

Society of Systematic Biologists Program Chair's Report

David W. Weisrock
June 8, 2017

SSB Symposia for Evolution 2017

The previous Program Chair, Stacey Smith, organized two symposia and a workshop for the 2017 meeting. These are:

- Symposium, "A Debate of Conceptual Issues Surrounding Genetic-based Species Delimitation in the Genomic Era." Organizers: L. Lacey Knowles and David Hillis
- Symposium, "Phylogenetic approaches to connecting genotypes to phenotypes." Organizer: Stacey D. Smith
- Workshop, "Trees, traits and functions: semantics for comparative biology." Organizers: Todd Vision and Hilmar Lapp

SSB Spotlight sessions for Evolution 2017

SSB is also sponsoring two Spotlight sessions this year and these represent my first foray into advertising and organizing scientific sessions for the society. I began advertising these opportunities in February 2017, which I learned was a little bit late in the game, as both SSE and ASN both had their Spotlight organizers and session themes already in place. Given that I took over Program Officer duties in January, this probably wasn't avoidable, but it's something to be prepared for in the transition to the next Program Officer in 2020 (three year terms, right?).

I advertised the Spotlight sessions on the SSB Facebook group page, as well as through emails to the SSB member list. This didn't generate much of a response, and the search for session organizers required more active effort on my part. In the end, we have assembled two interesting Spotlight Sessions:

- Spotlight Session, "Uncertainty in the face of strong support: new approaches and examples in the identification of signal, noise, and conflict in phylogenetic datasets." Organizers: Emily Jane McTavish and David Weisrock
- Spotlight Session, "Impact of gene flow and reticulation in phylogenetics." Organizers: Cécile Ané and Frank Burbrink.

2018 Joint meeting with ESEB

There will be no society sponsored symposia or Spotlight sessions at the 2018 Evolution meeting in Montpellier, France. Because these meetings are organized almost entirely around symposia that are chosen by the ESEB organizers, SSB has worked to encourage its members to propose

systematic-themed symposia to assure there will be sufficient opportunities for the presentation of systematics research at this meeting. In April 2017 I worked with Brian O'Meara to construct and email information about the 2018 meeting and encourage SSB members to propose symposia. This is an ongoing effort by SSB as we approach the June 26th deadline for symposia submissions.