

## **2008 WSSA Committee Report to Members Summary for 2008 and Action Plan for 2009**

**Committee Code and Name:** W21 Professional Development

**Committee Chair:** Sarah Ward

**Board Coordinator:** President (Jeff Derr)

**Committee Members Rotating Off:** Tracy Sterling (agreed to reappointment), John Willis (GSO President 2007-08); Hugh Beckie (contacted about reappointment but did not respond)

**Appropriate Replacements:** Vince Davis (GSO President 2008-09) replaced John Willis.

### **2008 Summary of Activities**

#### **What were the committee's goals for 2008?**

1. To establish the Professional Development Committee as a permanent WSSA committee with an approved constitution governing membership and scope of activities.
2. To work more closely with the WSSA Graduate Student Organization on ways to involve future weed scientists in WSSA (e.g. jointly organized symposia on professional development topics; national student paper/poster competitions).
3. Review existing WSSA online resources related to professional development (web site, WSSA-sponsored online courses) and identify areas for further development.

#### **List the committee's accomplishments in 2008:**

1. The Committee became a permanent WSSA Committee, and we developed a mission statement and MOP.
2. The Committee developed two successful proposals for symposia for the 2009 WSSA meeting: (1) Research Ethics and Mentoring in Weed Science, and (2) Technology Innovations in Weed Science Communication, and worked to organize these symposia.
3. In collaboration with the WSSA Graduate Student Organization, the Committee developed and obtained Board approval for a new WSSA Annual Meeting Graduate Student Grant to encourage participation in WSSA meetings by graduate students, especially those not in traditional weed science programs. We received 18 applications for this award, from which a screening panel of Committee members selected 6 successful applicants. These students will all be at the 2009 WSSA Annual Meeting as first time attendees.

**What information was posted on the WSSA website?**

The Committee has set up a "Professional Development" link from the home page. Currently this Professional Development page has information about the Committee mission and members.

**How much funds were requested? How much was spent?**

\$3,000 was requested to funding the symposia. This money will be spent in 2009.

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

We hope that the establishment of the WSSA Annual Meeting Graduate Student Grant is a first step to making graduate students in programs beyond traditional weed science aware of WSSA, and potentially expanding the WSSA membership pool.

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

See 2009 Plan below.

**2009 Plan for Committee Activities****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.

**Plan of Action:**

Goal 1: we will survey 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 will chair a sub-committee to develop recommendations.

Goal 3: As soon as the new Graduate Student Organization President is elected at the 2009 WSSA meeting we will start working with him/her to develop a symposium proposal.

Goal 4: Dave Horvath will head a working group of Committee members to pursue this.

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

A couple of more interested and committed Committee members would be welcome. Currently we have a small number of people doing a lot of work.

**Recommendations for Board/Society Action:** A formal acknowledgement of the contributions of Vince Davis (2008-2009 WSSA GSO President) would be appropriate. Vince has been a great source of energy and ideas this past year and has worked hard to make things happen. He deserves recognition.

**Funds requested for 2009:** N/A

**Other requests for the Board:** N/A

Report prepared and submitted by Sarah Ward, Professional Development Committee Chair,  
January 2009