

## **Proposal for Establishment of an SSB Diversity Committee**

**Prepared by the Interim SSB Diversity Committee (Tracy Heath, Hervé Sauquet, Alexandra Hernandez, and Kelly Zamudio)**

### **Mission**

The SSB Diversity Committee will promote diversity, equity, and inclusiveness to enhance the study of all fields in systematics, and to foster the career of early career systematists.

### **Vision**

A diverse and inclusive SSB will foster innovation, creativity, and inclusion at all professional levels. Through independent activities as well as activities in collaboration with diversity committees of the joint evolution societies, our goal is to promote the advancement of the study of systematics among underrepresented groups by supporting the inclusion and retention of individuals of all identity groups.

### **Values**

The SSB diversity committee's goal is to celebrate and foster the inclusion of all social, racial, cultural, sexual, gender, and economic groups in the society by promoting the advancement of the study of systematics for all interested parties at all career stages. Our guiding principles are:

*Inclusiveness*: Improving the visibility of underrepresented minority scientists in the field.

*Recruitment and Retention*: Devising strategies to recruit and retain underrepresented scientists in our field of study.

*Mentorship*: Pairing young scholars with mid-career and advanced career scientists for mentorship in career development.

*Professional development*: Supporting our scientists through educational and/or development opportunities.

*Informed decision-making*: Basing decisions by all SSB committees on best practices and data collection initiatives, keeping diversity as a target at all levels of the society.

### **Diversity Statement**

The Society of Systematic Biologists (SSB) is dedicated to promoting a broader understanding of the relationships among all living beings, both past and present. The society focuses on theory, principles, and methods of systematics as well as phylogenetics, evolution, morphology, biogeography, paleontology, genetics, and the classification of biodiversity.

We encourage the professional development of our members and support increasing participation and access. At the scientific core of our fields are value for, and appreciation of, biological diversity and, reflective of this, we welcome, support, and celebrate the diversity of our members. We are sensitive to the ways that diversity changes and grows in modern society

and acknowledge that it is the responsibility of all members of the society, independent of their demographic status, to be part of the process.

As a professional society, we promote equity, inclusion, and diversity at all levels, and we encourage participation by individuals of all groups. We encourage an inclusive, supportive, and impartial work space free from sexual harassment, bigotry, bullying or violence of any kind. We aim to promote ethical and inclusive practices during the conduct of research, with special attention to the use of cultural resources and professional and safe conduct during field work. Finally, we will work as a society to eliminate the barriers that make achieving success in scientific careers more difficult for members of underrepresented groups.

## **Bylaws**

- 1. The diversity committee's agenda will be set by the diversity committee on a yearly basis and in consultation with the approval of the acting SSB president and Executive council.**
- 2. The diversity committee is an ad hoc committee and thus the chair will be appointed by the President.**
- 3. The diversity committee chair will put out a call for nominations for committee members, and in consultation with the President, will choose two members and a graduate student member, to serve on the committee.**
- 4. The diversity committee will meet in person or via videoconferencing twice yearly to discuss goals and progress.**
- 5. The diversity committee shall be empowered to assess the society's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion and will be granted access to appropriate society data for these endeavors--e.g., membership lists, awards etc.**

## **Officers**

The SSB Diversity committee will be an ad hoc committee at its inception, with plans to formalize it as a standing committee in the near future.

The four officers of the diversity committee shall be a chair and two members selected via a call for applications, and appointed by the president-elect for terms of three years. The president and council are encouraged to solicit applications for the SSB Diversity committee, so as to reach the largest number of potential participants. A graduate student representative will additionally serve as a member. To foster continuity in action, the chair shall rotate from their duty following two years of service to then serve a final year of the committee as a member. The terms of all officers shall begin on the first of January following their nomination and acceptance of the position.

