

Canadian Society of Zoologists
Guidelines for Section Chairs

Prepared by Al Shostak, May 28, 2010

By-laws

Sections of the CSZ operate within the By-laws of the Society. Section Chairs should familiarize themselves with all the By-laws, but the following are excerpts that apply specifically to Sections:

III-3. COUNCIL

The Council shall have primary responsibility for conducting the business of the Society towards achieving the stated Objectives in such a manner that is keeping with these Bylaws. The Council shall consist of the six Officers, nine Regular Councillors, two Student Councillors and the Chairs of the Society Sections. The Councillors shall represent the various fields of zoology, and the geographical areas of Canada, as widely as possible. Regular Councillors shall serve three years; three shall be elected each year by ballot of the full membership of the Society. Student Councillors shall serve two years; one shall be elected each year by ballot of the full membership of the Society. Section Chairs shall be elected by their section and will serve as Councillor as long as they hold the position of Section Chair. All such members of the Council have voting rights on the Council. Anyone serving as a member ex officio of the Council shall not have voting rights on the Council. A Council-member-elect is to be considered a member ex officio of the Council.

IV-2-b. SECTION CHAIRS

Selection of Section Chairs shall be conducted by each Section using procedures of their choosing, and the name of the successful candidate shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary as soon as is practical.

XIII. SECTIONS

A Section of the Society may be established for the purpose of furthering the study of a particular area or field of zoology. The Council shall establish such a Section upon application by at least thirty members of the Society in good standing. Each Section shall elect its own Chair who will serve as a member of the Council, and may elect other of its own officers, transact business, and make its own rules, provided that they are not inconsistent with the Bylaws of the Society. Each Section may hold meetings at such times and places as it may choose, provided that its major meeting is held as part of the Annual Conference of the Society. Should a Section Chair be unable to attend a meeting of the Council, the Section may designate a replacement who may attend the meeting as a voting member of the Council. Membership in a Section shall be confined to members of the Society. The Section shall cease to exist if the number of members should drop below twenty at the end of the membership year. A member of the Society may belong to more than one Section. The Chair of each Section shall submit a written report on the major activities of their Section to the Secretary at least two weeks before the Annual Conference and two weeks before the "December Council Meeting", and at other times as requested by the Council.

All mumbo-jumbo aside, section chairs:

- run their sections according to the traditions (oral or written) of that section
- are the liaison between the section and the Society
- participate in meetings of Council
- are voting members of CSZ Council
- must periodically provide written reports on their sections to the Society
- serve on certain Society committees

What the Society does for its sections

The Society provides to its sections:

- logistical and financial support to its sections;
- a venue at annual conferences that accommodates the special interests that sections may have for activities that may appeal specifically to individuals interested in the sub-discipline of zoology represented by the section, within the broader theme of the conference that celebrates the diversity of zoology and zoologists;
- reasonable autonomy in the way they conduct their affairs;
- a larger, unified voice to raise issues of concern to external bodies.

Responsibilities of the Sections to the Society

Whether explicitly started in the By-laws, or through common practice, the sections through their Chairs should:

- act in accordance with Society By-laws and other policies;
- attend meetings of Council;
- keep the Society informed of their major activities, through reports to Council and to the *Bulletin*;
- respond in a timely manner to requests from the Society;
- conduct their activities in a manner that supports the aims and objectives of the Society;
- organize a symposium at the annual conference and communicate those plans to Council and the LOC in a timely manner;
- arrange for the judging of any student presentation competitions that are targeted at student members of their sections;
- contribute to the judging panels of Society-wide awards;
- consider nominating suitable members for elected office or Society awards.

Details

Business meetings

There are normally five scheduled business meetings each year in which section Chairs are involved. Four take place during the annual conference: a first Council meeting on the opening day, a section lunch and business meeting, the Annual General Meeting of the Society, and a second Council meeting on the last day. There is also a November or December meeting of Council that is usually done electronically.

- **First Council meeting:** This is the major business meeting of the year for Council. In addition to routine agenda items, this is an opportunity to introduce major items of new business. Current section Chairs or a designate attend as voting members. There is a standing agenda item for reports from section Chairs. This report should at a minimum include (if known) the incoming Chair or other executive of the section, the symposium title and speakers (for the record), the arrangements that have been made for judging the section's student paper competition, arrangements for the auction if it is that section's year to organize it, and any other general activities or concerns of the section since the last Council meeting. The report does not need to include section membership numbers or financial status since that is available separately. This report should be submitted electronically to the Secretary in advance of the meeting, and is also presented orally (with any updates) at the Council meeting.
- **Section lunch and business meeting:** Providing this venue to each section is included as a standing item for conference organizers. It is totally up to the sections how they conduct this meeting.
- **Annual General Meeting:** This is a meeting of the entire membership. Normally, the agenda consists of various reports (similar to those presented to Council), and votes requiring the approval of the

membership, but may also provides an opportunity for new business to be raised. There is a standing agenda item for reports from section Chairs. This report is usually a condensed version of the one presented at the first Council meeting.

- **Second Council Meeting:** This meeting is mainly used to deal with issues arising during the conference, including business that came up at the section lunches or the Annual General Meeting. There is a standing agenda item for reports from section Chairs. Current section Chairs or a designate attend as voting members. This report (which should be submitted electronically to the Secretary after the conference) is normally used to convey any new information arising out of the section's own business meeting, identify any new section Chair or other executive, report (for the record) any section student award recipients, and indicate any plans that are underway regarding the next year's symposium.
- **"December" Council meeting:** This mid-term meeting that in recent years is conducted electronically ("Google Groups" is the most recently employed mechanism). This meeting is primarily to conduct business related to the upcoming elections and conference (ratification of nominees etc.; planning issues for the conference), but new business may be introduced particularly if it is of a time-sensitive nature. The meeting is normally conducted over 2-3 days (requiring about 1-2 hours the first few days to read and respond to submissions, with an electronic vote on the last day). There is a standing agenda item for reports from section Chairs. This report should at a minimum include the section's planned symposium title and speakers, the arrangements that have been made for judging the section's student paper competition, arrangements for the auction if it is that section's year to organize it, and any other general activities or concerns of the section since the last Council meeting. The report does not need to include section membership numbers or financial status since that is available separately. This report should be submitted electronically to the Secretary in advance of the meeting, and is also presented orally (with any updates) at the Council meeting.
- In addition to these scheduled meetings, there are often other miscellaneous meetings/discussions/votes conducted informally by email throughout the year as the need arises.

Reports

In addition to the reports to Council (outlined above), the section Chair should prepare a brief report on section activities and submit it to the *Bulletin* editor well in advance of the Fall and Winter issues. These *Bulletin* reports may be brief summaries of the reports submitted to Council, but also may contain more newsy items of interest to section members. These reports form part of the official records of the Society and are vital attachments to the Society's minutes. In addition, they help inform members who may not have been in attendance at the last conference.

Symposium

The Society and LOC normally allot a 2-hour block during the annual conference to each section to allow them to host a symposium. The section Chair often takes the role in organizing this symposium, but may delegate it to another individual. According to the customs of the section, the Chair may wish to consult with section membership on the symposium topic. The Society provides some funding (see separate document "Policy for Payment of Symposium Expenses at Annual Conferences") to support these symposia, and provides the logistics to pay symposium expenses. The section will be held accountable for any expenditures on their symposium that are in excess of the amount authorized by Council.

Sections may elect not to hold a symposium, or to organize a symposium jointly with other section(s). Because of the packed scientific program at the annual conference, and the difficulty faced by the LOC in scheduling events, it is critical that symposium planning be done in a timely manner. Ideally, a rough program should be developed by September, but absolutely by the December Council meeting. If firm plans are not in place by December, Council may withdraw the section's invitation to hold a symposium.

Student presentation awards

At present, each section offers student awards for oral and/or poster presentations. These awards are funded through the Zoological Education Trust, which is a registered charity. The board of ZET comprises the CSZ Executive. Any requests for changes to the terms of these awards, or for new awards, should be brought before CSZ Council as a recommendation for ZET to consider.

It is the responsibility of section Chairs to coordinate the judging of their student awards. This is best done by selecting judges in advance of the meeting, and providing them with the names and times of presentations to be judged. The details of the judging are at the discretion of each section. The LOC endeavors to give students presenting a paper to indicate whether they wish to be considered in competition. This information can normally be obtained from the LOC soon after the deadline for receipt of abstracts.

Society awards

Some Society awards require/request the participation of each section Chair on their judging panel. These tasks are not onerous and they help ensure that these awards reflect excellence as viewed by the broad zoological community. Sometimes the timeline on evaluation is tight, so the section Chair should plan to give these priority.

Nominations

Membership in the various sections of the Society varies widely. Sections that dominate numerically tend to dominate awards and elected positions, but that is because they also tend to be the most likely to nominate individuals. All section Chairs should accept the responsibility to nominate exceptional individuals in their sections (or others!) for Society awards, and to nominate interested individuals as candidates for Council and Executive. This is vital to the health of the Society.