

**President's Plan of Work
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**To Be Presented to AFS Governing Board
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My work as president of the AFS will be grounded in the following priorities:

1. Address gaps in the professional development of fisheries professionals
2. Make fisheries relevant to the public and increase the accessibility of fisheries science to lay audiences
3. Continue efforts to increase diversity within the fisheries profession
4. Strengthen AFS publications by fostering mentorship and professional development of editorial board members and emphasizing the importance of a quality experience for authors
5. Finalize and prepare for implementation of 2020-2024 Strategic Plan

These priorities address a number of elements of the Society's current Strategic Plan and are discussed in further detail below.

1. Address gaps in the professional development of fisheries professionals

The Special Committee on Education (appointed by President Essig) identified 'soft skills' as a particularly important gap in the formal education and early on-the-job training of fisheries professionals. This circumstance is not unique to the fisheries profession: most scientific disciplines are finding recent cohorts of students and young professionals to be well-trained in the technical aspects of their field, but inexperienced in the practicalities and interpersonal aspects of the profession. While employers have identified communication, time management, conflict resolution, and other interpersonal skills as the most important for the success of young fisheries professionals, they are not part of the formal training provided by most fisheries education programs. AFS is uniquely well-positioned to help members close this gap by providing a series of courses focused on soft skills and related subjects. Offering such courses may also help members interested in Professional Certification to satisfy Human Dimensions or other education/experience requirements.

Specific actions proposed—Charge the Continuing Education Committee to develop a curriculum of soft skills continuing education (CE) courses needed by fisheries and other natural resources professionals. Courses may include supervision/motivation, conflict resolution, meeting management, media training, budget management, diversity topics, etc. Further charge the Committee with identifying the highest priority subjects and

developing courses to roll out during the 2019 Annual Meeting. Work with AFS staff to develop additional courses/materials and develop branding around a ‘fundamentals of the fisheries profession’ collection of CE courses.

Strategic Plan Strategies addressed: 2, 8

2. Make fisheries relevant to the public and increase the accessibility of fisheries science to lay audiences

This priority will build upon those of Presidents Margraf and McMullin to make fisheries science a recognized discipline in the eyes of the public and to make fisheries information accessible to decision-makers. During my term as President, the Society will engage on a number of fronts to make fisheries science more accessible, understandable, and relevant to non-scientists.

Specific actions proposed—Host the first joint meeting of the American Fisheries Society and the Wildlife Society in Reno, NV, providing what may be the largest forum of natural resource management and conservation professionals in our Nation’s history. Leverage this unique opportunity to hold interdisciplinary continuing education courses and symposia focused on science communication, develop content for non-scientists attending the meeting, and engage decision-makers, conservation leaders, and media professionals as participants in the annual meeting. Focus on the everyday relevance of thriving fisheries in President’s Columns, providing facts, figures, and stories suited to internal use by fisheries professionals and external distribution via other outlets. Engage Science Communication Section and AFS staff in developing connections with popular media and in the development training materials to help fisheries professionals be more media savvy. Work with the Communications Committee to address the Society’s needs regarding public outreach and media engagement and charge them with development of a media package for AFS.

Strategic Plan Strategies addressed: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10

3. Continuing efforts to increase diversity within the fisheries profession

Diversity strengthens populations and makes ecosystems more resilient in the face of change. Diversity is equally essential to the resilience of our profession, as well as its current and future effectiveness. Our profession and Society must better reflect the communities whose resources we study and steward on their behalf.

Specific action proposed—Reappoint the Special Committee for Diversity and work closely with this group and the Equal Opportunities Section (EOS) to take up the recommendations and action items developed in the course of their work during President McMullin’s term. Appoint a Special Committee to identify ways in which the interests of Native American Tribes/First Nations can be better represented within the

American Fisheries Society, such as the creation of an EOS subsection, development of a continuing education course to provide an introduction to tribal/First Nation's fisheries issues, etc. Charge all AFS committee chairs to address diversity in the appointment of committee members and otherwise in the course of their work.

Strategic Plan Strategies addressed: 11, 12

4. Strengthen AFS publications by fostering mentorship and professional development of editorial board members and emphasizing the importance of a quality experience for authors

The Special Committee to Increase the Relevance of AFS Publications (appointed by President Margraf) largely reaffirmed the mission and objectives of the Society's journals, but recommended a number of actions to reset the course for some publications that had drifted from their intended purpose. The Special Committee also recommended the appointment of Editors-in-Chief (EICs) for several of the Society's journals to enact these measures and to provide for greater communication and cohesion among within and among the editorial boards for each journal.

Specific action proposed—Work with the Publications Overview Committee (POC) and AFS staff to complete the integration of the EICs within the POC and the editorial team at-large. Charge the EICs and editors of the journals to implement mechanisms for redirecting worthy manuscripts to other, more appropriate journals within the AFS stable; establish procedural norms for the process by which manuscripts are reviewed; identify expectations for EICs, Editors, Associate Editors, and reviewers; and implement strategies to develop editors/reviewers to uphold the journals' standard and ensure authors experience a fair, predictable process when submitting manuscripts for consideration by AFS journals.

Strategic Plan Strategies addressed: 5

5. Finalize and prepare for implementation of 2020-2024 Strategic Plan

Although the next 5-year Strategic Plan will not take effect until after my term as President has concluded, the work of the Special Committee for Strategic Planning (appointed by President McMullin) will be ongoing through 2019. There is also the matter of updating the Governing Board Reporting Tool in 2019 so it is ready to accommodate changes in reporting taking effect in 2020.

Specific action proposed—Renew the appointment of the Special Committee for Strategic Planning to continue the work of their original charge to prepare a new Strategic Plan for consideration by the AFS Governing Board at the 2019 Annual

Meeting. Expand the charge of this committee to oversee revisions to the Governing Board Reporting Tool to ensure integration between previous and future datasets and prepare for reporting under the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan.

Strategic Plan Strategies addressed: 10, 15