

2009 WSSA Committee Report to Members Summary for 2009 and Action Plan for 2010

Committee Code and Name: W21 Professional Development

Committee Chair: Sarah Ward

Board Coordinator: WSSA President (David Shaw)

Committee Members Rotating Off: Vince Davis (GSO President 2008-09)

Appropriate Replacements: (Jason Weirich GSO President 2009-10) replaced Vince Davis. Bobby Haygood (Dow AgroSciences) joined as an additional Committee member.

2009 Summary of Activities

What were the committee's goals for 2009?

1. Develop report for the Board identifying reasons for decline in graduate student membership of WSSA and proposed actions to reverse this trend.
2. Develop affordable approaches to archiving WSSA meeting symposia and making them available via the WSSA website.
3. Work with the WSSA Graduate Student Organization to develop a symposium on a topic of mutual interest for the 2010 annual meeting.
4. Expand Professional Development resources on the WSSA website.

List the committee's accomplishments in 2009:

1. In collaboration with the WSSA GSO, the Committee organized and presented the Symposium "Research Ethics and Mentoring in Weed Science" at the WSSA 2009 Annual Meeting. Keynote speaker was Dr. Gary Comstock of North Carolina State University; attendance was 51.
2. The Committee organized and presented the Symposium "Technology Innovations in Weed Science Communication" at the WSSA 2009 Annual Meeting. Keynote speaker was Chuck Zimmerman of ZimmComm New Media; attendance was 23.
3. The Committee submitted a proposal for a workshop "Technology and Communication Skills for the 21st Century Marketplace" for the 2010 WSSA/SRM meeting. This proposal was approved, and Dow Agrochemical agreed to sponsor the \$3600 cost of the workshop.
4. Committee members Chad Brommer and Dave Horvath presented a mini-workshop on technology communication for WSSA BOD members in Denver on July 24, 2009.

5. Committee member Chad Brommer worked with David Krueger to add RSS feeds to the WSSA website (on the home page, jobs page, new release page and professional development page). The Committee also developed a HowTo Guide for WSSA members explaining the use of RSS feeds, podcasting and Facebook; this has been posted on the Professional Development Committee webpage.
6. The Committee has discussed the issue of declining graduate membership in WSSA. As an initial step to gathering information to address this, we developed an online survey for graduate students in weed science - this survey can be accessed at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=TM_2bvTE7r4ATTMo9ajIKAMw_3d_3d So far response to this has been poor, and we are working to get more graduate students to participate.
7. The Committee revised and streamlined the screening procedure for the WSSA Annual Meeting Travel Awards for graduate students. We received 20 applications and recommended 6 to the WSSA Board of Directors for funding. These award recipients will be first-time attendees at the 2010 WSSA/SRM meeting in Denver.

What information was posted on the WSSA website?

See #5 above.

How much funds were requested? How much was spent?

\$3,000 was spent in on the two symposia sponsored by the Professional Development Committee at the 2009 WSSA Annual Meeting in Orlando.

What was the impact of the committee activities/accomplishments on the following: membership, publication, policy, legislation, and/or education?

The WSSA Annual Meeting Graduate Student Grant this year attracted applicants from several non-weed science programs; one of the successful awardees is a graduate student in history at the University of Oklahoma. This represents progress towards the goal of increasing awareness of WSSA among students not in traditional weed science programs.

We also have received positive feedback from a number of WSSA members about the addition of RSS feeds to the WSSA website.

What is the current state of the committee's projects and activities?

See 2010 Plan below.

2010 Plan for Committee Activities

Goals for 2010:

1. Continue work on identifying reasons for decline in graduate student membership of WSSA and proposed actions to reverse this trend.
2. Develop affordable approaches to archiving WSSA meeting symposia and making them available via the WSSA website. (This was a goal for 2009 that needs further work).
3. Expand Professional Development resources on the WSSA website.

Plan of Action:

Goal 1: we will expand our survey of regional weed society graduate student members and graduate students in weed science and related programs to determine (a) whether students are aware of WSSA; (b) numbers of students who are actual vs. potential members; (c) reasons for joining or not joining WSSA; (d) student expectations of WSSA membership benefits. We will also examine membership benefits for graduate students in other professional societies in the applied biological sciences.

Goal 2: Chad Brommer and Dave Horvath are developing recommendations.

Goal 3: The Committee will investigate online professional development resources offered by other professional societies, and will brainstorm ideas for resources that could benefit WSSA members.

What is needed to further the goals of the committee/project?

Additional Committee members would be welcome. A replacement Committee Chair is also needed as Sarah Ward has served the two years specified in our MOP; however, no current committee member has expressed interest in doing this.

Recommendations for Board/Society Action: N/A

Funds requested for 2010: N/A

Other requests for the Board: N/A

Report prepared and submitted by Sarah Ward, Professional Development Committee Chair, January 2010.