

Ecology for the New Generation Status Update on Recommendations and Other Initiatives Report to the ESA Governing Board

April 30, 2013

In April 2012, the Ecology for the New Generation Committee, appointed by Past President, Steward Pickett, submitted its report to the Governing Board. The Committee's report was given to all the section and chapters during the annual meeting in 2012 and they were encouraged to implement as appropriate.

This report is to provide an update on the status of the recommendations. This update reflects all actions known to ESA staff. It is divided into five sections. The Ecology for the New Generation Committee made specific recommendations on four sections:

- I. Engaging the New Generation
- II. New Skills and Career Paths
- III. Action Ecology, Translational Ecology, Environmental Justice
- IV. International Networks

In each section, items that are have been or are currently being addressed in some way are compiled in a box. Recommendations not yet addressed are listed below the box.

The fifth section includes additional ESA initiatives that have bearing on the New Generation.

This version of the report has not yet been circulated to the ESA Sections and Committees.

I. ENGAGING THE NEW GENERATION

1.1. INCREASING NEW MEMBERSHIP AND RETENTION OF CURRENT MEMBERSHIP

1.1a (i). Use social media to promote ESA events and about ecology generally

We use social media daily to promote ESA events, opportunities, topics of interest to the ecological community. ESA currently has 2500 Facebook and 7600 Twitter followers.

1.1a (ii). Use visual media to promote ESA events and about ecology generally on both social media sites and other formal settings e.g. registration table at Annual Meetings (AM)

ESA has incorporated photos or graphs usually tied to ESA activities or events, such as from congressional visits, awards at the annual meeting, graphs that that show interesting statistics related to annual meeting registration, abstract submission, etc. Articles posted that are of interest to the community often also include photos, comics or graphs.

1.1b (i). Encourage members, special session and event organizers to tweet during AM

The Public Affairs Office has been doing this since 2011 AM.

1.1b (iii). Free student orientation events should have tickets printed and placed in registration information to reinforce it is a free event

ESA may be able to do some of this.

1.1d. Enrollment in student section of ESA should be automatic and included with student membership registration fee

The Governing Board declined to pursue this at its May 2012 meeting.

1.1e. Expand childcare to include infants and toddlers at AM. Set up volunteer program for students to co-run programs and offer AM registration discounts (background checks needed).

The liability is too great for ESA to involve students in providing childcare services.

1.2. MENTORING

1.2a. Develop new, bi-directional student mentoring program- an Adopt-a-Scientist program that builds on the SEEDS program. Provide venue and time slot for mentors-mentees to meet. Could take place during Section Mixers and should tie into Centennial efforts.

A mentor-mentee program was initiated in 2012. Two events were offered at Portland AM. ESA organized a mentoring opportunity at the annual meeting which began at the welcome reception. Each participating ESA Section provided 2 mentors. The mentors and students met again at a networking Tuesday morning breakfast. Both events will be offered again in Minneapolis.

1.3. ENGAGE WITH MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION

The Education office organized the Life Discovery Education conference in March 2013 that served high school educators. It is involved with a national Climate and Energy Literacy network (including environmental NGOs, government agencies and scientific societies) to promote education in connection with Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Life Discovery Education partners plan to include K12 resources in our joint digital libraries. Discussion with Baltimore LTER is in progress for the Centennial. However, external funding and new staff will be needed in order to develop and sustain these programs.

1.4. MULTIMEDIA ENGAGEMENT

1.4 (iii). K12 and higher education resources should be grouped and placed online

Higher education teaching resources are available in EcoEdDL. K12 resources will be available in the near future. Other announcements and opportunities will be made available through Education webpages in coming months.

1.4 (iv). One-stop shop for jobs, internships, graduate student opportunities - free access to members only. Maintain revenue potential through premium fee-based services

This is under discussion among staff in relation to new features for ESA website.

Other Recommendations Not Yet Addressed

1.1. Increasing New Membership And Retention Of Current Membership

1.1b (ii). Develop and film a short video "How to get the most out of ESA" to be shown during AM orientation events, posted online, and emailed with registration information. Develop ESA YouTube Channel.

1.1c (i). Develop custom welcome messages for members who sign up for specific member categories / sections / chapters. Remind people to review benefits which can include "how can you get involved".

1.1c (ii). Members can self-select to receive updates / messages on specific areas of interest.

1.4. Multimedia Engagement

1.4a. Offer live online access to plenary sessions and potentially, special sessions (for members only).

1.4b (i). Rethink and restructure website especially for renewals, join sections etc.

1.4b (ii). Member directory to also include research interests (e.g. study organism and ecosystem), outreach expertise and teaching or assessment expertise.

1.4v. Develop comprehensive grants database for members.

1.4vi. Create virtual space for dicussion e.g. working abroad, international students etc.

II. NEW SKILLS AND CAREER PATHS

2.3. Offer Career development opportunities to postdocs e.g. publishing, preparing job applications, interviewing, contract negotiations.

Workshops on these topics have been organized for two years and will continue to be offered.

2.6. Create a strategy to encourage ecologists outside of academia to participate in the organization

The Earth Stewardship Initiative and 2014 Emerging Issues Conference provide a platform for this. Also, Board nominations are including ecologists in federal agencies, business and NGOs. In 2013, the top leadership and senior staff have organized a Special Session bringing together a panel of business representatives.

Other Recommendations Not Yet Addressed

- 2.1. ESA hold special events in exhibit hall during annual meeting: career fair on professional careers; innovative technologies for ecology research; academic programs for students.
- 2.2. Offer certificate program for students and postdocs (members only) promoting professional development in skills such as communications, grantwriting, leadership (Based on idea developed for SEEDS).
- 2.4. Play a role in rethinking appropriate evaluation guidelines for pre-tenure faculty - address areas currently undervalued in the existing reward system.
- 2.5. Encourage PIs to bring in new generation as senior personnel and recognize role of graduate students in project administration - e.g. outreach, finance, media relations etc.

III. ACTION ECOLOGY, TRANSLATIONAL ECOLOGY, ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

3.1. New format for informal but planned round table discussions on diverse topics involving ecology e.g. Action Ecology, EJ, public policy.

A new Ignite session format will be launched in Minneapolis with presentations running for 5 minutes and another 10 allotted for questions and discussion.

3.3. ESA should create innovative ways to present research findings at AM

A new Ignite session format will be launched in Minneapolis.

3.6. Create directory of experts and organizations with experience working in specific communities or regions to promote research respecting and reflecting best cultural practices and norms

A new directory initiated by the VPs may be able to incorporate this.

Other Recommendations Not Yet Addressed

- 3.2. Organized oral session to include time to discuss integrating research topics with policy, outreach, etc.
- 3.4. If session incorporates impacted communities, review process should consider whether or not (and how) the session organizers and participants include members from these communities.
- 3.5. Create travel grant program to support member participation of members of impacted communities to participate in oral/poster sessions.
- 3.7. Develop list of initiatives where ecology is currently absent but could play important role and inform development (e.g. Engineers without Borders).

IV. INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS

4.3. Organize annual research mixer and poster session (separate from regular poster session) for international ecologists looking for collaboration with US scientists and for US scientists interested in working internationally.

After a hiatus of about 6 years, the International Section is planning a business meeting in Minneapolis.

4.6. Implement registration cost refund for international attendees unable to attain a visa to attend the meeting.

This is currently in operation.

Other Recommendations Not Yet Addressed

4.1. Work with International Affairs Section and Student Section to run annual workshops on funding resources for international students and faculty.

4.2. Create web-based network for those interested in working abroad to exchange ideas about conducting research outside of the US.

4.4. Develop and support a volunteer network of proof readers to help non-native English speakers publish.

4.5. ESA leadership meets with international members at annual meetings to talk about creating and managing ecological societies in their own countries. These sessions should be available as podcasts.

V. Other ESA Initiatives

1. The Professional Ethics and Appeals Committee is preparing the Code of Ethics review and addition suggested by the new generation report (hopefully for May GB meeting). They are reconstituting their committee and already have a student member who has agreed to serve.
2. When ESA established a new Fellows program, it also established an “Early Career Fellow” program to recognize and honor those early in their career.
3. The Board of Professional Certification has received approval to add a new certification category—Ecologist in Training – for postdocs.
4. The ad hoc committee on Publications had an early career member.

Respectfully submitted by
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