**SSB Program Chair’s Report**

Stacey D. Smith

Nov. 23, 2016

Selection of symposia and workshops for Evolution 2017

* The call for symposia and workshops was posted to Evoldir on May 14, 2016 with a target deadline of June 16th (the start of the Evolution 2016 meetings). As no applications were received by this deadline, receipt of proposals remained open until August 1st, by which point five symposium proposals and two workshop proposals were received. In 2017, it would be preferable to post the solicitation earlier (by late March) with multiple reminders on evoldir (e.g., in late April and again in late May), so that voting can take place in person at the June council meeting. This would allow a discussion of the proposals and give the program director a chance to remind council of the priorities for selection (of interest to members, new/emerging areas, diversity of speakers, etc.)
* This year, the council voted electronically on the seven proposals that were received. The selected symposia were:

1. "A Debate of Conceptual Issues Surrounding Genetic-based Species Delimitation in the Genomic Era." Organizers: L. Lacey Knowles and David Hillis
2. "Phylogenetic approaches to connecting genotypes to phenotypes." Organizer: Stacey D. Smith

And the selected workshop was:

1. "Trees, traits and functions: semantics for comparative biology." Organizers: Todd Vision and Hilmar Lapp

* Communications Director Brian O'Meara has posted these events and the full list of speakers on the website, and I have provided the titles and organizers' contact information to Howard Rundle for inclusion in the Evolution 2017 program.
* I would like to note that, having no precedent for submitting a proposal while program chair, I requested permission of the council before doing so. Any members of council, including me, who were organizing or speaking in symposia or workshops were not allowed to vote.
* I would also like to add that, as the past, I have assisted organizers who still wanted to hold their event even without the SSB funding. Essentially, the organizers can communicate directly with the conference organizers (Howard Rundle et al.) to book rooms during the meeting as long as there is some affiliation with SSB. The organizers pay for the rooms and any other services required, and in my view, these accessory events can only benefit SSB members by building our community and providing more opportunities to engage. Assuming they have decided to move forward, it is likely that Matt Haber will have a discussion centered on species concepts based on his proposal and Susanne Renner will also hold a satellite event related to a grant she holds for building systematics in Germany.

Student representatives

* In the past year, I was also heavily involved with recruiting the new graduate student council representatives and mentoring them as their roles have become defined.
* I assisted them in obtaining funding ($500) from council to contribute to the tri-society Women-In-Science event. They worked closely with grad reps from the other two societies to organize the event, and will continue to do so in future.
* There was some confusion about the process of electing student reps (I wrote into the job description that the reps would run their own elections, but the nominating committee quite fairly assumed it was their task). I think this issue has been solved by adding the members of the nominating committee to the council email list-serv so that there is better communication. Still, the grad reps do need a member of council to assist them in their roles and act as a mentor. I would suggest that the program chair continue to do this as their work has largely involved enhancing the program for student members of SSB.

Transition to new Program Chair

* I have completed three years as program chair, running symposium and workshop selection for Evolution 2015, 2016, and 2017.
* David Weisrock will be taking over as program chair in 2017 and will run the process of symposium and workshop selection for Evolution 2018.
* I will work with Dave through the 2017 Evolution meetings to smooth the transition.