

Society of Systematic Biologists

Duties of the Program Director

<Draft document, 5 April 1998 (updated 9 March 2002, 5 Nov 2004). Prepared by Chris Simon. To be modified and augmented to by future program directors and passed on in perpetuity.>

Brief List of Duties (details below).

- 1) To solicit proposals and choose symposia for the Annual Meetings (in consultation with the Council).
- 2) To send out announcements relating to SSB annual meetings (meeting announcement, call for papers, call for proposals). These are sent to the journal editor, the SSB e-mail listserver, EVOLDIR, and to the SSB publications committee for posting on the web page. (The announcement and call for papers are created by the meeting organizers but the SSB program chair must make sure that SSB needs are met, e.g. that there is a space to check off the Mayr award option, that Mayr talks should be grouped, that the SSB symposia are not concurrent with the SSB phylogenetic methods sessions, that the phylogenetics methods sessions be put into large lecture rooms, etc.)
- 3) To create the program for the annual meetings once every three years, or every year to work with SSE and ASN to create the program. SSB provides a one-semester graduate assistant to help with this task.
- 4) To work with SSE and ASN to find future meeting organizers/sites (three years in advance).
- 5) To act as one of three representatives to the Joint Steering Committee (also known as Coordinating Committee) of the Society of Systematic Biologists (SSB), Society for the Study of Evolution (SSE), and American Society of Naturalists (ASN).
- 6) To act as year-round liaison between SSB and SSE/ASN or other societies.
- 7) To advise the President, other officers, and council of SSB on matters relating to future meetings/coordinating committee matters, and the program and to act as a member of the executive committee and council.
- 8) At the end of three years, to update the duties of the Program Director and to pass the revised document on to the new Program Director and to the Executive Vice President (and Webmaster?).

Details of Duties (by Month):

July: 1) Notify successful and unsuccessful symposium proposers of the status of their proposals. 2) Request final titles of talks from successful symposium organizers. 3) Explain finances to symposium organizers i.e. they can have \$2,000 to divide as they see fit (e.g. according to need). Participants must pay their own airfare, registration, and accommodation fees; save receipts; and submit the receipts to the symposium organizer. The organizer then collects all receipts and sends them to the Treasurer of SSB with a letter explaining how the \$2,000 is to be dispersed. 4) Work with next summer's meeting organizer to get the Call-for-Papers and Meeting Announcement (attached below) ready for publication in time for the August (check this date with Kim Wollter) deadline for the December journal issue. If the announcement has to be mailed separately, it is very costly. 5) Review the topics/categories in the Call-for-Papers to make sure that no new categories are needed and that out-of-date categories are omitted (ask previous meeting organizer which topics attracted few papers).

August: Send Meeting Announcement, list of Symposia, and Call-for-Symposium-Proposals to Debbie Cizek, for publication in the December, February, and April issues (check with Debbie for deadlines specified by Taylor and Francis).

December: 1) Send Meeting Announcement, list of Symposia, Call for papers, and Call-for-Symposium-Proposals to the SSB e-mail listserver. 2) Make sure that the SSB Webpage has a link to the current meeting site web page.

March (after the Call-for-Papers deadline) 1) Work with meeting organizers to ensure that SSB's needs are met. For example, remind organizers to a) spread out SSB sessions as much as possible to avoid overlap; b) especially avoid overlap between SSB's symposia and SSB's most popular sessions e.g. "Systematics Methods;" c) inform organizers which SSB sessions are most likely to need the biggest rooms. 2) Work with the SSB president and meeting organizers to set up a time for the SSB council, business, editorial, awards presentation, and steering committee meetings. 3) Serve as intermediary between the President/Mayr Award Committee chair and the organizers to ensure that the Mayr Award talks are scheduled prior to the awards presentations, and grouped into sessions of their own. Ensure that a list of Mayr Award applicants/talk titles is sent to the Mayr Award Committee chair.

April: Send reminder Call-for-Symposium-Proposals to the Sys Bio e-mail list.

May: Collect/solicit symposium proposals and send them to the council for consideration prior to the meetings. Prepare a report for the council meeting summarizing future meeting sites, current symposia, numbers of new proposals submitted, organizers, etc. and send this report to the secretary.

June Attend, as one of three SSB representatives, the joint steering committee (also known as coordinating committee) of the Society of Systematic Biologists, Society for the Study of Evolution, and American Society of Naturalists. (The other two SB members of this committee are the President Elect and Treasurer.) The steering committee is to meet at the beginning and end of each annual meeting and is charged with coordinating the future meetings of the three societies.

Annual Meetings are generally scheduled three years in advance and must avoid overlap with AIBS, Ecological of America (ESA), and Society for Molecular Biology and Evolution (SMBE). Every three years SMBE plans to meet back-to-back with us so we need to be aware of that. Late June is the preferred time for meetings and meeting organizers who volunteer must immediately check availability of facilities at this time of the summer (often a problem); they must also ensure that at least 8 large (>100 people) rooms are available in close proximity at the site, and that at least one of these rooms have a capacity of 1,000 for plenary sessions.

The Program Director should also monitor the size of Annual Meetings and keep a list: e.g. the combined meetings of SSB/SSE/ASN attracted >850 participants in 1991 in Hilo, Hawaii; 883 in 1992 in Berkeley, California; 707 in 1993 in Snowbird, Utah; 850 in 1994 in Athens, Georgia; over 1,100 in 1995 in Montreal, Quebec; and 1,100 in Boulder, Colorado. Inform organizers that there is a joint meeting fund which contains profits from previous meetings that will fund a graduate student (approx. \$5,000) to organize and assemble the program.

Year Round. Act as liaison between SSB and SSE/ASN or other societies. The contact person in SSE is the executive vice president. The contact person in ASN is the president (unless otherwise advised).

At the end of your term of office help the new Program Director learn the duties. Pass this document on to the next person with your addenda.
