

Human Diversity Committee

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

Mission:

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

Information Items:

(1) The HDC seeks to have wide participation in our efforts to promote and support diversity in all aspects of the ASM—*especially related to ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, and gender*—and our efforts work best when we receive substantial feedback and input from ASM members. Remember that we are here to help implement activities and initiatives to make our collective society more inclusive and welcoming, as part of the HDC’s mission to serve the entire membership. *“Increasing the Dimensions of Human Diversity”* is our current theme.

(2) To that end, we will be conducting two committee meetings at this year’s conference. First, we will meet at **2 pm on Saturday, 13 June**, to discuss current and ongoing activities being conducted by our Committee; we welcome anyone who is interested in knowing more about the HDC’s efforts and, especially, those who think they may be interested in joining the Committee. Subsequently, we will meet at **2 pm on Sunday, 14 June**, to discuss the theme of *“Increasing the Dimensions of Human Diversity”* and where the ASM goes as we approach our second century as a scientific society. We hope for broad participation by folks at this year’s meeting—as well as over the next few years—as we approach ASM’s 100th anniversary. In keeping with our effort to reflect upon where we have been and where we are going as a society, we also will be presenting a poster entitled **“Increasing the dimensions of human diversity: approaching the next 100 years of North American mammalogy”** (*scheduled for the second poster session at 6 pm on Monday, 15 June*). This is part of our objective to take stock of diversity—past, present, and future—and disseminate that information to the ASM membership.

In accordance with these goals, we will conduct our fifth quadrennial survey at this year’s meeting. In addition, we have collected demographic information about this year’s attendees via electronic conference registration. In addition to giving us the most complete demographic information possible, this two-fold effort will enable us to compare the “picture” of diversity that we obtain by onsite survey vs. online registration. One challenge for collecting information through electronic registration is the strict limit on the number of “fields” of data we can collect (*based on the online registration infrastructure of K-State’s Conference Services*). Therefore, we can gather more comprehensive information through our onsite survey at the meeting (such

as participation in ASM activities and governance), as well as providing an outlet for attendees to express their views and experiences at the meeting. Thus, we increase our ability to relate and respond to our membership and increase our opportunity to retain members.

(3) We continue to pursue efforts to design a corresponding electronic survey of the entire membership to complement the information that we collect at the Annual Meeting. In doing so, our challenge is to maintain the tremendous success of our onsite surveys, with responses ranging from ~33% to over 50% of attendees (dating back to the first survey in 1999)—a remarkable return rate for surveys. Further, meeting surveys are unique in that they give us access to the population of attendees who come to at least one meeting but are not yet members. Being able to gain information about these potential members is invaluable and gives us an opportunity to gain insight into recruitment of new members. (*We thank past, current, and future meeting attendees for taking the time to complete onsite surveys that help to better inform us as a professional society.*)

(4) We want to remind everyone that we also work behind-the-scenes to support participation of members. For example, the HDC continues to make recommendations to help ensure that a diverse group of participants is involved in moderating technical sessions. Everyone has the opportunity to indicate their interest in moderating a session when they register, and doing so is a great way to participate in the Annual Meeting. In addition to having established mammalogists moderate sessions, we also invite relatively junior professionals to participate. Because being a moderator has an important functionality to making our Annual Meeting run smoothly (such as keeping technical session running on time), we do limit selection of moderators to early-career professionals (including postdocs and even senior doctoral candidates) and beyond, and those who have attended previous ASM meetings. This is a great way for relatively new participants in the ASM to get involved, increase interactions, and become more visible at the annual meeting.

(5) As always, we welcome input and ideas to address what the membership views as *its* needs, with regard to diversity. Much of what our Committee can accomplish springs from grassroots efforts to understand and fulfill the needs of members. We encourage greater involvement by members to further participate in the development of additional *online* programming in order to support the ASM membership, promote recruitment and retention, and serve wider outreach goals.

(6) We plan to host a discussion at the 2016 meeting to facilitate interaction about diversity that is best served in a *face-to-face* format and will continue the focus on our current theme—***“Increasing the Dimensions of Human Diversity”***—that coordinates with our efforts as we move toward the 100th anniversary of the ASM. We also are working to develop our contribution in recognition of this historic event. The “face” of ASM certainly has transformed over the last century—changing from founders who primarily were males of European descent to a much more diverse group. This change has included a much greater role for women in mammalogy over the last several decades and increases in at least some forms of racial and ethnic diversity. Further, even more recently, the ASM has recognized the need to be more explicit in its acceptance and inclusion of other types of diversity such as those based on sexual orientation (including members who are part of the LGBT community and who previously may

have felt disenfranchised in some way from mammalogy and science). We hope to help formally document these changes—*especially those that have occurred over the last quarter of a century*—as part of the ASM’s efforts to recognize a 100 years of North American mammalogy.

(7) Finally, we would like to thank Cody Thompson for his many years of service on this Committee.

Action Items:

(1) The HDC requests \$100 to cover incidental expenses and printing costs to promote diversity and a discussion forum at the 2016 Annual Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Dawn M. Kaufman, Chair
(dkaufman@kings.edu)