

Proposal for a July 2018 meeting of the Society of Systematic Biologists.

Location: Columbus, Ohio on the campus of The Ohio State University.

Local hosting committee: Bryan Carstens, Meg Daly, Laura Kubatko, with help from graduate students in the EEOB Department.

Duration: Meeting would take place over three days in July of 2018, likely at the Drake Union on OSU's Columbus Campus. The Drake Union has suitable facilities for large lectures/talks/debates, as well as smaller spaces that could function well for workshops. We would likely retain a similar format as the Ann Arbor and Baton Rouge meetings, with one day set aside for workshops and two days set aside for a combination of talks and debate/discussions. We plan on holding a catered picnic one evening, and set aside a second for a poster session. One novel aspect of a Columbus / OSU meeting would be that we could include students from the Next-generation Evolutionary Biology REU Site that is hosted by the OSU EEOB Department (NSF DBI-1560116). Participating in the meeting would be a tremendous benefit to these undergraduate students, and would likely help them in identifying mentors for graduate school.

Why Columbus? Columbus is the 15th largest city in the country and home to a vibrant nightlife and compelling local restaurant and brewery scene. July weather in central Ohio is pleasant, with average highs in the mid 80s and lows in mid 60s. Because Columbus is within 500 miles of cities ranging from New York City, St Louis, Atlanta, Madison WI, Raleigh NC, and Washington DC, it will be in a days drive of many SSB members. In fact, according to the Columbus Visitors Bureau, over 150 million people live within 500 miles of Columbus, making it the largest metro area in the US that can make such a claim.

OSU is located within a short bus/cab ride of two entertainment districts (Short North and Grandview), with myriad dining options for any taste. It also has several museums, a nationally recognized zoo and aquarium, and a beautiful baseball stadium.

Projected attendance. We anticipate that this would be the largest stand-alone meeting to date, with more than 300 people attending. The SSE/ASN/SSB Evolution meeting will not be held during the summer of 2018, as it will partner with two European societies for a meeting in France in early September. We propose that we help fill this hole in the summer meeting schedule by hosting a stand-alone SSB meeting during this time. We ask that the meeting proposal be approved by the council with sufficient time to advertise during the 2017 Evolution Annual Meeting in Portland.

Housing. In addition to several moderately-priced hotels that are located near campus, housing options include space in the dormitories that are across the street from the Drake Union, a bed-and-breakfast in a historical victorian neighborhood just south of campus, and many Airbnb options near campus.