

Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution
Council Meeting Agenda, 4 December 2013 8.00am-4.00pm EST
Room 15-200 (15th Floor); NSERC 350 Albert St., Ottawa, ON

In attendance:

CSEE-SCEE:

In person

Jeff Hutchings (President; Dalhousie)
Judy Myers (Vice President; UBC)
Miriam Richards (Secretary; Brock)
Julie Turgeon (Treasurer; Laval)
Locke Rowe (Councillor; Toronto)
Jeremy Kerr (incoming Vice-President; Ottawa)
Anne Dalziel (incoming Student and PDF rep; Laval)

By teleconference

Steve Heard (Councillor; UNB) (by teleconference)
Leanna Lachowsky (Councillor – Student and PDF rep; Calgary) (by teleconference)
Arne Mooers (Councillor; Simon Fraser) (by teleconference)
Fanie Pelletier (Councillor; Sherbrooke) (by teleconference)
Mary Reid (Councillor; Calgary) (by teleconference)
Andy Gonzalez

NSERC:

Isabelle Blain (Vice-President, Research Grants and Scholarships)
Pierre Charest (Associate Vice-President, Corporate Planning & Policy; incoming VP RGS)
Elizabeth Boston (Director, Mathematical, Environmental and Physical Sciences)
Dave Bowen (Team Leader, Environmental Sciences)
Brenda MacMurray (Program Officer, Environmental Sciences)
Kenn Rankine (Program Officer, Environmental Sciences)

Evolution and Ecology Evaluation Group 1503:

Hugh MacIsaac (University of Windsor – Group Chair, Evolution and Ecology Evaluation Group 1503) by teleconference

Robert Reisz (University of Toronto - Co-Chair, Evolution and Ecology Evaluation Group 1503) by teleconference

John Reynolds (SFU; Group Chair, Evolution and Ecology Evaluation Group 1503) by teleconference (tele) – see bottom, Jeremy (guest)

1. Adoption of Agenda

Motion (Locke, Judy): To adopt the previously circulated agenda.

Passed

2. Minutes of meetings of May 2013 (Kelowna)

Motion (Locke, Julie): To adopt the minutes of the Council meetings of xx and May 2013.

Passed

3. Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

Although Council had previously decided to continue the previous practice of not posting Council meeting minutes on the website, it turns out that this is a contravention of CSEE Constitution (Article 7). Therefore minutes of Council meetings will be posted, beginning with today's meeting.

ACTION: Given concerns that in the past, Council meeting minutes were constructed under the assumption that they would not be public, the Secretary will make a recommendation on how to proceed with respect to posting minutes of previous meetings.

Reports from Council Executive

4. President's report – Jeff Hutchings

A report was previously circulated and is attached to the minutes.

- a. Jeff recently received a phone call from a reporter who asked whether it is important to find out if the current Minister of Science and Technology believes in evolution. An article related to this topic will be published in a couple weeks, likely with reference to a letter from former CSEE President Graham Bell, commenting on school science curricula.
- b. **NSERC** – a major concern is an apparently growing disparity between NSERC's objectives and policies and the goals of the Canadian research community. A second issue concerns evidence that NSERC Discovery grant renewals may be gender-biased, as suggested by an analysis presented in the CSEE June Newsletter by CSEE member Yolanda Morbey based on data gleaned from NSERC publications. It was noted that there had been some concerns from NSERC supplied data to Judy and there was some presumption that the Newsletter article was based on these data (they were not).
- c. Jeff continues to work on obtaining agreements for additional membership benefits, namely discounts from publishing companies.
- d. Jeff recently received an email from a member commenting that the Society seems rather quiet at certain times of the year. Council agreed that more regular communications to the membership would heighten interest and participation in the Society. Suggested types of communications include notices posting agendas and minutes of Council meetings, a monthly summary of news items with pointers to the website, a New Year's message from the President, introduction of new Council members, etc. The Secretary will develop a protocol for sending out monthly "bulletins".
- e. There will be two CSEE symposia at the joint meeting (with CSZ and SCL) in Montreal in May 2014. Each will be a half-day symposium. There will also be a student-sponsored symposium.

- f. **Honorary membership** – A draft policy for creating and managing a new Honorary Life Membership category was previously circulated.

Motion (Locke, Judy) – to create a new Honorary Life Membership category as described below:

Passed

Honorary life membership may be conferred on individuals who have demonstrated a lifetime of research excellence or distinguished service in the fields of ecology and (or) evolutionary biology. Honorary members shall be exempt from payment of the annual membership fee and will receive all benefits associated with normal membership.

All CSEE members in good standing are entitled to propose the names of prospective honorary members. Each proposal, detailing the justification for the nomination and not exceeding 1000 words, must be supported by two additional members in good standing. Proposals must be submitted jointly to the Chair of the CSEE Awards and Recognition Committee and to the CSEE Secretary. The annual deadline for receipt of proposals for honorary life membership is March 31.

Based on recommendations from the Awards and Recognition Committee, the CSEE Council will evaluate the nominees at a Council Meeting held during the CSEE's Annual Meeting, normally held in May. Council will recommend meritorious nominees for election by all members in attendance at the General Business Meeting, held during the society's Annual Meeting.

The number of honorary members shall be limited to 1% of the total membership.

ACTION: The Secretary will issue a call for nominations early in the New Year.

5. Treasurer's report

A report was previously circulated.

- a. Julie reviewed 2013 expenditures based on more detailed descriptions of budgetary items, as previously requested by Council. After some discussion, Council agreed on the following budgetary approval schedule. As Council meets twice per year, the Treasurer will summarize expenses for the fiscal year ending 31 December at the fall Council meeting, as most expenses have been incurred by this point in time. Early in January, her report for the previous fiscal year is then sent to the auditors. Also at the fall meeting, Council will discuss and approve an Interim Budget for the following fiscal year, beginning 1 January, that will then be updated at the May Council meeting.
- b. Review of 2013 expenses:
 - i. CIEE fees – Since 2011, CSEE has been paying \$8000 per year to support CIEE. Prior to 2011, CSEE paid \$5000 per year, but at the fall 2010 Council meeting, agreed to raise the contribution to \$8000 for 2 years (2011 and 2012). Thus, we have actually already extended support at the higher rate for an extra year. CIEE support is the largest single budgetary item, amounting to about one-third of annual membership revenues.
 - ii. Webmaster expenses – At some time in the past, Council made an arrangement to pay for expenses relating to ongoing maintenance of the website with fixed \$1000 payments made twice a year, an arrangement that was never revisited. This arrangement has now been updated and website maintenance will now be compensated on an hourly basis, which likely will result in considerable savings.

Overall, as a result of receiving the GST refund from the Ottawa conference, the 2013 budget was balanced at the end of the fiscal year. However, without this influx of funds, the fiscal year would have ended in a deficit, because membership revenues were lower than expenditures.

- c. SWEET budget. Julie described some difficulties sometimes encountered by organizers of the SWEET Symposium, because it can be difficult for organizers to create appropriate bank accounts and there also are difficulties in transferring profits from the Symposium to the organizers of subsequent symposia.

Motion (Locke, Julie): CSEE will, upon request from SWEET organisers, facilitate the transfer of funds for SWEET but funds will not represent a line item in the CSEE budget.

Carried

Further budgetary discussion was postponed until the afternoon, in order to consider the CIEE report and other issues with budgetary implications.

6. Secretary's Report –Miriam Richards

A report was previously circulated.

A brief discussion focussed on two topics 1. the website and suggestions for using the website to collect membership information (e.g. academic institution, research interests, etc.), which would address our need to replace the information previously collected through the old website, and 2. on whether membership is mostly drawn from academic institutions (based on email addresses, almost all members are from universities).

7. CIEE – Steve Heard

A report was previously circulated. Steve joined the meeting by teleconference at 9.30 am to discuss the CIEE report.

Discussion focussed on CSEE's current and future financial commitments to CIEE and on whether current levels of support are a. sustainable given CSEE's annual budget deficits, and b. lack of clarity about the benefits to CIEE membership, given that membership accounts for one-third of annual membership revenues. Steve provided some additional information not in the report. Currently CIEE has 4 or 5 sustaining members, providing about \$30000 in annual revenues, which supports a couple working groups or a working group and a few courses. Recent programming included a working group in 2012 (on the topic of thermal scaling and body size workshop), a graduate course offered at URegina on stable isotope ecology (there were 40 applicants of whom 12 grad students from 11 universities participated). There have also been workshops co-sponsored by CIEE at CSEE meetings, an R-STAT workshop in Montreal, and two new working groups will soon be announced soon. It is hoped that the proposed new College of Representatives will be able to raise CIEE's profile.

Councillors expressed support for CIEE was expressed, but also considerable concern that CIEE is not delivering sufficient benefits to CSEE to justify an \$8000 annual contribution. It was also pointed out that at the previous meeting in Kelowna, CIEE (represented by Diego Steinaker) had been requested to provide concrete evidence that CIEE has been successfully engaged in activities of general benefit to CSEE members. No such evidence has been provided.

Motion (Andy, Mary): that in 2014, CSEE provide one year of funding at the current level of \$8000, conditional on CIEE providing the justification for funds.

Motion defeated (1 for, 6 against, 1 abstention)

Motion (Fanie, Andy): that in 2014, CSEE provide one year of funding at the level of \$5000.

Motion passed (5 for, 2 against, 1 abstention)

Action item: Jeff will convey our concerns to CIEE, emphasizing that CIEE needs to make a strong case to donors for further funding.

8. CSEE/NSERC Liaison

10:30-11:00: Teleconference with 1503 Co-chairs and Group Chair

11:00-12:30: Meeting with NSERC Vice-President Isabelle Blain, NSERC staff, and representatives of NSERC Evaluation Group 1503 to discuss issues of mutual interest including (attendees listed on next page):

- a. Canadian Common CV (CCCV) – see letter circulated – main concern seems to be that a lot of extra work is now being required and the benefits really are not clear. Liz: the new format allows data mining by the agencies whereas the Form 100 pdf did not. These data can be used to make a case for more funding, etc. NSERC will be implementing an improvement to the formatting of the ccv, so that it is easier to read. Also improvements to automate addition of publications, etc. Note that each agency constructs its own version of the cv from the common elements that inputted to the database. NSERC's key consideration in changing the forms was in making changes that would have a positive impact on the quality of peer review (reducing clutter, improving readability, etc.). The major benefit of switching to the CCCCV will be in the long run when the databasing of information in cv's has been enabled and becomes useful.
- b. In response to a question about responses to the Council of Canadian Academies' report, Innovation Impacts: Measurement and Assessment, as this would relate to NSERC's role in research choices, Isabelle Blain commented that NSERC is working to develop a set of quality and quantity indicators for measuring research inputs and outputs that can be used then to suggest budgets and allocations to various disciplines. There will be a feedback period from the community, and then an expert panel will consider how these indicators would be made into a formula that would be used in creating allocations (which may or may not be done in the context of a growing, static, or lower overall funding scenario). Given the long time projections, this exercise will have no impact prior to 2016.
- c. Open access policy: NSERC has been directed to develop such a policy as part of the Tri-Council. The Canadian policy will be "middle of the road" and aligned with proposed policies in many other countries. The policy will not be proposing the so-called "gold standard" of open access, but will probably be going with the green option (researchers can publish in any journal and deposit a copy of the paper into own institution's repository). The consultation period will be closing in mid-December. Although the policy will be proposed in concert with SSHRC and CIHR, each council will have to approve separately. The target is for a fall 2014 announcement.
- d. Access to research data policy: A consultation paper has been issued in concert with all councils. Issues to be considered include data types, curation, cyber infrastructure, etc. For the next few months, NSERC will be focussed on assessing the results of the consultation exercise, then will make a decision on the next step in the exercise. NSERC

is aware that open access will raise publication costs, suggesting that some creativity will be required.

- e. NSERC post-doctoral fellowships: NSERC is trying to stabilize the budget to fund 110-120 awards per year. The success rate has declined because the number of applications has changed from 700 per year in 2004 to 1300 in 2011. Rule changes were made to limit eligibility in order to bolster the success rate. Also, it was simply becoming too difficult to evaluate these files. Although many have expressed their concerns, there is very little consensus and wide variation in opinion on how to improve the situation in the absence of any new money.
- f. Research Tools and Instruments Grants: Has the downloading of RTI evaluations to the universities resulted in any change in the number of ecology proposals forwarded for field research? NSERC can check the data to determine whether the vetting through universities has changed the nature of requests, but at this stage it appears that the ecology proportions are similar to or greater than in previous years. The application quota for the RTI program was not filled in fall 2013, because small universities did not send in as many proposals as allowed. The total quota was 500.
- g. Discovery grant renewal rates at small, medium and large institutions: A clear pattern is forming that the failure rates are much higher at small and medium institutions. The pattern actually began before the new grant evaluation model came into place. NSERC's conclusion, based on the portion of the grant evaluation scores pertaining to "quality of the investigator", is that this pattern is due to lower quality PI's at smaller institutions (possibly due to higher teaching loads and less access to infrastructure, etc.). The question was raised as to whether the higher failure rates at small and medium institutions have led to overall changes in the number of NSERC-supported researchers in Canada, especially those working in ecology and evolution.

At the end of the meeting with NSERC, President Jeff Hutchings presented an Inuit carving to Isabelle Blain, on behalf of CSEE, mark her upcoming retirement and her work with CSEE over the years.

9. Society Constitution

Major changes to the CSEE Constitution are required to support the society's forthcoming application for Continuance as a Not-For-Profit Organisation as required under the new federal Not-for-Profit legislation. Judy, Julie and Miriam presented preliminary proposals to Council, mainly requiring feedback on general principles to be followed in preparing the final draft By-laws and Standing Rules, the new documents that will replace the current Constitution. The plan is to create the final draft early in January 2014, to distribute it for consultation by the membership, over a period ending in late February or early March, then scheduling a poll for the membership to vote on the new By-laws and Standing Rules by late March or early April. A two-thirds majority of the membership is required to accept each new document. As a back-up plan, if too few members vote on these items, they will be brought to a vote at the General Membership Meeting in Montreal.

Action item – all committee chairs will write descriptions of their committees to be submitted before the end of December for inclusion in a new handbook.

Motion (Leanna, Locke): that the number of student/postdoc councillors be increased to two, one of whom shall be a student member and one of whom shall be either a student or post-doc member, and that student budget be increased to \$4000 to cover student expenses.

Passed

Reports of Committees

10. Membership & Communications Committee – Andy Gonzalez

The committee report is attached.

- a. The committee had been previously charged with developing a policy to enable evaluation of requests for funding for events such as regional conferences and symposia. One issue has been some confusion about the scope of this committee versus the Outreach Committee, which should be clarified when the new descriptions of the committees are submitted. The proposal for a new policy is detailed below the statement of the motion.

Motion (Andy, Fanie): That there be a budget line item of \$2000 annually that will be used for sponsorship of regional conferences and other requests, according to the slightly revised wording presented below.

Passed

CSEE conference and symposium award

One of the aims of the CSEE is to foster the communication of research findings and activities. The CSEE conference and symposium award supports events organized by CSEE members that provide a venue for CSEE members to present and communicate their results. The CSEE offers ~~up to 6~~ awards of up to \$500 per year to co-fund the organization of such events (e.g., symposia, poster sessions, retreats).

Call for applications

General rules

Awards will co-support the organization of a conference or symposium event by a CSEE member or partner institution.

The event shall take the form of a symposium or session where several CSEE member researchers and/or students present aspects of their research in ecology and evolution.

Awards will not be made to the same member, event, or institution in consecutive years.

Award amount

The normal maximum award is \$500. Requests for an award in excess of this maximum will only be considered under exceptional circumstances.

Eligibility requirements for the event

Organized by a CSEE member;

Involve several CSEE researchers and/or graduate students;

Involve collaborations across institutions.

Application requirements

Cover letter with the applicant's contact information;

List of CSEE members and institutions involved;

Brief description of the proposed symposium or session (1 page, or ~400 words maximum), including its scientific scope;

Brief explanation of how the proposed symposium or session relates to the CSEE missions (1 page, or ~400 words maximum);

Detailed program (speakers) and schedule for the proposed symposium/session plus other side activities;

Estimated budget (must include description of additional sources of funding);

Please send all components of the applications as a single PDF file. Applications should be emailed to the Chair of the Membership and Communications committee.

Evaluation procedure

The Membership and Communications committee will evaluate applications with regards to the CSEE's mission using the following criteria and weighting:

(30%) Scientific merits and scope of the proposed session topic.

(30%) Collaboration between CSEE members locally and regionally.

(20%) Program feasibility and budget adequacy.

(20%) Existence of side activities that will increase the symposium or session's impact.

Award timeline:

Two application deadlines per year with 2 to 3 awards per call:

Application deadlines: May 1st and December 1st

Application deadlines will be strictly adhered to.

The CSEE's membership and communications committee will evaluate the applications. The results of the evaluation will be communicated to the applicant by the committee's Chair within 4 weeks of the deadline.

Obligations associated with the award:

Recipients should make the CSEE's support visible on all documents (e.g. CSEE logo on posters, flyers, slides) and advertising materials (e.g. website);

CSEE will post information about the symposium and workshop on the CSEE website, in accordance with publication regulations and other policies;

Award recipients will produce a summary report for CSEE within 4 weeks of the completed activity.

ACTION – the above document needs to be translated and posted on the CSEE website.

b. CSEE membership leaflet

ACTION: – Andy proposed the creation of leaflet that would describe the society's goals and mission and identify the benefits to being a member.

The purpose of the leaflet is to showcase the CSEE and attract new members, and the leaflet will be ready for distribution at the next CSEE meeting in May. It would also be available for download as a PDF on the CSEE website, and advertised through social media and networks (e.g. Facebook). A one-page poster version would also be useful.

11. Nominations Committee & Elections – Judy Myers

There was nothing to report.

12. Awards & Recognition Committee – Locke Rowe

- a. Administration of student awards at annual meetings – As a general rule, the meeting LOC (local organizing committee) is supposed to organize the student awards and the awards committee simply helps. The LOC for the Montreal meeting made a decision not to coordinate the awards, so this job has now fallen back onto the Awards committee.

ACTION: Miriam will check that the conference handbook specifies that the LOC is responsible for organizing the student awards ranking.

- b. **Announcement of student awards:** as it can be quite difficult to get everything organized in time to give out awards, including cheques and certificates, at the annual meeting, the decision was made to adopt a new procedure. In future, if the awards are

ready in time for the banquet we will give them out at that time, otherwise they will be announced to the membership.

- c. Early Career Award update – the deadline was extended to 15 December to ensure sufficient applications are received.

ACTION: a proposal to change this biannual award to a yearly award will be considered at next meeting

13. Outreach Committee – Fanie Pelletier

A report was circulated prior to the meeting.

Discussion focussed on defining the scope of the Outreach Committee vs. the Membership Committee. Fanie wondered whether there is a real need for the outreach committee, given that turnover in members is high (all members are students who cannot always attend the annual meeting), and because of inconsistency in the scheduling and organization of outreach activities as defined by meeting LOCs. Overall, it seems easier that each LOC sets up a local outreach committee. Council suggested that the responsibility of the Outreach Committee is defined by the Society's second official objective: *to raise public awareness of the importance of ecology and evolution to Canadian society.*

ACTION: Fanie will propose a definition of outreach in her description of the committee.

ACTION: Miriam will ensure that it is specified in the conference handbook that outreach events are organized by the LOC in consultation with the outreach committee.

14. Biodiversity & Conservation Committee - Arne Mooers

A report was circulated prior to the meeting.

Arne reminded Council that his term ends at the end of the year, so a new chair and members required for this committee.

There was a brief discussion about the decision not to send the letter about the SARA (Species at Risk) legislation to the prime minister after signatures had been gathered. There are likely to be members who may be disappointed that it wasn't actually sent, regardless of the reasons why the decision was made.

Society Business

15. Graduate students & post-doctoral fellows – Leanna Lachowsky

A report was circulated prior to the meeting.

The proposal to increase the number of student/post-doc councillors was dealt with earlier in the meeting. Additional proposals were dealt with in the context of the budget discussion.

16. PAGSE - Jeremy Kerr

PAGSE has recently taken part in three meetings with NSERC's acting COO, Janet Walden. Clearly, NSERC has been struggling to make a convincing case for discovery science and technology but it now seems that they may be making some progress with the current government.

17. CIEE

This item was addressed in the morning discussion (see notes above).

18. CCAC - Albrecht Schulte-Hostedde

No report was received.

19. Budget

The meeting returned to the subject of the interim budget. Julie prepared an updated version of the budget based on motions already passed during the meeting, then presented this to Council. A lively discussion ensued about the benefits of proposing an interim budget that would balance expenses against operating revenues (i.e. membership fees).

MOTION (Julie, Miriam): to accept the interim budget as proposed.

Passed.

20. Bulletin – Mary Reid

Although her term on Council is ending, Mary has offered to take charge of the next bulletin. A new editor will be required for the July bulletin, and a potential candidate has been identified. Submission deadline for the next bulletin is 6 January 2014.

21. Meetings of the Society – Jeff Hutchings and Judy Myers

2013 Okanagan – Jason Pither provided a final report to Council.

2014 Montreal – No report as such was received from Andrew Hendry, but the meeting will break even if about 650 people register.

2015 Saskatoon – The LOC has been organized, and the chair is Eric Lamb. CIEE is not, after all, going to be involved.

ACTION: Judy will request that the LOC provide preliminary budget by the end of February 2014.

2016 Memorial – Ian Fleming and Tom Chapman are co-chairing the LOC

2017 – the idea has been floated to host the meeting in Guelph

22. Other Business

The next regular council meeting will be in Montreal in May, likely on the Sunday preceding the conference.

Jeff thanked outgoing councillors Mary Reid, Steve Heard, and Arne Mooers for their service to CSEE. In turn, Council thanked Jeff Hutchings for his service as Vice-President and President of CSEE. Everyone applauded.