

Coming Soon!

Topical Working Group 3: Human Capacity (TWG-HC)

There are underlying distinctions in culture between zoos and museums, in particular with regard to the role of science (Fernandez et al. 2008, Hutchins and Thompson 2008, Anderson et al. 2010). These cultural differences are multifaceted and complex, although each holds at its core a passion and keen interest in biodiversity and the natural world. Core institutional differences in ethos have driven deep seated differences in personnel development for STEM professionals. Neither zoos nor museums currently have a standardized curriculum for research staff training. Zoos, in general, focus on on-the-job training that builds off a core educational background to develop skills, with more focus on animal welfare and management and less on research. Meanwhile, museums frequently draw personnel from academic backgrounds and focus more on biodiversity research and less on curatorial skills. Despite the differing pipelines for staff development, the overall focus of both zoos and museums is consistent in valuing public education and access to our shared biodiversity. The goal of this TWG is to develop an improved understanding of cultural differences between zoos and museums in terms of scientific research and to lay the groundwork of a combined educational pipeline for the professional development of zoo and museum professionals that emphasizes collaborative research. While there are longstanding and systemic barriers to equitable professional opportunities in both institutions, in recent years museums and zoos are increasing a focus on diversifying their workforces to historically marginalized populations. The work of this TWG will build on these efforts and broaden the participation of the next generation of collection professionals (see sections 4.3.1, 5.3, 7.4).