

Human Diversity Committee

Committee Members: R. P. Anderson, A. S. Chavez, L. J. Dizney, D. M. Kaufman (Chair), D. W. Kaufman, I. M. Ortega, K. C. Rowe, and C. W. Thompson.

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 continues its efforts to promote and support diversity in all aspects of the ASM. During the last year, the committee was approached to help coordinate a planning discussion that would be focused on ensuring that students and professionals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) would feel welcome to be part of the ASM. In short, regardless of sexual orientation, ASM members and anyone attending the Annual Meeting should feel that this Society is a safe place with supportive colleagues. At the 2012 Annual Meeting, we will hold a “Diversity in Science: LGBT and Friends Roundtable and Mini-Mixer” (tentatively scheduled for 4:15-5:30 pm on Sunday, 24 June). The focus of this mini-mixer and discussion will be to (1) facilitate informal discussion and increase awareness, (2) provide a supportive environment and allow attendees to meet others interested in LGBT issues and those who want to ensure that ASM is welcoming to all forms of diversity in science, (3) enable participants to highlight their own experiences, (4) understand challenges related to being LGBT in science, (5) gather information about potential solutions to issues faced by LGBT persons, (6) discover perceptions about academic and professional environments and attitudes (e.g., in the workplace), and (7) obtain feedback about whether professional societies (such as ASM) present themselves as welcoming and open organizations and what approaches might reinforce positive aspects or address any concerns. We wish to thank two anonymous sponsors who donated funds to provide refreshments for this combined roundtable and mini-mixer.

(2) The HDC is working to further develop our committee webpage (such as posting a history of past diversity-related activities) and is exploring ways that we can make available ASM-related diversity information (such as temporal changes in diversity and demographic patterns of ASM members and Annual Meeting attendees [e.g., from published sources as well as membership information and surveys of past annual meeting attendees]). Further, the committee is progressing with efforts to provide a clearinghouse webpage that will serve as a storehouse of information related to diversity. The aim of this webpage will be to provide information, data, and approaches to address the value, support, recruitment, and retention of human diversity in mammalogy and science. We plan to make this informational clearinghouse available (via the ASM website) later this summer.

(3) For the 2013 Annual Meeting, the HDC proposes two coordinated activities—(1) a diversity forum and panel discussion and (2) a members' mixer and diversity social. As a birthplace of equality, a center of learning and history, and a diverse city in and of itself (e.g., being comprised of significant populations of a variety of racial and ethnic groups), Philadelphia is an especially fitting site for this activity.

(a) The proposed forum would be focused on issues related to diversity in mammalogy and would include commentary by invited panelists (i.e., a group of ~5 members that includes one local panelist), as well as audience interaction, concerns, questions, and feedback. The format of this event would enable participants to have tremendous input into the breadth and depth of topics discussed. The purpose of this forum is to (1) present information, (2) provide a venue for the discussion of diversity concerns, (3) highlight personal experiences, (4) identify the current diversity issues that are of greatest concern to members, (5) ascertain challenges and potential solutions related to diversity in science, (6) review changing demographics in the ASM, (7) determine what approaches will maintain or enhance the Society's diversity outreach, and (8) catalyze continued and future discussion of diversity topics. The core of the panel would be formed by regular meeting attendees with relevant perspectives, interests, experiences, mentoring, development, and expertise related to diversity in mammalogy. In addition, the final member of the panel would be invited from the local Philadelphia area and would provide a unique perspective on and specific expertise related to diversity, learning, development, and/or science. We have been working closely with the Program Committee (related to the program and schedule) and hope to host this forum (followed by the social) during an evening at the Annual Meeting.

(b) The follow-up members' mixer and diversity social would be a broad, public social for meeting attendees and would be design to reinforce the forum program, to promote further discussion about diversity issues in a relaxed, open-ended atmosphere, and to empower members to voice diversity concerns. Further, by following the forum, it would aid participants in identifying other attendees with whom they might like to speak. This social would be very similar to a traditional meeting social in most respects (and the usual socializing would not be precluded). However, its name would highlight the importance of (and reiterate ASM's commitment to) diversity in mammalogy and science; the timing of the social (immediately following the forum) would facilitate continued interactions about diversity issues—particularly those catalyzed by the proceeding discussion, information, concerns, questions, approaches, and feedback (which would be fresh from the forum). Again, the importance of holding this event in the evening is that people are relaxed, there is ample social time with fewer constraints, and people are not pressured to get to the next item on their schedule.

(4) Finally, the HDC is developing a diversity symposium for the 2014 Annual Meeting; we envision capitalizing on local and/or regional aspects of the host location related to diversity in mammalogy or mammalian research (in addition to broader issues of diversity). In conjunction with the development of these ideas and other initiatives, we welcome involvement of additional members and seek feedback from those who have specific suggestions for approaches and activities to continue to increase the opportunities for and participation of those under-

represented in the ASM, mammalogy, and science. We also would like to thank Chris H. T. Himes for his input and years of service on the HDC.

Action Items:

(1) A total allocation of \$2,750 is requested from the 2012 ASM budget to support proposed activities at the 2013 Annual Meeting.

(a) A request of \$750 to support the forum via the invitation of a local, Philadelphia-area panelist and provide necessary funding (including local travel, accommodations, and meals) for that panelist to attend the Annual Meeting and participate in diversity activities.

(b) A request of \$2,000 to help defray the costs of hosting the Members' Mixer and Diversity Social.

Respectfully submitted,
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