chair)* Mercedes said that there was not concrete definition of the role of the DEI chair. Marc wrote up a one page definition of Committee chair and the duties and sent this to Mercedes and to Greta (under whom the DEI committee was formed). This description of role and responsibilities was approved by those two members and is placed in DB.

  Marc read the proposed role and directives. Marc read this proposed description of role and directives. Paula made a motion to approve; Nina Sandlin seconded. It was approved.

- What is the AAS policy on conflict resolution and Title IX issues? We should at least have a method in writing that explains how to go about solving such issues. Marc thought that this was a non-issue. Mercedes was concerned that issues were brought to her and she could not deal with them. Now that we have approved a definition and directives, this is not an issue that we need to deal with. Jason pointed out that we, as a small society, do not have the ability (money, time, legal representation) to really deal with any Title IX issues. We are covered by our Code of Conduct as much a possible.

- What is the AAS policy on using generative AI in conference presentations? Or using AI to write grant applications? Or using AI to write conference abstracts?

- (Marc Milne's) Opinion: Although not peer-reviewed, conference presentations and presentation abstracts may go on CVs and are therefore considered academic works *authored* by the presenter. They should therefore reflect the author's own work, not that of generative AI.

Marc suggested that presenter declare what component was generated using AI. Ella felt uncomfortable w/ poster generated entirely by AI winning an award. Jason liked the idea of detailing how and when in a presentation AI is being used. There are some classes on how to use iterative processes to generate content. This is an evolving issue. Anne pointed out that a policy saying "disclose" when AI is being used. There is no policy for the journal. Whatever policy we come up with for presentations should be applied to journal articles also. Disclosing use of AI might be a good first step. Jason charged Marc Milne with coming up with a possible statement about use of generative content that can be discussed at a future EC meeting.

- *Honorary Member: A special category of membership established to acknowledge arachnologists who have achieved a high level of eminence on the basis of significant research contributions. After being nominated, an individual may be elected by a two-thirds vote of the Executive Committee. The number of honorary members is not to exceed 5% of the total membership. A list of these Honorary Members is to be published in each issue of the Journal of Arachnology.* Proposal of new Honorary Members was discussed and several people were proposed. The EC decided to nominate Ann Rypstra and Deborah Smith as new Honorary Members. The EC will discuss the definition and qualifications for this category in the Interim EC meeting (to be held in August). Others will be decided on at a future date. Deb pointed out that there can be some poor feelings if someone is voted as honorary member and others are not. Deb thought this was why we have not proposed honorary members for a while. Jason pointed out that some societies have a "Fellows" category recognizing significant contributions. Jason thinks that there are members that have made significant contributions to the society that should be considered a Fellow or Honorary Member. Jason pointed out that this is for significant research contributions. Jason thinks it should be expanded out to more than just research. Jason thinks that how we (in future) define this category should wait for another day. Ella suggested that all these folks (if approved) would be worthy of a write up in the *American Arachnology* newsletter.

  Nina pointed out that the honorary appts require some message crafting on the part of the AAS Pres because we will need to notify these individuals (most of whom are paid up) that we are canceling their membership subscriptions because they are now honorary members for life. Jason made a motion to vote on these new honorary members as a group. Marc Milne seconded the motion. All approved. However, subsequent discussion indicated a need to reevaluate and redefine the honorary membership category before additional appointments (discussions post-EC meeting).

***Defining the role of the American Arachnological Society's (AAS) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee Chair**

The role of the American Arachnological Society's (AAS) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee Chair is to lead the DEI committee in generating new initiatives that relate to their committee's mandate and to act as a liaison between the DEI committee and the cares and concerns of AAS members as they relate to the charges of the DEI committee.

The DEI Committee Chair has the following major duties:

1. Work with the DEI Committee members to develop new, carry out current, and reflect on past initiatives relating to DEI within the AAS.
2. Coordinate with the AAS Treasurer about spending funds for the activities relating to the DEI Committee.
3. Regularly communicate with AAS members via electronic or in person methods to understand concerns as they relate to the charges of the AAS DEI Committee.
4. Serve on the Executive Committee of the AAS to inform the EC of the goings on within the DEI Committee, the cares and concerns of AAS members as they relate to the charges of the DEI Committee, and to provide input on AAS activities and future DEI committee initiatives and needs.

The AAS DEI Committee Chair is responsible to the members of the AAS and to the Executive Board of the American Arachnological Society.

New Items from Webmaster/Treasurer:

This item is tabled for Interim EC meeting.

- EBSCO proposal to let AI tools "pull small, real-time excerpts to give accurate answers, but not use our full text for training" (I will upload the info if Deb hasn't done it already)
- The single-issue JoA price should be $40 for institutional orders. Presumably there are no objections? (it was just an oversight not to do that right away)
- As Jason noted, we're supposed to have honorary members and publish them in the journal; I can set that up in Stripe if folks make a list
- We should flesh out the website listing of upcoming meetings with institution and host; also, Sarah lined up two more last year (2032 Chattanooga TN, 2033 Bethlehem PA) that could be re-confirmed and added (Anne has been contacted)
- Efforts we will need to get paid/renewed membership back up to historic levels. (see "Membership revival efforts" from Nina Sandlin in DB).

ACTION ITEMS:

Jason Bond:

- Jason will reach out to Sean Walker and see if a new chair of Herb Levi Committee should be appointed (no report submitted) – **deadline August 31st**
- If Herb Levi grants were awarded, Jason should send list of Awardees to Paula to include in next *AA* newsletter – **deadline August 31st**
- Jason will reach out to Shahan and find out if Shahan thinks ELRAW is still needed given the AI tools available to non-native English speakers. If ELRAW is still of value, new chair must be found since Shahan wants to step down – **deadline August 31st**

- Changes to JoA Editorial Board & ongoing publication delays. Jason proposes, to deal with these JoA issues, that **by Aug 31st**, he will develop a plan for moving forward with the JoA issues.
- Revise DEI Mandate and DEA Chair description as per the addendum once new DEI Chair is appointed – deadline **TBD**

Items to be discussed at TBD Interim EC meeting (sometime in August) – Jason to create meeting schedule and agenda.

- EBSCO proposal
- Clarify Honorary Membership definition and set up system to provide waived membership for these honorary members.
- Discuss new DEI chair

Anne Danielson-Francois

- Send Paula list of student oral and poster winners from 2026 meeting – **deadline October 15th.**
- Offer student competitors in 2027 opportunity to approach judges to receive feedback on their presentations – **remember for 2027 meeting**

Linda Rayor:

- Linda suggested we modify letters to lapsed members saying "we want you back! And include a QR Code – work with Nina and Alex to write such a letter for distribution during next membership campaign – **deadline TBD.**
- Linda will develop plan or recommendation to move forward on Development Committee **by August 31st.**

Nina Sandlin:

- Change the definition of eligibility for AAS student membership to include current students or post-institutional enrollment up to two years and the same wording should be used for those applying to travel grants – wording changes to be made by **August 31st**
- Earmark $2500 for DEI committee and $2500 to Outreach committee that those committees can use for their activities that they will then report on at the EC meeting. Motion approved. If committees do not feel that this is enough, they can come back to the EC – Treasurer to communicate with new DEI Chair when appointed and with Student Travel Grant Committee chair for 2026 meeting, Marc Milne by **August 31st (if new DEI chair is appointed.**

Marc Milne:

- See above regarding 2027 student travel grant eligibility.
- Jason charged Marc Milne with coming up with a possible statement about use of generative content that can be discussed at a future EC meeting – by **August 31st**

Paula Cushing:

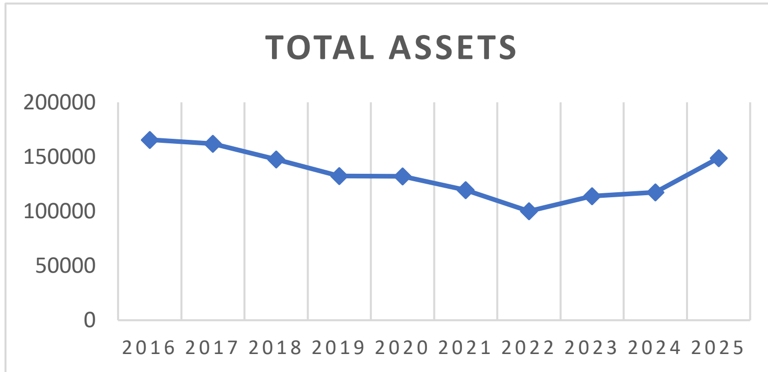
- Include report on new Honorary members (Ann Rypstra and Deb Smith) in next *American Arachnology* newsletter – **deadline October 15th**

2026 AAS Treasurer Report
Submitted by Nina Sandlin

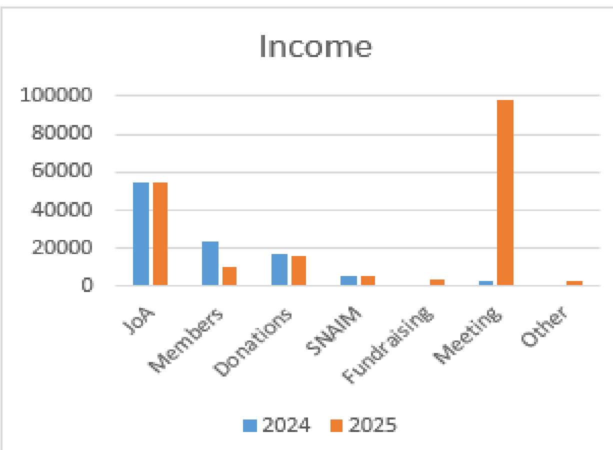
Review of 2025 and a Look Ahead

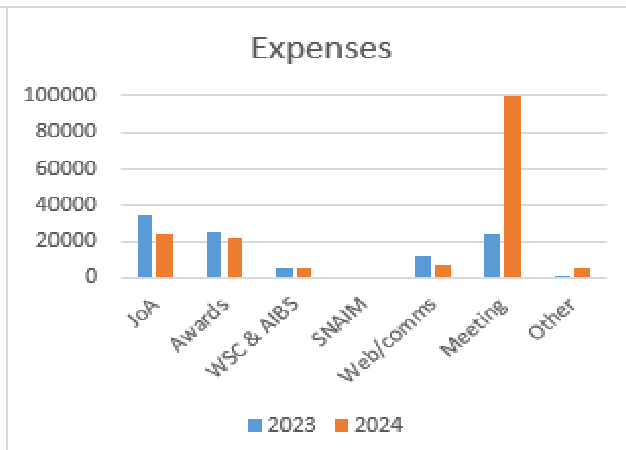
Cash on hand at the end of the year was more than 50% above 2024 levels.

	2024	2025
Mains	34,105	54,533
SNAIM	12,831	17,307
Cash on hand	**46,936**	**71,840**
Schwab	70,386	76,891
Total assets	**117,322**	**148,730**



Meeting costs and proceeds were both unusually high. We saw a considerable reduction of JoA cost due to ending the print edition. JoA expenses were about 31% ($11,000) lower than in 2024. Low web/communications costs (39% lower, at $4,800) mask the sizable membership-migration expense, which was mostly carried forward to 2026.





INCOME	**2024**	**2025**
JoA - Royalties	51,760	49,687
JoA - Author charges	2,710	3,410
JoA - POD		1,603
Membership	23,398	10,143
Donations	16,945	15,685
SNAIM - Baker & Taylor	4,708	3,902
SNAIM - Sales	550	1,750
Fundraising	483	4,030
Meeting	2,400	98,265
Other (misc, interest)	68	3,169
	103,022	**191,645**

EXPENSES	**2024**	**2025**
JoA - Composition etc.	17,256	8,891
JoA - Prodn, storage	10,898	6,418
JoA - Editors	7,010	7,010
JoA - POD		1,749
Awards	24,790	22,260
WSC & AIBS	5,505	5,260
SNAIM	0	0
Website - maintenance	9,398	6,246
Website - webmaster	1,000	0
Website - hosting, domain	1,686	137
Social/email outreach	276	1,234
Meeting	23,951	100,416
Other (fees etc.)	1,396	5,237
	103,166	**164,857**

Meeting costs were 2.4 times that of the 2023 meeting at Cornell (the most recent previous US site), due to the expensive outside venue and the use of a meeting planner. (A post-meeting accounting showed costs in the $122,000 range; the data above reflect a somewhat different allocation of categories used in IRS filings). Costs were mostly offset by strong proceeds and donations, both routed directly to AAS coffers.

JoA savings from discontinuation of the regular print edition were partly obscured by the last issue of 2024 being published in January. Looking at Volume 53 alone, revenue exceeded $100,000, with total costs well below $25,000 – an indication of the possible financial profile going forward. Total POD costs per copy were just under $30 for both domestic and international subscribers. This will likely creep upward, however, with rising paper and shipping costs and a return to larger issues (the last two were only 68 pages).

Migrating membership payments to Stripe cost AAS $10,760 (3,280 in 2025 and $7,480 this year), over and above any costs that may have been associated with the earlier version of the shared AAS-ISA project. Besides improvements to the membership workflow (see Webmaster report), having membership in Stripe means that financial notifications of things like disputes and journal non-delivery are now directed to the treasurer.

Paid-up membership, which had fallen to under 330 as of mid-2025, was further disrupted by the transition. We will need active efforts to bring our paid-up member roster to historic levels in order to provide for future initiatives and maintain strength and stability in inflationary times.

Fundraising netted $4,030, reflecting both the auctions (live and silent) and the innovation of a "merch table" where new and used items are sold for pre-set prices.

Our new credit card has facilitated operations, including payment for AAS elections, purchase of plaques and swag, and securing meeting-related venues. Recording these expenses directly, rather than as refunds to individuals for personal payments, is a best practice and avoids duplication of effort for recurring purchases such as the plaques.

Briefly Noted

• We moved collection of sensitive payment info from Google (where it is technically not allowed) to Cognito Forms, which provides end-to-end encryption.
• I have removed full account numbers from online documents, for security.
• We started complying with the IRS requirement to send 1099s for grants and honoraria over $600. Students are advised that we can issue the grant to their institution instead.
• A new vendor for plaques and T-shirts (and possibly some other swag) has credentialed us as tax-exempt (irrespective of shipping address) and has our plaque text and logo on file for future orders.

Quarterly and annual financial reports are available on request.

Looking Ahead

Cash on hand at the end of the Q2 2026 stood at $182,000, some $65,000-80,000 of which will go to cover meeting expenses. Planning for the 2027 meeting has already begun; there are some unspent travel grant funds. For JoA, 2026 will be the first year with no regular print editions.

Operations continue to grow in complexity. We now have three bank accounts at two banks, two payment processors (PayPal and Stripe), a credit card, two tax-filing processors, an investment account, and a form builder (vs. one bank account and a certificate of deposit in Karen's era). If, with inflation, gross receipts hit $200,000, we'll need to use the 20-page IRS Form 990 instead of the "simpler" 16-page 990 EZ.

2026 AAS Webmaster Report
Submitted by Nina Sandlin

Migration Results and Site Usability

Migrating membership from PayPal as the payment facilitator to Stripe dominated website activity in 2025, with other projects taking a back seat or falling through the cracks entirely.

Stripe Migration

Planned and agreed upon in 2023 as part of a larger project involving sharing functionality and server space with ISA, the move was intended to be cost-saving and to make membership management more automated and streamlined.

Implementation was delayed. By 2024, we had determined that the original plan (where users would apply for membership before paying) would lock into place the manual and problematic aspects of the old process; we told the vendor we needed a payment-first process.

Work was slow to start, and keeping January-1 renewals proved unworkable. After a bumpy start, with joining/renewing not available until February 18, it now seems to be working smoothly.

Although we could have switched to subscription plans without going to Stripe (the JoA POD sign-ups are PayPal subscriptions), Stripe allowed a greater degree of developer customization and integration – presumably why PSBrands (the developer) proposed it.

The subscription model has a number of benefits:

- Automatic renewal simplifies the process for both members and management.
- Payment-first greatly reduces manual tasks for the membership secretary and eliminates "stranded" accounts where people don't realize they never paid.
- The mechanism for sponsored membership means better recordkeeping (where before we had 829 member records in the database, but fewer than 330 verified paid members).
- Separating student and retired membership types gives us a better understanding of our audience and allows for appropriate messaging to each group.
- We now have a way to create and track honorary members, as set forth in AAS bylaws.
- The membership secretary is no longer subject to a deluge of non-membership email clutter in their mailbox.

The current arrangement has some downsides:

- “Anniversary of purchase” renewal means members will be renewing all through the year. Stripe notifications are limited, so we may need to supplement them (on the other hand, members will not need to actively renew unless their payment method has changed/expired).
- There is no direct way for a member to change their membership type (when they graduate, retire, or decide to become a Lifetime member); it has to be done by an AAS admin.
- Sometimes people do not receive the automatic email with their one-time password, and so are not able to activate their account.
- The migration disruption further depressed paid-up membership levels.

Website Usability

Broader issues remain with the underlying website. In many ways, it is essentially – to echo Alex's words – "still only half built." Ongoing usability issues include:

- The home page is static and very limited.
- You have to log in to see news items – not a reasonable expectation, giving people little reasons to visit the site. Not surprisingly, news tends not to be posted.
- The header overlays the tops of sections, meaning that direct links to specific parts of a long page (like the meeting page) no not show you the whole section. (As a workaround, the link must be to a narrow block of text *above* the target block.)
- There is no "page not found" page. A typo or bad link returns a pink server error.

Some under-the-hood aspects also create difficulties:

- Images cannot be positioned in text.
- Changes cannot be previewed.
- Many of the controls are in German.

We have limited maneuverability to address these issues. The server is slow and frequently overburdened, despite a costly hosting package; space and functionality are shared with ISA. The Typo3 platform grants access to much of the site configuration only to developers, not admins. (Used primarily in the German-speaking part of Europe, it has minute levels of adoption/support in the US.) PSBrands' area of expertise is brand identity, not association management. Of course, moving and/or redesigning a website (even one without half a century of scholarly journal archives) is a giant undertaking, and one which – in many ways – we are still engaged in.

In 2026

A few usability improvements did get incorporated into the Stripe migration. Users no longer see "Status LOGOUT" when they are logged in, and the link at the top now correctly says "Log out" when you're logged in and vice versa. The personal info form (to create or update your account) has a more-logical order and normal (not random) spacing. And we added a Payment FAQ to help users navigate the new sign-up process.

Improvements I want to explore this year:

Home page. I'd like to change the labels from "New" and "Publishing organ" to "Newsletter" and "Scholarly journal"; discover how to regularly update to the most recent journal cover image; and expand the number of characters shown from a newsletter post, eliminating or reducing the big blank spot. (fig. 1)

Continuous publishing. This is now in effect on BoOne, and there is as far as I can tell no reason it cannot be reflected on the website, apart from coordinating with KGL and the journal editor.

News items. I will see if there is a simple way to post some of the items that go out in membership email announcements to a non-password protected area.

Error pages. I will see if we can get standard "page not found" and "session time out" messages that users expect set up in the system. (fig. 2)

Figure 1. Home page

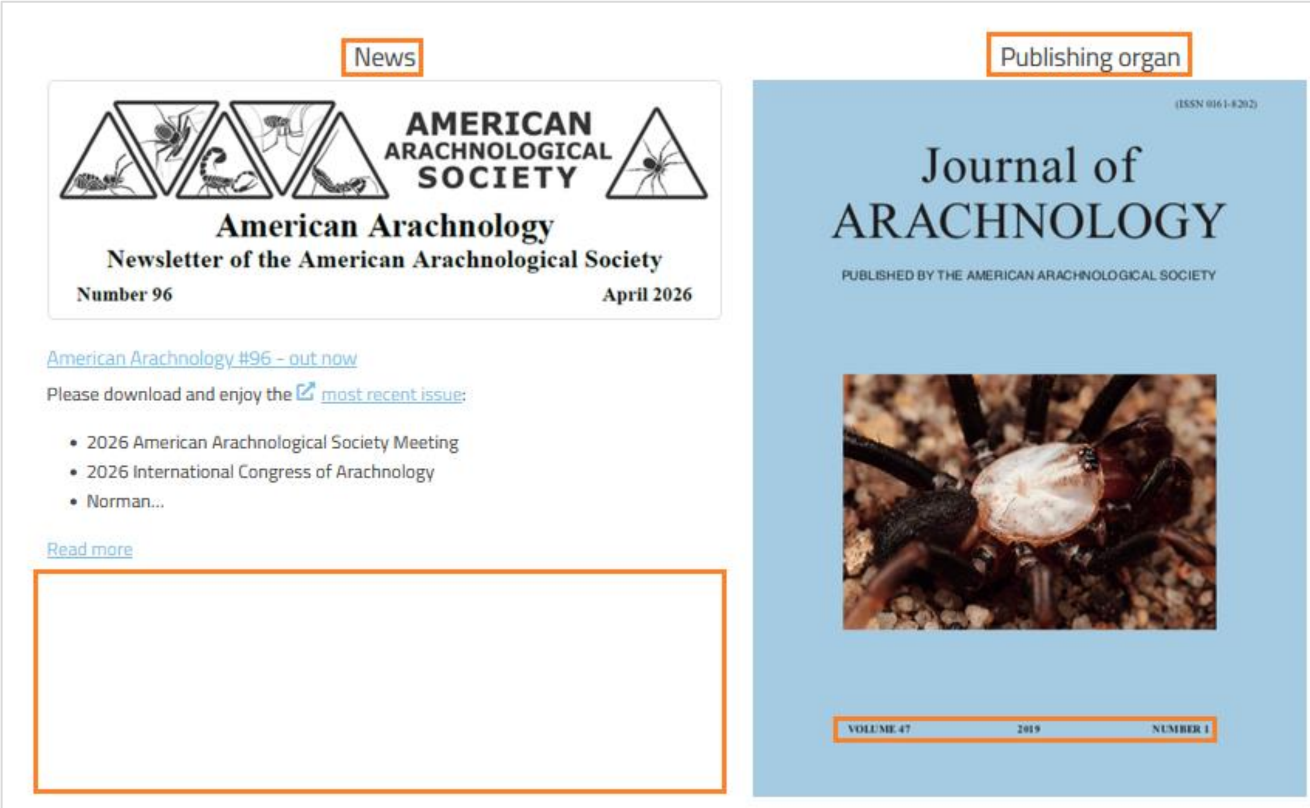
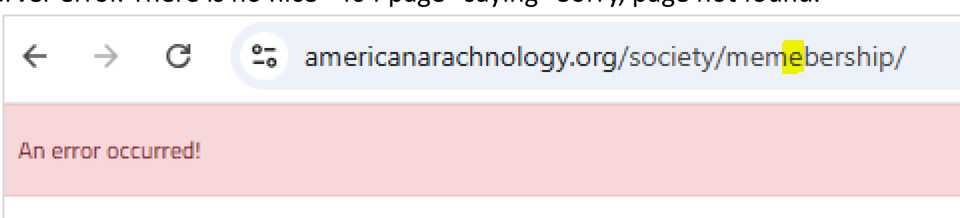


Figure 2. Missing error pages

A bad link or typo (as pictured here) displays a generic nonspecific failure message, indistinguishable from a catastrophic server error. There is no nice "404 page" saying "Sorry, page not found."



A stale login means a member gets "access denied" instead of a nice message that their session has timd out.

Journal of Arachnology – Annual report for 2025 (Volume 53)

1. Our compositor/printer is still Sheridan/KGL
Improvement to our publication system: A consistent method for billing authors for page charges, thanks to the efforts of the Treasurer, Nina Sandlin.

2. Our articles are posted on BioOne Complete and EBSCO
BioOne is merging with Johns Hopkins University Press, but (according to BioOne) our contract remains "essentially" the same.

3. AAS Membership includes online access (on the AAS website) to the Journal of Arachnology.

4. Print copies of the journal can be obtained via Print on Demand (POD). This includes single issues (e.g., an issue including one's own publication), and a separate subscription for an entire volume.

Note: since we still produce a print version of the journal, we still have to maintain a minimum page-count per issue in order to use the same high-quality paper, cover, and square-back binding.

5. Impact factors:

- BioOne Complete Impact factor, 0.9; 5-year impact factor, 1.2
- Journal Citation Reports Ranking: 72/110 Entomology journals
- Journal Citation indicator: 0.41 ("normalized" comparison among similar journals; 1 is average, >1 above average, <1 below average; JoA likely grouped with the 110 Entomology journals)

6. Manuscripts submitted in 2025 calendar year – 40

Comparisons: 2024 – 41
2023 – 34
2022 – 64 (the year our 50th volume came out)
2021 – 79
as of July 10, 2026 – 33 (and nearly half the year to go)

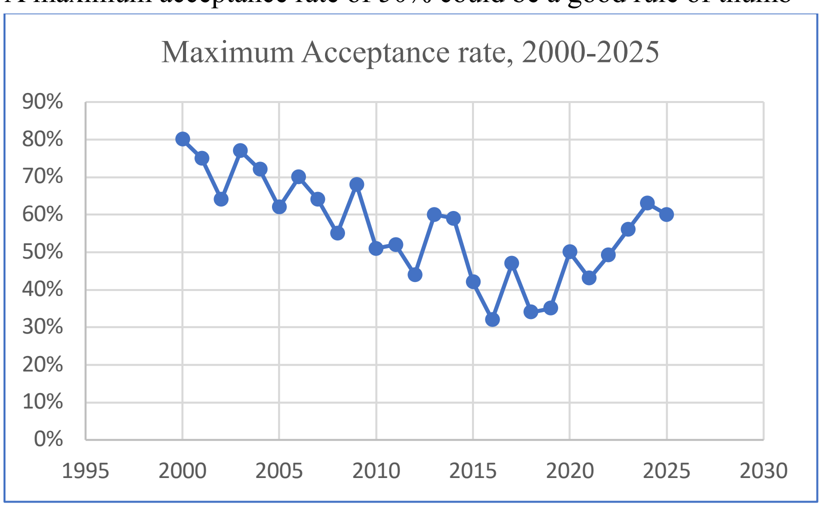
7. Manuscript acceptance rate - accepted 18 (45%), in revision 6 (15%), rejected 14 (35%), incomplete 1, with editor 1.
If we assume all manuscripts in revision are eventually accepted, we have a **maximum** acceptance rate of 60%, which is in line with our rates at least since 2019.

8. Total pages Vol. 53: 218 (2025-6)
Comparisons: Vol. 52: 272 (2024)
Vol. 51: 373 (2023)
Vol. 50: 385 (2022)
Vol. 49: 417 (2021)

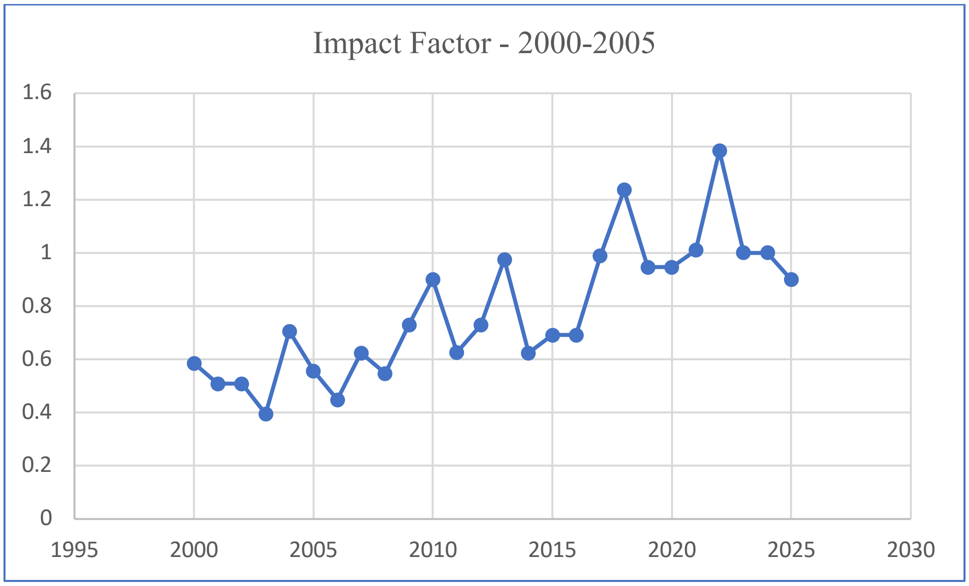
JOURNAL TRENDS

(a) Submissions per year, 2000 to 2025
Steep drop off after “Covid year”
2000-2002 not clear why
2003-2005 probably due to long lag time between acceptance and publication.

(b) Acceptance rate, 2000 to 2025
A maximum acceptance rate of 50% could be a good rule of thumb



(c) Impact factors
Generally increasing over time; drop off from 2023-2025 could be attributed to smaller number of papers published, attracting fewer viewers.



2000 to 2016 – data provided by previous editor, Robert Suter
2017 to 2025 – data from Deb Smith > BioOne Impact factors

(d) Not calculated – mean length of time from acceptance to publication.
I can say with a fair amount of certainty that the time from acceptance to publication has increased from about 2000 onwards. **This quite likely contributes to the decline in submissions.**

Some of the problem began during 2000-2001, when covid restrictions required a wholesale switch to online teaching. This slowed my processing of manuscripts. The move to KGL/Sheridan after they bought out Allen Press was another factor. There is nothing wrong with their product, but their system for interacting with publishers is different from Allen Press's and adjusting to this has also slowed me down in some procedures.

THINGS TO DO IN THE COMING YEAR
(a) It's essential to get back on our regular Spring/Summer/Fall schedule. My attempt in 2025 failed. (I aimed for a short Issue 53-3 and a fresh start in 2026 with Issue 54-1 but ran into the minimum page requirement for the print volume.)

I intend to finish issue 54-1, then do a combined issue 54-2&3. The page count in the latter should be more than the minimum page number for a print issue, but not but not the length of two full issues.

(b) Last year **I asked subject editors to check that figures of accepted papers were submitted as individual image files, suitable for publication**. That is starting to have a positive effect; publication-ready or near-ready figures greatly reduce the time I spend preparing a manuscript for page proofs. I will continue to encourage authors to take responsibility for formatting their manuscript and supplemental files.

I should note, some journals have quite stringent requirements that figures and tables must meet early in the review process. Doing “remedial” formatting work increases the time from acceptance to publication.

(c) **The society needs to be prepared to replace me** and---at some point---Rick Vetter. Although Rick’s title is Managing Editor and mine is Editor-in-Chief, we both spend much of our JoA of time doing copy editing. I have a series of checklists for preparing manuscripts for page proofs and I am annotating the letters I use to correspond with authors, so that the next person in line will not need to start from scratch. Last Fall, one person (Jessica Petko) prepped a manuscript to see if it might be something she’d like to continue. But I think it would be a good idea to (i) spread the word more generally in the society that my position, at least, will become open and (ii) to think about what criteria the society would want to look for in a future editor. After all, I could be run over by a bus at any moment.

Respectfully, Deborah Smith, Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Arachnology

Membership secretary's report

1. Website updates mean a new payment method and workflow for members.
2. Membership numbers are down across the board
    a. 62 lifetime members
        i. 60 last year
    b. We currently only have 1 sponsored member according to the website
        i. 80 current or former sponsored members (20 paid through 2025)
        ii. I believe the actual number is higher, but not a lot.
    c. 104 Regular members have created new accounts
        i. 306 regular members last year before the switch to the new website.
        ii. Only 135 Paid through 2025
    d. 38 Retired members
    e. 90 Student members
        i. 290 listed student/retired last year
        ii. 107 paid through 2025 (37%)
    f. There is also a small group of inactive accounts
        i. The group includes some admin and test accounts.
3. Donations are roughly the same as last year

Membership revival efforts – some ideas

The main effort should be to first bring back the longtime, still-interested, recent members.

AAS election ballots went out to about 500 current *and recent* members, and we now have 320 current paid-up members. Even figuring that some of the latter are new, that means we have about 200 *recent* members to reach out to. These are our prime target market. And we *have* this list!

People who have a genuine interest in being members are the ones we are most interested in: They are going to have the lowest "cost of acquisition" and the highest likelihood of retention.

Former members are considered the most likely to convert with a membership drive, and also the easiest to retain. (Although of course, older lists will have a higher email failure rate, and it will be important to scrub those out after every mailing.)

We need to craft warm, special, inviting messages to them ("We miss you..."), keeping in mind that many of these folks are loyal, longtime, active members who either a) didn't manage to renew due to the disruption, or b) were already not very clear on whether they were paid up for last year, given the murkiness of how the old system operated.

Secondarily, we also have the names and emails of formerly sponsored members (or ones with an otherwise unclear status), that there is no reason to not also reach out to. These are of course of lower priority, but no reason not to reach out.

We need not limit our membership efforts to only former members on our own archival member lists. There are other groups of individuals to whom we could send invitations, such as non-member authors of articles in JoA (and for that matter, in other related journals).

Another idea is to create a printable poster about the benefits and excitement of being a student member and send the pdf to everyone on our website graduate studies lab list, and ask them to post it in their lab. For that matter, it looks like some of these folks are not current members themselves. (And are there relevant labs that are not on that list?)

Just some thoughts.

2026 Secretary Report and SNAIM report:

Submitted by Paula Cushing

Secretary Report:

- Publication of *American Arachnology* newsletter has continued on schedule (deadlines for articles posted on the AAS website).
- Call-out for articles has not been that successful – particularly for the last issue.
- Have been using *AA* as a mechanism for publishing interviews with retired arachnologists; tributes to scientist who have passed; announcements about upcoming meetings or events; announcements about winners of awards.
- It is important for the chair of the presentation award committee to record winners of oral and poster competitions at meetings AND to get photos of those winners that can be published in upcoming *AA* newsletters.
- The *AA* is distributed as a pdf link to members, posted on the AAS website and distributed to officers of sister arachnological organizations.

SNAIM Report (*Spiders of North America: identification manual*)

- Our distribution company – formerly Bookmasters, then Baker & Taylor, now known as Lakeside Book Company no longer is printing. They are only serving as our distributor for the remainders of SNAIM.
- We currently have 174 SNAIM manuals (2^{nd} edition, 2^{nd} printing) in our inventory.
- Sales of SNAIM in 2023, 2024, 2025 and for the first 5 months of 2026 were: 299, 306, 265, and 91 (thus far this year). Average sales from 2023 – 2025 were 290 manuals per year.
- Thus, we may have less than one year of inventory remaining.
- The editors of SNAIM (Darrell Ubick, Pierre Paquin, myself, and illustrator Nadine Duperre) have begun discussing the requirements for the 3^{rd} edition.
- We will not begin the revision for the 3^{rd} edition until sometime in 2027.
- However, the authors of the Salticidae chapter have already begun discussing required changes to that chapter.
- The ePUB is still available via Amazon as a Kindle or directly from Baker & Taylor/Lakeside as an e-pdf.
- Important: because Bookmaters/Baker & Taylor/Lakeside is no longer our printing company, we have identified Bradford & Bigelow (https://www.bradford-bigelow.com/) as our future printing company for SNAIM. One of their contacts reached out to me since he had been associated with Bookmasters (et al) and after the latter stopped their printing arm, Ryan Seidner (rSeidner@bradford-bigelow.com) suggested we utilize Bradford & Bigelow for our next print run. They sent me sample spiral-bound books and the quality and pricing was well within what we got w/ Bookmasters.
- At the time of our conversation (2024), Bradford & Bigelow did not have a distribution arm but it seems they they now do have a warehouse and distribution capacity so we will likely move our entire operation of SNAIM production, printing, and distribution to this company.

Press officer report:

- Have not submitted any Press Releases focused on JoA articles because I have received no suggestions for such articles from the Editor in Chief.

2026 AAS Election Results:

- Only 34% participation (179 votes out of 523 “members”)
- In 2025, participation was 40% (164 / 414)
- In 2024, participation was 40% (207 / 513)
- This low participation in 2026 despite Election Buddy sending out 3 reminders and the secretary sending out personal reminders to those who “opened” their ballot but did not vote and to those who did not open and did not vote.
- Rebecca Goodwin received 83 votes for director; Saoirse Foley received 87 votes – Saoirse is the next Junior Director.
- 154 people said “yes” – they have renewed membership for 2026; 25 said no and should have then been directed how to renew their membership.

2026 Student Representative Report

Submitted by Ella Kellner

Student Discord:

- 128 members with 59 new members in the last year
    - Most of the new members (27) are from the Arachnids: Science and Husbandry channel (lead by Julien Tchilinguirian) as recommended by Angela Chuang in an effort to foster more communication between international arachnology communities
- Continued promotion of the AAS Discord channel during the meeting will help inform potential new members of the community

Student Needs/Comments:

- DEI representation
    - Continued emphatic representation and promotion of DEI initiatives is always a strong talking point among students. Students want to feel heard.
    - It may be a good idea to have a layered DEI committee
        - Members from each level of the society (student, early-career, senior, etc) to provide full representation
- Student presentation competition feedback
    - Comments by students wanting a clearer idea of the criteria they are being scored on in student talk and poster competitions
        - Clarification on talk versus poster guidelines AND provide an example scoring rubric for each
        - Criteria needs to be more visible for student competitors
            - Criteria should be included in an email to the student competition members prior to meeting to clearly explain expectations
            - A rubric could be included in a more visible portion of the AAS website (eg. on the yearly meeting page for quicker access)
    - **Student competitors are also wanting this feedback returned to them after the meeting is concluded in order to know what to improve upon**

AAS Director Report 2025-2026

The year 2025-2026 saw the elevation of Marc A. Milne into the Director position, Sarah Stellwagen into the Senior Director position, and Angela Chuang into the Junior Director position.

The following activities were undertaken by the Director and/or Junior Director during this year:

- Marc attended the 2025 AAS conference and the EC meeting that year,
- Marc recruited two candidates to stand for Junior Director during the 2026 AAS election: Rebecca Godwin and Saoirse Foley.
- Marc and Angela worked with Nina Sandlin (AAS Treasurer) to update the Travel Grant website and the Travel Grant application.
- Marc and Angela reviewed applications for the AAS Travel Grant and approved funding for all applicants as the amount of money in the Travel Grant pool was larger than that which was requested and all applicants were deemed worthy of funding.
    - Total amount in Travel Grant account: $16,200.00
    - Total amount requested: $10,126.70
    - Total number of student requests funded: 14
- Marc will be attending the 2026 AAS conference in Lincoln, NE and will be attending the EC meeting this year.

Issues that need to be resolved regarding the Director position:

- The travel grant application and instructions state that the applicant must be a student. The application asks for an advisor (optional), degree sought, and expected year of completion. However, some students who were between undergraduate and graduate degrees requested funding. Some students who were post-grads also requested funding. If going by the letter of the instructions, these applicants are ineligible. However, it is my understanding that previous Directors have given a grace period of ~2 years after graduation. **If we want to implement such a policy, we should put it in writing on both the website and the application.**

2026 Student Research Grants – Annual Report
American Arachnological Society

The American Arachnological Society has two funds to support research by student members of the society (undergraduate or graduate):

- The Arachnological Research Fund (ARF) provides awards of up to $1,000 to support projects related to any aspect of the behavior, ecology, physiology, or evolution of any of the arachnid groups. The ARF subcommittee consists of Anita Aisenberg, Al Cady, and Jason Schmidt.

- The Vincent Roth Fund for Systematics Research (VRF) provides awards of up to $1,000 to support projects focused on the taxonomy or systematics of any arachnid group. The VRF subcommittee consists of Dan Proud, Shahan Derkarabetian, and Siddharth Kulkarni.

Total number of submitted proposals:	23
• Arachnological Research Fund (ARF) Proposals:	12 (52.2%)
• Vincent Roth Fund (VRF) Proposals:	11 (47.8%)

NOTES: "No proposals were administratively rejected without review, but two were moved from ARF to VRF for better fit.

Demographics:

• Total number of applicants:	23
• Applicants by educational level:	
○ PhD:	11 (47.8%)
○ MS:	7 (30.4%)
○ Undergrad:	5 (21.7%)
• Institution of applicants:	
○ United States:	12 (52.2%)
○ Mexico:	4 (17.4%)
○ India:	3 (13.0%)
○ Argentina:	1 (4.3%)
○ Brazil:	1 (4.3%)
○ Panama:	1 (4.3%)
○ Taiwan:	1 (4.3%)

Total Student Research Fund Budget: $15,330

- Budget is allocated annually based on relative proportion of total applicants in each fund (see above).
    - ARF: $8,000
    - VRF: $7,330

    - **NOTE:** 17 proposals were fully or partially funded (6 proposals were not funded).

- Total funding requested: $22,980
    - ARF: $11,574
    - VRF: $11,406

- Total Awarded (*n* = 9), **Arachnological Research Fund: $8,000.00**
    - **Curtis James Abell**, PhD student, University of Georgia, USA. $1,000. Analysis of spider community structures and food webs in peanut landscapes
    - **Annalyse Leach Brogan**, MS student, Eastern Michigan University, USA. $1,000. Co-occurrence of Tarantula Burrows with Soil Properties and Plant Community Composition
    - **Brendan James Lan**, PhD student, Duke University, USA. $1,000. Small but keen: Investigating the exceptional vision and novel eyes of a tiny harvestman
    - **Ava Marie Maliszewski**, UG student, Penn State York, USA. $376. Temperature-induced alternative splicing of circadian regulators in *Parasteatoda tepidariorum*.
    - **Sayith Padilla**, UG student, University of Panama, Panama. $624. Sensory Integration in Wolf Spiders: Vision and Ornamentation in the Courtship of *Schizocosa tristani*
    - **Jeniann Rodriguez Rosa**, UG student, Penn State York, USA. $1,000. How Tracing the Developmental Onset of Spider Silk Gene Expression in *Parasteatoda tepidariorum*
    - **Brian Tampos Sabanal**, PhD student, Kaohsiung Medical University, Taiwan. $1,000. Advancing Spider Genomics through Next-Generation Sequencing
    - **Jenna Marie Sbeity**, MS student, Eastern Michigan University, USA. $1,000. Season, Environmental Conditions, and Physiology Drive Tarantula (*Aphonopelma hentzi*) Activity
      Patterns
    - **Kayla M. Stalcup**, MS student, University of Florida, USA. $1,000. Is a diet containing ants more nutritionally beneficial to an ant-specialist jumping spider (*Anasaitis canosus*) than one that excludes ants?

- Total Awarded (*n* = 8), **Vincent Roth Fund: $7,330.00**
  - **Maite Allegue**, PhD student, Centro de Recursos Naturales Renovables de la Zona Semiárida (CERZOS), Argentina. $1,000. On the genus *Chilehexops* Coyle, 1986 (Araneae, Mygalomorphae, Euagridae) from Argentina: discovery of a new lineage, taxonomy and phylogenetic placement
  - **Fernando Pilo García**, MS student, Centro de Investigaciones en Biodiversidad y Conservación, México. $1,000. Taxonomic Review of Mecaphesa Simon, 1900 (Araneae, Thomisidae) in Mexico
  - **Jadon Gonzales**, MS student, San Diego State University, USA. $1,000. Integrative Taxonomic Revision and Biogeographic History of the California Spider Genus *Yorima*
  - **Athira Jose**, PhD student, Christ College Irinjalakuda, Thrissur, Kerala, India $330. A Taxonomic and Phylogenetic Study of *Pilia* Simon, 1902, a Little-Known Jumping Spider Lineage from the Western Ghats
  - **Miguel Menendez-Acuna**, PhD student, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), México. $1,000. The unexpected diversity of the genus *Mexigonus* Edwards, 2003 (Salticidae: Euophryini)
  - **Alexandre Stamato Michelotto**, PhD student, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Brazil. $1,000. Phylogenomics of freyine jumping spiders from Brazilian Caatinga using Ultraconserved Elements
  - **Harper Elizabeth Montgomery**, PhD student, University of Maryland, USA. $1,000. Identifying Genomic Fingerprints of Historical Introgression in the *Leiobunum vittatum* species group of Opiliones
  - **Brendan Stewart O'Loughlin**, PhD student, The Ohio State University, USA. $1,000. Defining cryptic species boundaries in the *Hogna coloradensis* complex (Araneae: Lycosidae)

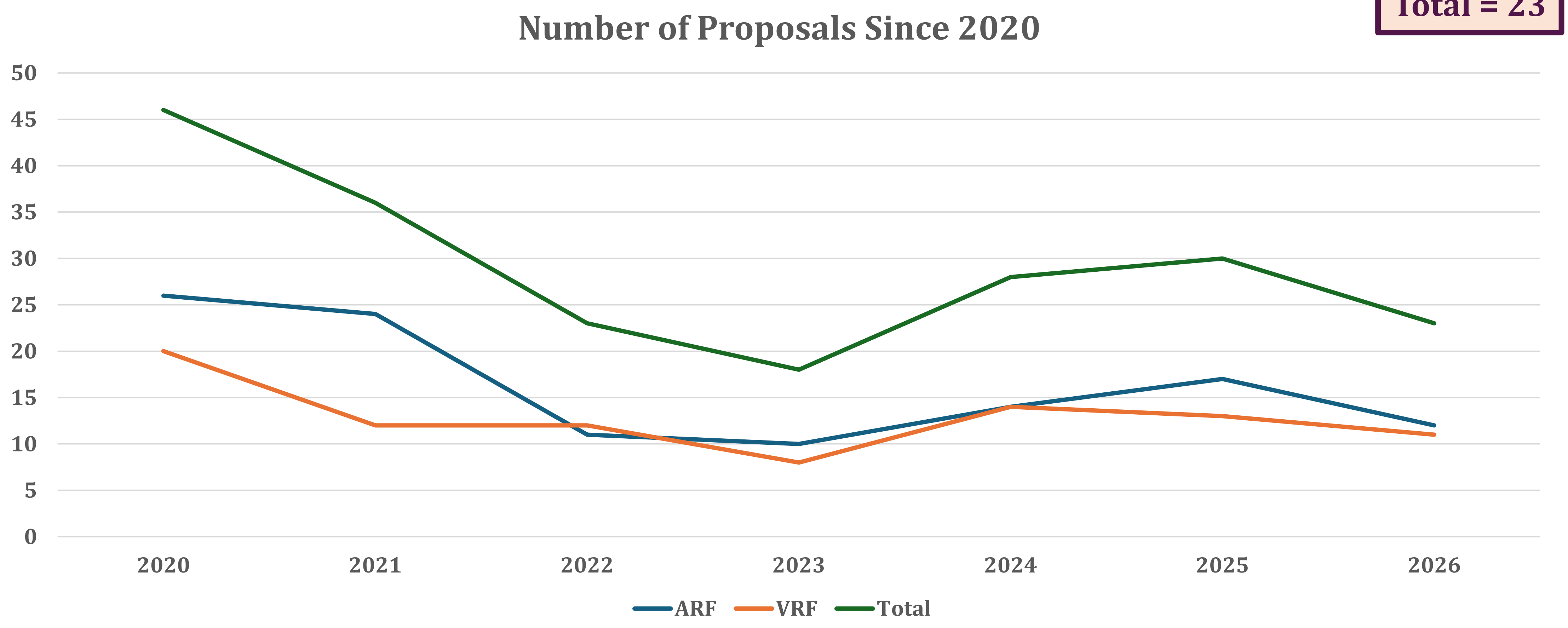
Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to student research in arachnology.

Respectfully,

Matthew R. Graham, PhD
Chair, AAS Student Research Grants Committee
Professor, Biology Department
Eastern Connecticut State University
grahamm@easternct.edu

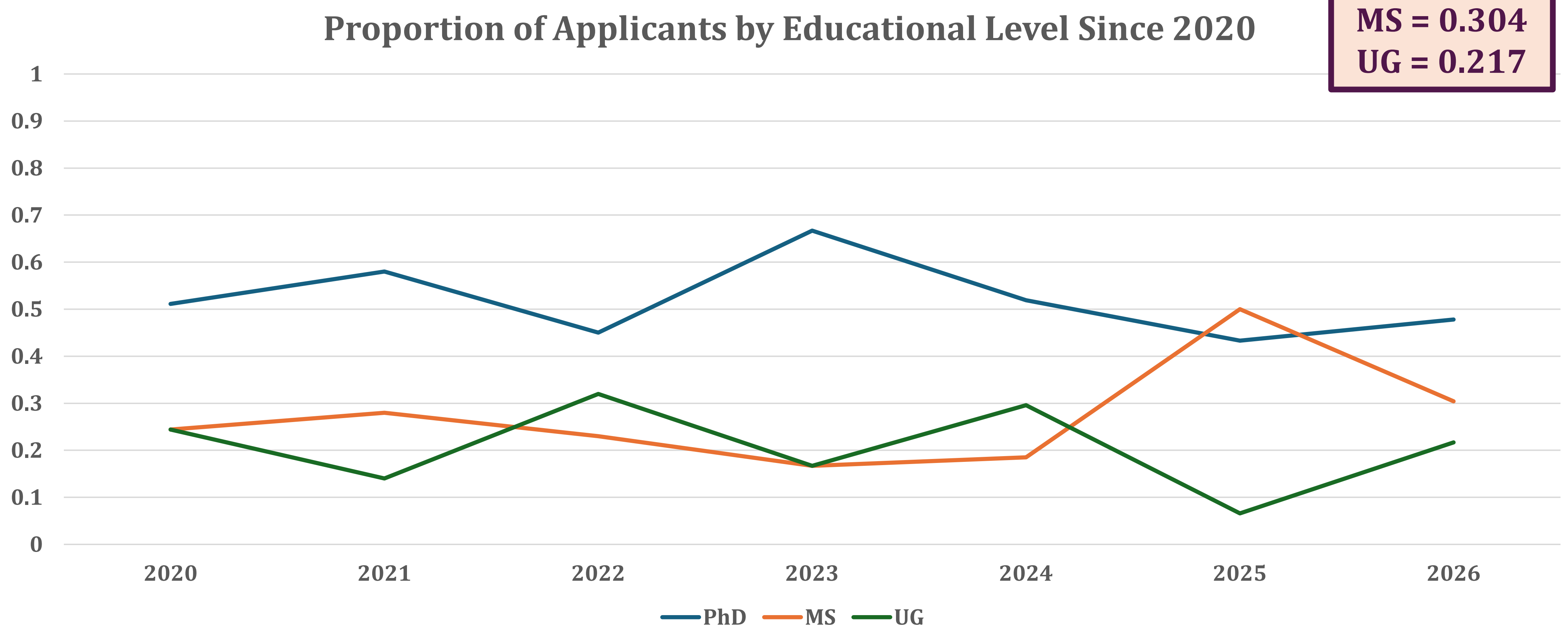
Proposal Statistics

<u>2026</u>
ARF = 12
VRF = 11
Total = 23



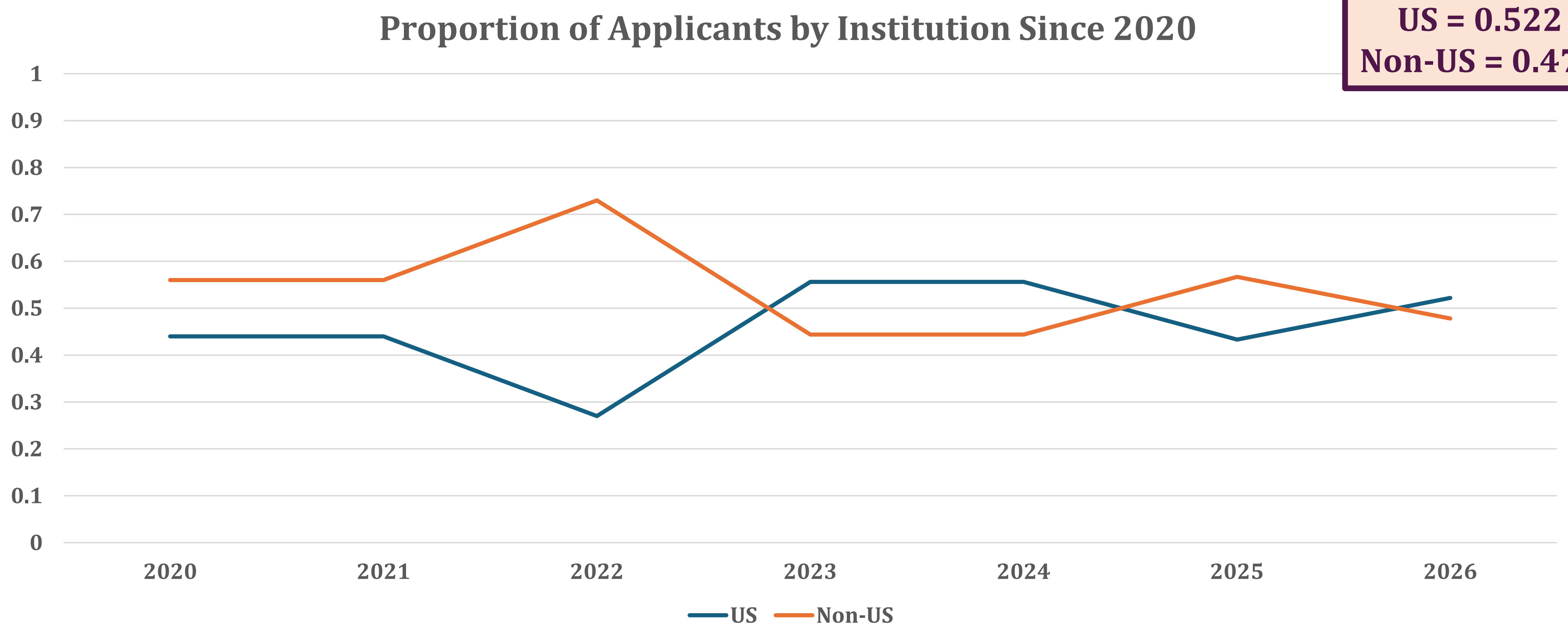
Proposal Statistics

2026
PhD = 0.478
MS = 0.304
UG = 0.217



Proposal Statistics

2026
US = 0.522
Non-US = 0.478



In 2025, non-US applicants from Mexico, India, Argentina, Brazil, Panama, and Taiwan

American Arachnological Society
Norman Platnick Award 2026

The Selection Panel for the Norman Platnick Award met on 19 May 2026 (Australian Western Standard Time) to consider the applications received by the closing date.

Please note that Hannah Wood and I are completing our term on the Committee, and the remaining members (Junxia Zhang, Martín Ramirez and Gustavo Hormiga) will select two replacement members, as well as a new Chair, in due course.

Panel members:

- Dr Mark Harvey (Chair)
  Dr Gustavo Hormiga
  Dr Martín Ramírez
  Dr Hannah Wood
  Dr Junxia Zhang

The applicants are:

- Dr Donard Geci
- Dr Miguel Garcia
- Dr Rishikesh Tripathi

Conflicts of interest:
No conflicts of interest were noted.

Eligibility:
All applicants were deemed eligible for the Award.

Discussion:
The Panel then discussed the applications.

Despite the publication achievements of the applicants, none were considered sufficiently outstanding to receive the Norman Platnick Award 2026.

Recommendation:
The Selection Panel unanimously agreed to not bestow the Norman Platnick Award for 2026.

Award presentation:
The Panel Chair will contact all of the applicants and inform them of the decision.

Panel composition:
The Selection Panel for 2026 includes two members who have served since 2021 (Mark Harvey and Hannah Wood) and three new members (Gustavo Hormiga, Martín Ramirez and Junxia Zhang). Mark Harvey and Hannah Wood will now step down from the Selection Panel, and the remaining members will invite two new members to bring the Panel membership to five. Recruitment to the Panel will take into consideration commitment to morphological taxonomy, gender, diversity and geography to ensure equity and balance.

Respectfully submitted

Dr. Mark Harvey (Chair)
Dr. Gustavo Hormiga
Dr. Martín Ramírez
Dr. Hannah Wood
Dr. Junxia Zhang

2026 Common Names Committee Annual Report

The current members of the common names committee are:

Sarah J. Rose PhD (Chair)
Assistant Professor
Arkansas State University
sarose@astate.edu

Richard Bradley PhD
Associate Professor Emeritus
The Ohio State University
bradley.10@osu.edu

Ray Fisher PhD
Entomologist at Mississippi State Entomological Museum
Based in Fayetteville, Arkansas
Naturalist; systematist; mites, spiders, ants, aquatic arthropods
jrf521@msstate.edu

Kari J McWest MS
West Texas A&M University (former)
REVSYS, AMNH
kari.mcwest@gmail.com

Susan E. Riechert PhD
UTK Distinguished Service & Chancellor's Professor
The University of Tennessee Knoxville
riechert@utk.edu

Louis N. Sorkin B.C.E.
American Museum of Natural History
sorkin@amnh.org

Ray Fisher has provided a minimal update for the mites and ticks common names, implying that a complete draft will be submitted in the near future. I am pleased that there seems to be some progress and will continue to push for a complete update so that a new common names listing can be published on the website.

A request for a common name for *Trichonephila clavata* has been received, the committee has been emailed regarding this request but a decision has not been made at this time, I am still waiting for responses from all of the committee members.

I have moved to Arkansas and started my new position. It has been quite a heavy workload, hopefully as I get settled, and with Ray working on the mites and ticks, we will have lots of updates next year.

Submitted by
Sarah J Rose PhD
Chair of the AAS Common Names Committee

ELRAW Report 2026

ELRAW had two submission this year, reviewed by two different reviewers.

1. Salazar Ipuz and Lopez Castaneda. Microhabitat preferences and behaviors associated with the reproduction of Latrodectus garbae (Aranea: Theridiidae) in the Upper Magdalena Valley.

2. Schultheiss et al. *Purrankia* (Opiliones: Laniatores: Gonyleptidae), a new genus of Pachylinae from the Coastal Range of southern Chile, with descriptions of three new species

It is recommended that a new refreshed “advertising” campaign is undertaken to increase the reach of ELRAW. The current manager, Shahan Derkarabetian, would like to hand off the managerial role to another person.

AMERICAN ARACHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Office of the Past President/ Director

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EC Report for both the Past-President/ Director and the Outreach Committee -

Role as Director:

I sent thank you letters to donors and life-time members. This effort will be taken over by the President or President Elect in the coming year. I will share my working templates with them.

Provided detailed budget and meeting details to Eileen Hebets for this year's meeting.

Outreach Committee:

The 1st Inaugural Science Communication Lunch will be held this year to discuss large scale community science outreach events such as Insectapalooza, Eight-legged Encounters, and Tarantula Fest with the goals of encouraging our membership to try or participate in similar events. The event will also be an opportunity to see what sort of a science communication/ outreach program will be beneficial in coming years.

I did not make good progress on the Outreach Committee this year. I hope to settle the members of the Outreach Committee during this year's meeting.

Working toward upgrades in the Outreach Web page on the AAS site.

ARACHNO-ANSWERS: 2026 Report – Jerry Rovner

I answered 179 questions during the past year (June 1, 2025 – May 31, 2026): ≈ 15 questions/month.

July was the busiest month: 27 questions.

December (5 questions) and January (3 questions) were the least busy.

The remaining 9 months ranged from 10 to 21 questions per month.

Role of the American Arachnological Society's (AAS) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee Chair

The role of the American Arachnological Society's (AAS) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee Chair is to lead the DEI committee in generating new initiatives that relate to their committee's mandate and to act as a liaison between the DEI committee and the cares and concerns of AAS members as they relate to the charges of the DEI committee.

The DEI Committee Chair has the following major duties:

1. Work with the DEI Committee members to develop new, carry out current, and reflect on past initiatives relating to DEI within the AAS.
2. Coordinate with the AAS Treasurer about spending funds for the activities relating to the DEI Committee.
3. Regularly communicate with AAS members via electronic or in person methods to understand concerns as they relate to the charges of the AAS DEI Committee.
4. Serve on the Executive Committee of the AAS to inform the EC of the goings on within the DEI Committee, the cares and concerns of AAS members as they relate to the charges of the DEI Committee, and to provide input on AAS activities and future DEI committee initiatives and needs.

The AAS DEI Committee Chair is responsible to the members of the AAS and to the Executive Board of the American Arachnological Society.

From: milnem@uindy.edu <milnem@uindy.edu>
Sent: Thursday, July 2, 2026 1:11 PM
To: Paula Cushing <Paula.Cushing@dmns.org>; 'Jason Bond' <jbond@ucdavis.edu>
Subject: RE: Issues for 2026 EC

Thanks for the clarification, Paula. To be clear, I agree that issues outside of AAS events is definitely outside of our purview.

In speaking to Mercedes, she suggested that a legal professional might need to be engaged in developing resolution methodologies for conflict issues relating to sexual misconduct and other Title IX issues that may arise during an AAS-sponsored event.

I think the CoC wording is fine, it's just not specific enough. Using the CoC as it currently stands, I wouldn't know – specifically – what to do if a Title IX situation occurred at an AAS event. In reading past conversations, in developing the current CoC in 2022, a policy adopted by the ABS was modified and presented as an example of what could be included (see attached, pgs. 3-7; I think this was during Greta's presidency?). However, I'm not sure if a completed version of that exists anywhere (I don't see it on the AAS website nor in the meeting Host Guidelines document).

Marc

Dr. Marc A. Milne (he/him)
Professor of Biology
Department of Biology
University of Indianapolis
1400 E. Hanna Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46227

From: Paula Cushing <Paula.Cushing@dmns.org>
Sent: Tuesday, June 30, 2026 11:27 AM
To: milnem@uindy.edu; 'Jason Bond' <jbond@ucdavis.edu>
Subject: RE: Issues for 2026 EC

I'll chime in: If I recall the discussion, Andy Roberts (when he was pres) consulted with his wife who has expertise in these issues and the conclusion was that the society could not legally address issues outside our purview (specifically AAS-related activities or AAS sponsored events).

Marc, I'd suggest (and Jason can correct) that you should read thru our current CoC and if there is specific wording that you think needs clarification or something missing, maybe propose as a new order of business to be discussed.

paula

From: milnem@uindy.edu <milnem@uindy.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, June 30, 2026 7:38 AM
To: 'Jason Bond' <jbond@ucdavis.edu>
Cc: Paula Cushing <Paula.Cushing@dmns.org>
Subject: RE: Issues for 2026 EC

Hi Jason,

Yeah, I'm not sure how much has been discussed prior to me being on the EC (<2 years), so I may be ignorant of previous conversations. In reading past Code of Conduct drafts, there were conversations about adopting grievance procedures that were more in depth than what is present now (e.g., having a standing form, a person of contact in leadership, a review board, an interview procedure, etc.).

The reason I put it on the "issues to address" email previously is that I'm unsure if these types of specifics need to be added to our code of conduct guidelines of if they were omitted purposefully.

Marc

Dr. Marc A. Milne (he/him)
Professor of Biology
Department of Biology
University of Indianapolis
1400 E. Hanna Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46227

From: Jason Bond <jbond@ucdavis.edu>
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2026 7:14 PM
To: milnem@uindy.edu
Cc: 'Paula Cushing' <Paula.Cushing@dmns.org>
Subject: Re: Issues for 2026 EC

Hi Marc -

Happy to make sure these items are on the agenda. One point of clarification that might be helpful to have beforehand - I am wondering what specifically you are thinking re Title IX that is beyond our code of conduct for meetings? That's already well spelled out for meetings - are we thinking conduct of members outside of our meetings? Members of the EC? We've explored this in the past and typically come to the conclusion that we don't have the resources for the legal guidance we'd need to formally "police" Title IX related allegations that extend beyond our annual meetings (also limited there too, aside from excusing respondents from the meeting).

https://www.americanarachnology.org/aas-meetings/aas-code-of-conduct-1/

Thanks!

Jason

From: milnem@uindy.edu <milnem@uindy.edu>
Date: Thursday, June 18, 2026 at 11:42
To: Jason Bond <jbond@ucdavis.edu>
Cc: 'Paula Cushing' <Paula.Cushing@dmns.org>
Subject: Issues for 2026 EC

Hi Jason,

I've attached a document with some issues I think need to be addressed at the EC meeting this year. The first references the Director report, which has been uploaded to the Dropbox folder shared by Paula. The second and third issues reference the AAS DEI committee, one problem with which was a lack of duties assigned to the Chair. So, the second document attached here is a definition of those duties, reviewed by both Greta Binford (who was the President when this position was created) and Mercedes Burns (the previous DEI Chair).

Please let me know if you need more clarification. I look forward to seeing you at the meeting this year!

Marc

Dr. Marc A. Milne (he/him)
Professor of Biology
Department of Biology
University of Indianapolis
1400 E. Hanna Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46227

Draft AAS 2022 Updated Code of Conduct including Process Details

Pasted below are our current code of conduct, our society Purpose (mission statement posted on our website) then the draft code of conduct of ABS. Please add any other templates that might serve as good resources.

Anyone who wants to be involved, please read through these and then we'll discuss the process of creating this document.

I've added an extensive set of resources from our TitleIX coordinator.

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AAS Code of Conduct (copied and pasted from our website):

Code of Professional Conduct

Approved by Executive Committee December 2017

By attending any Society event, you agree voluntarily to abide by our Code of Conduct.

Authorship: All authors connected to a presentation and/or abstract must agree on all information contained in the presentation. An author who submits a presentation to the conference must have intentions of attending, registering, and presenting at the meeting once the submission is accepted into the program.

Harassment and Safety: The society is dedicated to providing a safe, hospitable, and productive environment for everyone attending our events, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, physical appearance, or sexual orientation. It is important to remember that a community where people feel uncomfortable or threatened is neither healthy nor productive. Accordingly, the society prohibits intimidating, threatening, or harassing conduct during our conferences. This policy applies to speakers, staff, volunteers, and attendees. Conference participants violating the code of conduct may be sanctioned or expelled from the conference, at the discretion of the meeting host and society leadership.

Harassment of meeting attendees will not be tolerated in any form. Harassment includes offensive gestures or verbal comments related to gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, physical appearance, or sexual orientation in public spaces; inappropriate physical contact or unwelcome attention (particularly on the part of senior scientists or staff towards students or assistants); deliberate intimidation, stalking, following; harassing photography or recording; sustained disruption of talks or other events. Participants asked to stop any harassing behavior by the recipient of that behavior or by anyone witnessing the inappropriate behavior are expected to comply immediately.

If a participant or exhibitor engages in, or is accused of harassing behavior, the meeting host or society leadership will investigate the report and may take action as appropriate, ranging from a simple warning to the offender to expulsion from this and future conferences. If expulsion is deemed necessary, the offender will not be entitled to reimbursements or refunds for costs incurred at the conference. If you are being harassed, notice someone else being harassed, or have any other concerns, please contact the meeting host or society officers who can take appropriate measures to ensure that the behavior desists. Reports of inappropriate behavior can remain anonymous if so requested.

Society officers will be happy to help the host or meeting attendees contact convention venue security or local law enforcement, or otherwise assist those experiencing harassment, to enable them to feel safe for the duration of the conference. We value your attendance, and want to make your experience as productive and professionally stimulating as possible.

Photography and Social Media: The society supports the communication and discussion of science in all formats. Information, including original data, slides, or other visual representations, may be summarized and discussed by attendees and science writers via blogs and other social media formats. However, we ask that this be done respectfully and that permission be obtained from the presenter before reproducing any visual materials.

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Here's the AAS mission statement. We revised this in 2020 after covid and George Floyd's murder.

Purpose of the American Arachnological Society

The American Arachnological Society (AAS) is a professional organization dedicated to furthering the science and awareness of research on arachnids (spiders and their relatives) through the advancement and professional development of all its members. The AAS is dedicated to providing a safe, hospitable, and productive environment for everyone involved in research, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, physical appearance, cultural background, or sexual orientation. We value contributions by those interested in this part of Earth's biodiversity regardless of your professional status. It is important to remember that a scientific community grows and progresses when it cultivates a culture of excellence based on mentorship, encouragement, tolerance, and mutual respect.

The AAS accomplishes the dissemination of information about arachnids through annual meetings, mentorship and support of the next generation of scientists, and through publications, including the *Journal of Arachnology*.

Meetings

The society hosts an annual meeting for professional and amateur arachnologists and students interested in arachnology to share research and ideas.

Supporting Graduate Studies

The society promotes undergraduate and graduate studies in arachnology by providing grants for travel to meetings and research, by recognition of high quality student presentations and posters at the annual meetings, by recognition of outstanding early career researchers, and by providing information on graduate study opportunities in the field of arachnology.

Publications

The society publishes a refereed research journal, the Journal of Arachnology, three times a year. It also publishes the Spiders of North America-An Identification Manual, and has provided support for the publication of Common Spiders of North America.

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DRAFT of potential procedure- heavily following the policy adopted by the ABS society i.
This plan requires a designated body that receives reports of violations of the code of ethics.
The ABS calls this the Safe Behavior Committee (SBC).

Procedures for Reviewing Reported Violations of the Code of Ethics and Member Conduct by a member of the American Arachnological Society

1. A member who wishes to report a potential violation of the Code of Ethics and Member Misconduct may report this conduct to xxxxxxxxx
   a. Emails sent to xxxxxxx will be received by xxxxxx and/or another reporting channel as designated by the AAS
   b. Reports sent to a member of the AAS Executive Committee will be forwarded to xxx by forwarding an email report to xxxxxx or writing up a summary based upon a verbal or non-email written report. A summary will be sent to xxxxxxx.
   c. Published articles by a reputable news source alleging ethics violations by a member of AAS will be considered a report of ethics violations.
   d. Upon receipt, the xxx will review the report to ensure that no member of the xxx (reviewing committee) is named in the misconduct report, or has a conflict of interest, before passing it on to the committee. If a member of xxx (reviewing committee) is named or there is a conflict of interest with any member of the xxx (reviewing committee), they will be replaced by another agreed upon member of the EC, with 1-2 members of the Diversity Committee to serve as provisional members of the xxx (reviewing committee). If there is a conflict of interest for other alternate EC members or Diversity Committee members then the case will go to a third party consultant.
   e. The ABS management company will inform the SBC of any prior reports concerning the accused party.

2. The Safe Behavior Committee will review the details of the allegation as follows:

i. The SBC will first determine if the reported behavior is in violation of the AAS Code of Ethics and Member Conduct. During this stage, the SBC may contact the accused party to inform them of the report and request a voluntary cessation of AAS-related activities until the SBC concludes their determination.
    - In the absence of a full review, the SBC and the accused party may engage in conversations and mutually agreed upon actions to directly address the reported behavior.

ii. If a full review is warranted, a member of the SBC will contact the accused party to inform them of the report and the initiation of the review process. Names of reporters will not be included, unless specifically requested by the reporter, but an overview of the violations will be provided. At the time of initial contact, the accused party will be offered an opportunity to respond to the report with a written statement within 7 days.

iii. During a review, the Safe Behavior Committee will ask the AAS management company to put a hold on the accused party's membership.

iv. During the review, the committee may ask for more information from the accused party. Accused parties will be made aware of this policy, ABS Procedures for Reviewing Reported Violations of the Code of Ethics and Member Conduct

v. If necessary, the Safe Behavior Committee will, with the help of professional consultants, conduct an investigation to obtain additional information from individuals other than the accused party This investigation may include interviewing witnesses, reviewing documents, and obtaining any information necessary to reach a conclusion on the reported violation. The SBC will use the "more likely than not" standard to determine the credibility of parties and witnesses in reaching its determination on the reported violation..

vi. The Safe Behavior Committee will, with or without the input of a professional consultant and/or a lawyer, decide on consequences, if any.

vii. The SBC must reach a majority vote on consequences before they can be enacted.

1. If the Safe Behavior Committee concludes that the reported behavior and/or accused party was not acting in violation of the ABS Ethics Policy:
    1. The ABS management company will strike through the report entry and will add a note of when and why the report was negated.

        1. Such action will effectively remove the accused party from the reporting document, but will retain a record of the report and outcome.
    2. The Safe Behavior Committee will inform the accused party , reporting party , and any other individuals directly involved in the review, of the outcome.

If the Safe Behavior Committee concludes that the reported behavior and/or alleged violator was acting in violation of the ABS Ethics Policy, they will determine appropriate consequences.

1. The Safe Behavior Committee will inform the accused party, reporting party, other survivors and witnesses, and any other individuals directly involved in the review, of the outcome.

1. Potential consequences for violations of the ABS Code of Ethics may include, but are not limited to:

i. Receipt of a verbal or written warning, indicating that any future misconduct may carry serious consequences.

ii. Removal from an in-person or online meeting or event. Such an action can be done without warning or refund and at cost to the individual.

iii. Removal from an ABS-related committee, position, and/or consideration for an award or grant.

iv. Prohibition from attending future ABS meetings and events permanently or for an indicated time (e.g., 5 year ban).

v. Revocation of past ABS-related accolades (e.g. society awards and honors)

vi. Removal from the current and all future ABS activities, including membership of the Society.

If the Safe Behavior Committee recommends revoking awards, membership, or banning future membership or participation, they will:

- Present a confidential verbal report to the Executive Committee with details and identities redacted for those that wish to remain anonymous.

- The Executive Committee will engage in a discussion about the appropriateness of the suggested consequence(s)
- The EC will hold a formal vote as detailed in Procedures for Revoking Awards and Removing Membership (below) .

1. The Safe Behavior Committee will provide the ABS management company a record of each case that is not dismissed to be archived in a confidential document. The record will take the form of the written report shared with the EC.

2. The confidential document of reported cases will be managed and accessed only by the ABS management company so as to keep the information confidential. The ABS management company will consult this confidential report document for prior offenses by the party in question and if a name is present, it will be brought to the attention of the Safe Behavior Committee.

c. Procedure for Revoking Awards and Removing Membership

A recommendation from the Safe Behavior Committee to revoke past ABS-related accolades or to remove a society member from all current and future ABS-sponsored events, including revoking and/or preventing future membership, will require a majority vote of the ABS Executive Committee.

1. A recommendation from the Safe Behavior Committee to revoke an award and/or remove membership will result in the following:

i. The alleged violator will be contacted by a member of the Safe Behavior Committee and informed of the committee’s recommendation.

ii. The alleged violator will be invited to provide a written statement to be read to the Executive Committee during the discussion of the case. The alleged violator will be given a minimum of 7 days to provide a written statement.

iii. A special Executive Committee meeting will be scheduled to discuss the case. The case will not be discussed over email.

iv. If the Executive Committee supports the SBC’s recommendation, the accused party reporting party, other survivors and witnesses, and any others directly involved in the review will be informed of the outcome.

1. If the Safe Behavior Committee is made aware that a member of the ABS society has been found to have engaged in ethics or conduct violations at their home institution or by another professional institution or organization (e.g., a journal or another professional society) that may also be considered a violation of the ABS Code of Ethics and Member Conduct, they are charged with making a recommendation regarding consequences consistent with their operations detailed above.

1. Recommendation to revoke awards and/or remove membership can result from behavioral and/or scientific ethics violations.

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Some language and resources from L&Cs Title IX coordinator

Thank you for asking about resources for developing accountability structures. Offhand, I have a few places to start looking:

1. Here is a workbook that I really appreciate for setting up accountability structures within groups. It was developed with community groups in mind, but is applicable to other organizations/societies:
https://www.akpress.org/fumbling-towards-repair.html
(I love this title, too -- Fumbling Towards Repair seems exactly right for most of our very human and unpracticed attempts at conflict resolution and repairing our relationships)
That workbook costs $35, which hopefully would not be prohibitive.

2. I attached a free community-created workbook for groups to work on their interpersonal conflict skills; it could be a practice to go through sections together at meetings/conferences/gatherings. I really appreciate how it is divided into sections and not too text-heavy or dense. I've used the Feedback section with anyone I've supervised in any capacity.

3. Here is a document I put together for our efforts within student conduct to establish a "restorative" model instead of a "punitive" model for conduct -- it lists some resources to learn about restorative justice:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LIxJtF1WDzX3s_knNhE3VqLZzvwltN5wuCkFSRYj8ns/edit?usp=sharing

4. Statements/Communications: Here is an example of a community organization that issues a statement to its members acknowledging past harm and setting up steps for how they'd do better going forward (this one is very long, but could be a reference in some places):
https://www.youthoutright.org/articles/organizational-accountability-to-harm-done

5. Here is an example of a group from Eugene that put together their own conflict resolution process without extra funding or any particular expertise/practitioner involved (though they do often suggest bringing in a third party that everyone agrees is outside the conflict). This would be a great start if you're trying to create an internal process from scratch: https://neighborhoodanarchists.org/structure/#conflict

6. If you end up interested in restorative justice in particular, there is a publishing group that directly publishes several small chapbooks introducing some concepts: https://livingjusticepress.org/shop/ and ebook versions https://livingjusticepress.directfrompublisher.com/, for example https://livingjusticepress.org/product/little-book-of-circle-processes/. Any approach like this would require significant time from the group members, but it's good to know such models are out there.

7. It is hard to find practitioners who can come in and help the way a part-time legal counsel might, and usually the practitioners who are available are not free or affordable for a group with no/little budget. The publisher I mentioned does keep a list: https://livingjusticepress.org/listings, and there is also a list for Oregon mediators: https://ormediation.org/, again with varying cost -- this would take some calling/emailing/digging.

8. As you can tell, I have lots of thoughts about this -- I could definitely tell you how to set up a process that involves paid staff or a structure in place, but am giving the above ideas from the perspective that you might not have any of those resources (time, money, people) available. A great alternative, however, would be to **look for an umbrella/parent organization or group** (like the entomological society) that might be able to provide a structure that you could use when an issue arises.

Finally, I just want to name that this is a big, difficult question: what you are talking about is establishing community norms (aka code of conduct) and a system of accountability for when those norms are broken (aka enforcement). This is what our legal systems, our HR departments, and our student conduct systems are designed to do, with resources dedicated to it (some more than others). If it feels like a big ask, it IS!

At the same time, groups, families, and societies big and small have found many ways to navigate conflict and enforce their norms: there are many ways, and what works is what works for your group, so long as it works for everyone in the group (not just those who originally had power and control). For example, a group could agree that they kick someone out the moment there is any allegation of wrongdoing -- this happens in some activist circles (and is certainly efficient, if not always fair). A group could agree that they always convene a core number of people to discuss and resolve any issue -- this works best in tight-knit small groups. A group could agree to always bring in a third-party conflict resolution specialist, or have a designated person resolve any dispute, such as your society President (an important role of a leader/chief/spiritual leader in many societies over time). I'm about to get into an anthropological eddy here, but my point is just: it is possible and do-able, but does take some time to get your members together and get everyone to agree to a process and approach. My personal recommendation is to be honest that you want to establish an accountability structure but need help and input from AAS members!

I hope that was not too much at once. I care a lot about this topic and have plenty of books I can loan if you get really interested (indigenous practices of justice, etc), but most are not a practical workbook-style list of what to do immediately, so I recommend Fumbling Toward Repair (#1, above) as a great start.

You are welcome to share any of these thoughts with your colleagues, thought partners, Valerie, or anyone else; none of it is my original thinking, just things I've come across in different circles.

All my best,
Casey

Casey Bieberich | she, her, hers
Interim Dean of Equity and Inclusion | Title IX Coordinator
Report a Concern
bieberich@lclark.edu
Phone: 503-768-7185

EBSCO RAG RIGHTS PROPOSAL – Email thread

On April 6, 2026, Krista Blaisdell <KBlaisdell@ebsco.com> **wrote:**
Hi Deb,

I hope you're doing well. I'm reaching out with a new opportunity that I believe may be of interest to you. EBSCO is introducing a simple way to help your content stay visible as more researchers begin their work in AI tools and web search: Retrieval Augmented Generation (RAG).

RAG lets AI tools pull small, real-time excerpts to give accurate answers, but it does not use your full text for training. Full text remains available only to authenticated users. This helps increase usage, citations, and overall journal impact while keeping you fully in control.

Unlike the LLM training opportunity, which only provides value if your content is selected, these discovery enhancements benefit every publisher who opts in_. And if an excerpt (20 words or less) of your content shows up in an output, you receive 50 percent of the revenue generated. It's a straightforward way to create a new revenue stream with no additional work on your end since we already host your content.

Please let me know if you would like for me to send the template amendment for your review.

I look forward to hearing from you and thank you for your time.

Best,

~Krista
(she / her / hers)
Krista Blaisdell | Senior Publisher Relations Manager | EBSCO
Information Services | Phone 978-414-0453

On April 6, 2026, Deborah Smith <joa@americanarachnology.org> **wrote:**
Hello, Krista

This sounds like a very promising way to boost our income and visibility. I'm cc'ing Nina Sandlin our Treasurer, too. Pleas do send the template amendment (I have to confess I am not sure what the original template is) and any information you think would be helpful, Sincerely, Deborah

On April 8, 2026 Krista wrote:
Thank you for your response. RAG permission is a great opportunity to get broader exposure and additional revenue while not having your full text content go anywhere outside what is currently allowed on EBSCOhost as part of our license agreement.

I've attached an amendment for your review, which may be signed and returned at your convenience. If you prefer, I'm happy to send it via DocuSign for electronic signature. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions-I'd be glad to chat or answer anything through email.

On May 7, 2026, Krista wrote
I wanted to follow up on the attached amendment. So far we have over 250 publishers who have signed up. As mentioned, text remains available only to authenticated users through EBSCOhost. The AI partner never receives or stores your content directly. They connect to EBSCO through an MCP server, and any output shown to users is limited to 20 words or fewer, includes attribution to Whiting & Birch Limited, and does not display full text unless the user is authenticated through EBSCOhost.

Please let me know if you have any questions about the amendment or want me to send through DocuSign for easy execution. I look forward to hearing from you and thank you for your time.

On May 7, 2026, Krista wrote
My apologies for the duplicate email. I meant to clarify below that the attribution would be shown to American Arachnological Society.

AI RAG SUBLICENSE ADDENDUM TO LICENSE AGREEMENT

An AI RAG Sublicense Addendum (herein the "Addendum") to the existing License Agreement dated May 23, 2007 (herein the "Agreement"), entered into on the latest execution date set forth on the signature block below, by and between EBSCO Publishing, Inc. whose principal place of business is at 10 Estes Street, Ipswich, MA 01938-0682 USA ("EBSCO") and **American Arachnological Society** whose principal place of business is at 209 Tucker Hall. Univ. of Missouri, Columbia,. NO 65211 ("Licensor").

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11. **Conflicting Terms**. In the event of a conflict between the terms and conditions of this Addendum and any other provision of the Agreement, the terms and conditions of this Addendum shall supersede and control solely with respect to the subject matter hereof.

In addition, the parties hereby agree that Section 2.7 of the Agreement shall be deleted in its entirety and replaced with the following:

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All other terms and conditions of the Agreement shall remain in full force and effect.

Accepted and agreed to by the parties as of the last execution date set forth on the signature block below.

Licensor	**EBSCO Publishing, Inc.**
BY: ____________________ (Signature)	BY: ____________________
Title: ____________________	Title: ____________________
____________________ Name	____________________ Name
Date signed: ____________________	Date signed: ____________________

Exhibit 1 – Content

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