

African Graduate Student Fund Committee

Committee Members: B. Agwanda, B. Buttler, A. Ferguson, J. Goheen (outgoing Chair), A.-M. Hodge, P. Kaleme, A. Linzey, M. McDonough, P. Moehlman, R. Norris, L. Olson (incoming Chair), S. Rabiou, C. Warret Rodrigues, R. Rose, D. Schlitter, S. Stephens.

Mission:

The African Graduate Student Research Fund Committee grants awards to African nationals pursuing graduate degrees, in the form of \$1,500 grants and an online sponsored membership to the ASM. Eligible students must be citizens of African countries and currently enrolled in a graduate program.

Information Items:

(1) The African Graduate Student Research Fund Committee was an *ad hoc* Committee formed in 2013 and was promoted to a standing committee in 2016. Currently, 16 members comprise the Committee. Jake Goheen officially stepped down as chair in July 2018 but continued to mentor and advise incoming chair Link Olson up until the time of this report's submission. Please contact Olson if you are interested in serving on this committee. We are particularly interested in additional members from African institutions.

(2) In 2012, the Committee began collecting contributions towards an endowment fund that would support this program in perpetuity. The balance of this fund stood at roughly \$65,510 as of March 2019, down 3.07% from 2018. In 2018, two awards were made with the annual interest generated from the endowment and a third was made with *ad hoc* funding from several generous donors. In 2019, a total of \$5,600 was received in donations, \$3,000 of which was requested by the donors to be used to fund two additional awards, for a total of four. ASM members interested in contributing to this fund should earmark their donations to ASM with the notation "African Graduate Student Research Fund."

(3) In 2019 we received 55 applications from citizens of 20 African countries enrolled in 37 institutions spanning 13 countries and five continents. This is over twice the number of proposals received in any previous year with the exception of the inaugural competition in 2014, and we hope to recruit new committee members to keep up with what we hope is continued high levels of interest in this opportunity.

(4) The recipients of the 2019 African Graduate Student Research Fund awards will be announced at the Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. Each awardee will receive a grant for \$1500 and an online, 3-year annual sponsored membership to the American Society of Mammalogists.

(5) Along with the Conservation, Human Diversity, and International Relations Committees,, we request that the ASM Board of Directors consider matching funds of up to \$10,000 raised to support a symposium titled, "Recent advances in the conservation of African mammals," to be held at the 2021 joint American Society of Mammalogists-International Mammalogical Congress meeting in Anchorage, AK. This symposium would represent the first effort to increase exposure

of meeting attendees to historically underrepresented geographic regions and ensure attendance by mammalogists from representative countries. With the Board's support, it is our intent that this symposium would represent the first in a longer-term commitment by ASM to promote global diversity of mammalogists and mammalogy in general.

Action Items:

(1) The Committee seeks board approval to make two of four \$1,500 awards for 2019 from the endowment. The other two awards come from targeted donations (Information Item 2, above). Additionally, we request \$120 to pay for six online-only developing country student memberships (two each for the 2017, 2018, and 2019 recipients of this award).

Respectfully submitted,

Link E. Olson, Chair

(link.olson@alaska.edu)