

Latin American Fellowship Committee

Committee Members: J. A. Cook, M. M. Diaz, S. T. Álvarez-Castañeda, K. A. Ernest (Chair), M. A. O'Connell, T. E. Lacher, Jr., J. Salazar-Bravo, S. Solari.

Mission:

The Latin American Student Field Research Award is made annually to support field research projects by Latin Americans in Latin America. Eligible students must be citizens of Latin American countries (excluding Puerto Rico) and currently enrolled in a graduate program. Projects must be field-oriented investigations of natural history, conservation, ecology, systematics, wildlife biology, biogeography, or behavior. The selection committee, whose membership reflects these diverse fields and has field experience in Latin America, considers each of these areas of research equally important. Five \$1,500 awards are granted each year. The Oliver P. Pearson Award supports a young professional who holds an academic position in a Latin American institution within 5 years of receiving a Ph.D. or equivalent degree. A single \$5,000 award is granted each year. In addition, up to \$2,000 are offered for the recipient to attend the mammal meetings of the year following the award.

Information Items:

(1) In 2013, we reviewed four applications for the Oliver Pearson Award, and selected Dr. Mariana Muñoz-Romo (Venezuela), Associate Professor of Biology and Director of Applied Zoology Lab at Universidad de Los Andes (University of the Andes, Mérida, Venezuela).

(2) In 2013, we received 11 applications for the Student Field Research grants. Each committee member reviewed and ranked all applications. We awarded 3 grants (according to the budget approved) to the applications with the highest average ranks:

Emma Gomez-Ruiz (Mexico): Identifying priority sites for the conservation of the migratory endangered bat *Leptonycteris nivalis* in northern Mexico; Ph.D. program in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences at Texas A&M University.

Romina Pfoh (Argentina): An experimental approach for exploring the adaptive functions of grooming in social contexts in Tufted Capuchin Monkeys (*Cebus apella nigrurus*); Ph.D. Program in Biological Sciences at National University of Cordoba, Argentina.

Mariel Ruiz-Blanco (Argentina): Puma-guanaco interactions: evaluating the impact of predation on newborn guanacos; Ph.D. Program in Biology at National University of Comahue, Argentina.

(3) Last year's budget request for 5 Latin American Student Field Research awards was approved, so we anticipate awarding 5 this year.

(4) We have received 21 applications for the 2014 Latin American Student Field Research awards and 2 applications for the Oliver Pearson Award. Committee members are in the process of reviewing applications, and recipients will be announced at the 2014 Annual Banquet in Oklahoma City.

(5) Committee Membership: Former member Eileen Lacey has stepped off the Committee to focus on her other work with the Society as President-elect. We thank her for her service.

Action Items:

(1) 2014 budget request

Latin American Student Field Research awards 5 x \$1500	\$ 7,500
Oliver P. Pearson Award (1) award \$5000 + travel \$2000	\$ 7,000
Total Request	\$14,500

(2) Request to consider moving to an online application process for both Pearson and student field grant awards. This may require additional funds.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristina A. Ernest, Chair
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