

Duties of the President, President Elect, and Past President of SSB  
(Last Modified 16 October 2007, with an addition by Chris Simon, 29 Aug. 2013)

The President serves for three years, one year as President-Elect, one as President, and one as Past-President. For each of these three years the individual has some duties.

The P is expected to give vision and direction to the Society. It is critical that the presidents continue to take an active role in the direction and future of the society. Each P is expected to leave SSB in better condition than when he/she took office.

**Duties of President-Elect (P-E).**

The main job of the P-E is to serve as one of at least three official representatives from SSB on the Coordinating Council (sometimes called the Joint Steering Committee) for the SSB/SSE/ASN Annual Meeting (As many officers as possible should attend the coordinating council meeting; the program director and treasurer are essential). The Coordinating Council Meeting takes place around noon of the first day of the annual meeting (the day before the first papers). The purpose of this meeting is to coordinate the activities of the three Societies, review current meeting progress with the organizers, and plan for future meetings. Financial, programmatic, and administrative matters are discussed. The Chair of this committee rotates among the three societies. The president chairs the SSB delegation and the Executive VP takes notes, this is an excellent opportunity for the president elect to start learning about the administration of the Society.

During this year the P-E should be thinking of what he/she would like to accomplish during his/her presidency (termed "goal" from here on). Traditionally, the presidents of SSB have been very active and have played an important role in the direction and future of the society. The P-E should begin to talk to officers and council members and learn from the President. The President Elect announces a tentative goal at the mid-year executive council meeting in March, (three months after taking office as PE); the goal should be perfected during the remainder of the term as PE and a progress report presented the following year at the Mid-year and Annual Council meetings.

As P, one is responsible for appointing all the committees. Therefore, it is best to give serious consideration to this matter while P-E so that the appointments as possible can be made at the annual meeting. The PE should review the SSB constitution and website to help prepare for the presidential year; The PE should make note of any items that may need to be updated in the coming year and suggest these as agenda items for the upcoming council meetings.

Following the annual meetings (July-October), the PE plans the mid-year meeting that he/she will host during March of his/her term as President (the mid-year meeting does not have to be located at the institution of the president but may be moved to a convenient central location or, e.g., NESCENT headquarters). At this time, the P-E also appoints the nominations committee that will be chaired by the President during the last six months of his/her term and the first three months of their term as P-P.

**Duties of President (P)**

The P servers as the main spokesperson for the Society, the one who represents SSB in meetings, receives key mail and messages about issues of general importance and

responds to them. Each president pursues a goal for his or her term of office (described above under P-E).

The P is the leading member of the Coordinating Council (Joint Steering Committee) of SSB/SSE/ASN.

The P makes sure officers, council members, and committee chairs are involved and informed. Also, the P checks with officers and committee chairs throughout the year to make sure goals are being met. The P is assisted by the Executive VP and works closely with the Executive VP.

The P chairs all Council Meetings and Business Meetings, works with the Executive Vice President (formerly Secretary) to determine the agenda for the meetings and insure that all important matters are covered. In designing the agenda, the P reviews the minutes of the past SSB council meeting. The P works with the Program Chair to make sure the Council and Business Meetings are scheduled at an appropriate time and that all members of the Council and Committee Chairs are notified in advance of the location and time of the meetings.

The P interfaces with the Treasurer to make sure adequate funds are available.

The P is in regular contact with the Editor on matters related to the publication of SB. For instance the P serves as an arbitrator in disputes. The P should work with the Editor and Managing editor to make sure that important announcements appear in the journal and on the website.

The P should work with the publisher to prepare a letter to members to accompany the dues notice.

The P interfaces with the webmaster and head of the publication committee to periodically update the website if needed).

The P helps the P-E and future P-E learn the ropes.

The P appoints all committee members and interfaces with committee chairs to follow committee progress (see below).

The P appoints all committee members and designates the Chair. There is some tradition involved in the makeup of some committees and some chairs traditionally serve for three years but these can be changed by any P (check the constitution first, some are in the Constitution or Bylaws, most not).

Committees and Appointments:

- AIBS Representative: usually serves a 3-year term; should be someone who goes to AIBS meetings. This is currently (Jan. 2003) Richard O'Grady.
- AAAS Representative: usually serves a 3-year term; should be someone who goes to AAAS meetings. Currently (Jan. 2003) there is no AAAS rep; Doug Eernisse did it for a while.
- Awards Committee Members: Chair of this committee serves for 3 years. [P appoints Chair who in turn appoints other committee members? Duration of terms of committee members same as for chair?] Currently (Jan. 2003) Scott Edwards.

- Endowment Committee: Indefinite appointment. Chaired by Terry Yates, also includes Mary McKittrick and Joel Cracraft. Terry receives all the account statements.
- Long Range Planning and Finance Committee: traditionally chaired by President and made up of one or more past Presidents, sometimes the Editor and Treasurer are on it as well but this is up to P to decide) Currently (Jan. 03) this committee does not meet.
- Nominating Committee: Chaired by P-P; membership is traditionally suggested by P-P and appointed by P; this Committee takes care of all nominations except for Editor, who is appointed by a special committee. [Alternative interpretation: P appoints Committee during presidency; Committee becomes active when P becomes P-P.]
- Publications Committee: The Committee shall consist of at least five members including a Chairperson, the Editor, the most recent past-Editor, the Managing Editor, and the Treasurer. The Chair of the Committee approves all material to be placed on the website and passes this to the Managing Editor (Debbie Ciszek) who is the one person authorized to send items to the Web Master (currently Ruedi Birenheide). The committee negotiates publication contracts and interfaces with the editor, president and webmaster.
- Representative to the International Federation of Systematic Societies started by Vicki Funk: probably should serve for 3 year term.
- Search Committee for Editor: created every three years to search for new Editor for SB, usually contains the current editor in an advisory capacity. R. Olmstead 2000-2001, C. Simon 2001-2004, R. Page 2004-2007, J. Sullivan 2007-2010. Next editor should be chosen in 2008-2009 to be elected in June 2009 and start in 2010.
- Joint Steering Committee (Coordinating Council): the P-E heads this delegation, the Treasurer & Program Chair are members, the P and Executive VP attend but do not vote.
- SSB Webmaster. At present and for as long as he is willing, the webmaster is Rod Page (still true in 2013).

Every three years, the three presidents (past, present and future) have the option to choose a recipient of the President's Award for outstanding contributions to the field of systematics. The awards not only recognize outstanding contributions but also add visibility to the society when they are announced at the annual meetings, in the journal, and on the website. The president should find the date of the last award and if three years prior or longer, initiate a discussion about the next award. The President's Award is given to a person who has made outstanding and sustained contributions to the field over the course of many years. The recipient is selected by three people - the past [chair], present and future presidents - and has the option to be given once every three years. So far we have given one to Dave Swofford (at the Vancouver meeting) and one to Joe Felsenstein (I think it was at the Indiana meeting).

The three presidents may also present distinguished service awards for contributions to the Society of Systematic Biologists. [We have given one to Vicki Funk (at the Indiana Meeting) and one to James Rodman (to be presented at the Minnesota meeting). The president should make sure that awardees are added to the SSB website.

#### Past-President (PP).

The past president reviews the SSB constitution (in January at the beginning of their past presidential term) and finds any items in need of revision. These items can then be reviewed at the mid-year meeting, approved at the council meeting, and placed on the ballot for the next year's elections.

The PP serves as chair of the nominating committee (began as President), makes sure that the elections happen on time, and may be asked to serve on the Search Committee for a new Editor.

The PP has the option of giving (strongly encouraged to present) a Past-President Address at the annual meeting. This replaces a SSB presidential address and gives the president an additional year to worry about the lecture!

The PP is available for consultation should the new P need information.

#### Time-Lines

##### President-Elect

1. March attends mid-year executive council meeting and announces proposed goal as president.
2. June, serves as part of SSB delegation to Joint Steering Committee (Coordinating Council).
2. June, meets with out going P during meeting to transfer information.
3. During whole year considers goals of upcoming Presidency and think about appointments to committees, etc.
4. During last six months: Makes plans for mid-year executive council meeting and ensures that attendees make their travel arrangements.

##### President

1. January, appoints Committees soon after taking office. Finalizes plans for mid-year executive council meeting. Thinks about Presidential awards. Checks with Awards chair to make sure all awards have been announced (deadlines generally in Feb or March).
2. January, mid-year check with Council and Committees to keep everyone informed and see what is developing for annual meeting. Announces plans to accomplish Presidential goal(s).
3. Feb-Mar, works with Executive VP to make sure Mid-year, Council and Business meeting are scheduled at appropriate times and that officers and committee chairs are preparing their reports. **Makes sure that Executive VP has updated the annual report on the CT government website (as required in the terms of incorporation of the society; [www.concord-sots.ct.gov](http://www.concord-sots.ct.gov)).**
4. March, hosts and chairs mid-year executive council meeting; checks with Awards Committee Chair to make sure appropriate arrangements are being made for Ernst Mayr Award judges, etc. Reports on progress towards presidential goal(s).
5. April, checks with Treasurer to make sure tax returns are filed.
6. April-May, works with Executive Vice President to revise agenda for council meeting and business meeting (modified from mid-year meeting agenda)
7. June (Annual Meeting), Leads SSB delegation to Coordinating Council meeting
8. June (Annual Meeting), chairs Council Meeting and Business Meeting. The function of the Business Meeting is to inform the membership of the Society about the results of the Council Meeting (e.g., election results, symposia and location of next annual meeting, journal status, other relevant news); all officers should be present and give very brief reports
9. June (Annual Meeting), organizes [and serves as MC for] SSB portion of awards program at banquet. At the banquet, presents the Presidents Award (if given) and introduces the people who present the student awards (Awards Committee Chair presents Graduate Research Awards and Ernst Mayr Award; Editor or Publihers rep

presents Publishers Awards). Passes presidential gavel (put not yet the presidency) to the P-E.

10. July-December: Finishes all items that were left over from council meeting. Makes sure that P-E appoints the nominating committee work with officers to schedule a time for mid-year executive meeting to be held sometime in the winter or early spring, chair nominations committee
11. October-December- Reviews and revises if necessary the duties of the president.

#### Past-President

1. January: reviews the SSB constitution (in January at the beginning of their past presidential term) and finds any items in need of revision. These items can then be reviewed at the mid-year meeting, approved at the council meeting, and placed on the ballot for the next year's elections.
2. March: Finalizes ballot (with nominee brief CV's and any constitutional changes) send ballot to the Executive VP and President for approval by the council. Executive VP must send ballot to Publisher to be administered on-line during mid-March to mid-May. Presents a report on accomplishment of presidential goals and makes suggestions for the future.
4. June (Annual Meeting): gives the Past-Presidential Address at the annual meeting.

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This list of Presidential Duties was prepared by Past President Vicki A. Funk with additions and modifications by Kevin de Queiroz, Toby Kellogg, and Chris Simon. Last revised 16 October 2007, red line added by Chris Simon, 29 Aug. 2013