

Annual Report: SETAC North America Awards & Fellowships Committee (SNA AFC)

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Executive Summary

The SETAC North America Awards & Fellowships Committee (SNA AFC) is comprised of several subcommittees that help administer the many award opportunities within SETAC North America. These awards recognize and honor outstanding contributions in the environmental sciences by professionals, and enhance the professional development of students and pre-professionals.

Organization

Continuing this year, subcommittee chairs were:

- Burton Suedel (Government) - Professional Awards Subcommittee (9 members);
- Ryan Prosser (Academia) - Student Travel & Minority Awards Subcommittee (28 members);
- Ryan Prosser (Academia) – Recent Graduates Travel Awards Subcommittee (6 members);
- Rene Falconer (Academia) - Student Presentation Awards (3 members);
- Laurel Royer (Industry) – Fellowships (6 members).

Key activities in 2016

1. A major activity of the SNA AFC activities is review and recommendation for SNA Awards and Fellowships (A&Fs) to be presented at the SNA annual meeting. A description of the awards and fellowships recommended by SNA AFC and approved by the SNA BoD for 2017 is provided below:

Outstanding Regional Chapter Member Award

- Three nominations
- Winner: Nile Kemble, USGS
- Nile scored consistently highest amount the reviewers due his considerable contributions to the Ozark Praire Chapter of SETAC over 17 years. He has been on the Board of Directors and been the Treasurer of the chapter for 13 years. Being the treasurer is a big job and committing to that role for 13 years is outstanding. Nile has also service SETAC at the national level on many committees.

Government Service Award

- One nomination
- Winner: Alex Stone, Washington State Department of Ecology
- All reviewers thought that Alex was deserving of the award due to consistently demonstrating exemplary dedication and service to promote the collective application of environmental toxicology and chemistry to support risk reduction while with the Washington Department of Ecology. He has not only advanced scientific understanding through research and monitoring,

but has also initiated program that advance ecologically sound and acceptable practices and principles by creating collaboration forums that enhance communication among professionals in government, business, academia, and other segments of society. He has done this not only in Washington state but with federal agencies and multi-state initiatives.

Klaine Environmental Education Award

- One nomination
- Winner: Ron Kendell, Texas Tech University
- All reviewers thought that Ron was deserving of the award due to his consistent commitment to students and education. He was the founding directors of The Institute of Environmental and Human Health and founding chair of the Department of Environmental Toxicology at Texas Tech University. Before that, he established the toxicology programs at Western Washington University in 1980 and Clemson University in 1989. Interestingly, it was Ron who hired Dr. Steve Klaine to join the Department of Environmental Toxicology at Clemson. Ron has even published multiple editions of a children's books titled "Toxic Substances in the Environment" that he authored with his students at Western Washington University.

Eugene Kenega Membership Award

- One nomination
- Winner: Kay Ho, USEPA
- All reviewers thought that Kay was deserving of the award due to her considerable service to regional and national committees, SETAC workshops, and interest groups over the years. Kay was also a founding member of the North Atlantic Chapter of SETAC and has provide important leadership for that regional chapter.

Jeff Black Fellowship

- Two nominations
 - Winner: Nicholas Cipoletti, St. Cloud State University
 - Nicholas scored consistently higher than the other nominee. Reviewers thought that Nicholas' research proposal was ambitious and novel. His CV, cover letter, transcripts and statement of interest indicated he was an excellent candidate for the award.
2. Also in preparation for the annual meeting, Student Travel Awards were evaluated by 22 members of the Student Travel & Minority Awards Subcommittee, including some new volunteers. Each of the 135 applicants was evaluated by at least 3 different reviewers making for a total of over 335 reviews! Specifically, the SNA AFC awarded 101 student travel awards to 7 undergraduates, 26 Masters, and 60 PhD students. These included 8 awards from the SETAC Minority Travel Fund and one award for the Melissa Schultz Memorial Travel Award (Taylor Bujaczek).
 3. A new award was initiated this year in collaboration with the Early Career Members Committee and the SETAC NA Endowment Fund Committee. The new award is called the Recent Graduate Travel Award. It will support six recent graduates to attend the SETAC NA annual meeting with a complimentary registration and up to \$800 in financial support to offset travel costs. Two

awards will be given to two recent graduates from each of academia, government, and industry. The description of the new award and criteria are outlined in Appendix A.

There were 25 applicants for the award this year. This is a considerably high number considering the window for submitting an application this year was roughly 4 weeks. The short window for applying was due to the late implementation of the award. I think this may be a preliminary indicator of the high interest in this type of award with recent graduate members of SETAC. Of the 25 applicants, 11 were from academia, 10 were from government and 4 were from industry.

All applicants were accomplished and deserving of the award but the following received the highest scores from reviewers due to their plan for taking advantage for all that is offered at a SETAC NA meeting, along with their explanation on how attendance at the SETAC NA meeting relates to their short- and long-term career goals. The financial needs of the applicants were considered but did not play a factor in the decision for the six winners below. All six winners would not be able to attend without the travel award.

Academia

- Maria Rodgers, University of Southern Mississippi
- Elvis Genbo Xu, University of California, Riverside

Industry

- L. Blair Paulik, Maul, Foster & Alongi Inc.
- Jared Bozich, International Flavors & Fragrances Inc.

Government

- Rebecca Dalton, Environment and Climate Change Canada
- Meagan Harris, Whatcom Conservation District

4. The new online Awards Management System (AMS) was used to submit and review nominations for the Professional Awards and Fellowship. The Professional Awards and Fellowship Committee chairs worked with the SNA AFC chair and the SETAC Awards Specialist Laura Swanson to update the scoring and weighting for assessing the award criteria. These updates were entered into AMS and used to review nominations. There were a number of setbacks that needed to be overcome with using the AMS for the first time. Troubleshooting with the software designer was required to ensure that all reviewers could login to the system. The Professional Awards Subcommittee chair was never able to successfully login to the system.
5. During this year (2017), this year the student presentation subcommittee continued to work with the Program Committee and the SNA staff to improve the processes by which student presentations are judged and winners are selected. This year's annual meeting will include 193 student presentation competitors, requiring 579 judging events! We are in the process of

recruiting judges for the meeting. As was done last year, judges will be entered into a drawing to win next year's registration fees (thanks to Greg Schiefer for implementing this program.) The student presentation awards committee continues to solicit support from our membership to minimize the number of student entries for presentation awards that occur late on Thursday - this implemented strategy is expected to help the AFC efficiently and accurately complete student presentation awards in time for the closing ceremony.

Coordination with Other Advisory Groups and Committees

This year AFC worked with the Early Career Members Committee, SETAC NA Endowment Fund Committee, and BOD to develop the new Recent Graduates Travel Award.

Future Plans

- The AFC will continue to work at forming a 'Recruitment subcommittee' to identify and resolve possible issues with recruitment of applicants for the SETAC awards. For example, the Fellowship subcommittee is working on new ways to target academia to enhance the applicant pool. The SNA AFC will continue to work with the Global Awards Committee on strategies to recruit greater diversity among applicants.
- The AFC will work to improve the process of nomination and review of the Professional Awards and Fellowship using the new AMS. The goal is to address the issues that arose this year so that they do not hinder the review process next year. The AFC will also work to use the AMS for the nomination and review process of the Recent Graduate Travel Awards. The AFC will also explore the possibility of using the AMS to review Student Travel Awards. This may be challenging as the Student Travel Awards are closely linked to abstract submission, which occurs in SETAC's Meeting Management System (MMS). Student Travel Award reviewing has traditionally occurred within the MMS.
- The AFC will refine the assessment criteria and instructions to reviewers for the Recent Graduates Travel Award. This year's reviewers posed some good questions about assessment of the candidates, which highlighted the importance of refining the instruction to reviewers to improve clarity.
- The AFC needs to recruit a new sub-committee chair to lead the Student Travel Award Committee or the Recent Graduate Award Committee. Currently, the AFC chair is leading these two sub-committees as the previous chair of the Student Travel Award Committee decided to step down at the beginning of 2017 and the Recent Graduate Award Committee is a new committee that was quickly assembled in June of 2017, once the new award was approved by the BoD. The AFC chair is happy to lead one of the two sub-committees.

Committee/IG nexus to SNA long-range plan (circle which of the four pillars of the LRP is the *principal focus* of the Committee/IG's activities in 2017):

1. Enhance Recognition & Advancement

2. **Maximize Relevance & Impact**
3. Promote Interdisciplinary, Tripartite Problem Solving
4. Expand Member Services & Revenue Streams

Committee/IG project name: *Migration of all SETAC NA awards to new Awards Management System*

Project manager: *Ryan Prosser and Laura Swanson*

Milestones (products and dates):

- *Complete troubleshooting of Awards Management System in its current form – November 2017*
- *Migrate all SETAC NA awards to Awards Management System – January 2018*

What support is the Committee/IG seeking from the SNA Board?

- *Great access to the software developer responsible for the new Awards Management System. The project managers need to be able to work closely with the developer to effectively complete troubleshooting and migration.*

What (if any) other Committee(s)/IG(s) are collaborating on the project?

- *SETAC Global Awards Committee*

How will the project support the implementation of SNA's LRP?

The migration of all SETAC NA awards to the Awards Management System will simplify the nomination and reviewing processes. This will hopefully have a two-fold effect of increasing the number of nominations for awards, particularly the Professional Awards and Fellowship, and make it easier to recruit reviewers. Both of these will increase member involvement in the promotion of the SETAC community, which will contribute to first two pillars of the LRP.

Business and Planning Meetings; Membership Communications

The AFC communicates primarily by email, with periodic calls among the AFC members working on specific awards, and the Steering Committee, who helped to establish and further develop specific projects, activities and future directions of the AFC. A face-to-face meeting of attending AFC members occurs each year at SETAC; this year's meeting in Minneapolis will occur on Tuesday, November 14 at 12 pm.

Issues/Problems

Soliciting volunteers for evaluating award applicants was challenging despite the assistance of appropriate groups/leads. While the SETAC NA staff continues to do an extraordinary job in managing the application process for awards and fellowships, the committee will work closely with SETAC staff to optimize the usefulness of the new AMS to ensure timely reviews.

As mentioned above, a number of issues arose with the new Awards Management System (AMS), which is to be expected when using an online program for the first time. The AMS has great potential but will require effort to realize this potential. If possible, the chair and SETAC awards specialist (Laura Swanson) need to be able to have easier access to the developer of AMS.

APPENDIX A

Recent Graduate Travel Award

Description of Award

The [SETAC North America Endowment Fund Board of Trustees](#) established a SETAC North America Recent Graduate Travel Award in 2017. The purpose of the award is to encourage participation of recent graduates who are SETAC members at each SETAC North America annual meeting. Encouragement is provided via awards (up to US\$800) in support of travel. In addition, SETAC North America will also provide registration waivers for the successful applicants. It is anticipated that approximately six awards (two per sector) will be made directly to recent graduates for the [SETAC North America 38th Annual Meeting](#), which will be held from 12–16 November 2017 in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Application for Award

Evaluation: Your application will be scored based on how much your participation in the SETAC NA meeting will advance your career as an environmental scientist; your scores are not dependent upon whether you have an accepted abstract or not. After each application is judged for merit, final award decisions will take into consideration each applicant's financial need. Please fill-in the following information. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

Eligibility:

- 1) Are you currently a Recent Graduate member of the SETAC North America Geographic Unit? (Only those answering yes will be considered for this award, please see other SETAC travel awards if you are currently a student; choose one.)
 - a. Yes, I am currently a Recent Graduate member of the SETAC North America Geographic Unit.
 - b. No, I am not currently a Recent Graduate member of the SETAC North America Geographic Unit.

Application Questions:

- 2) Award category: What sector do you belong to now? If you are currently unemployed, which sector do you hope to gain employment in? (Choose one)
 - a. Government
 - b. Industry
 - c. Academia

- d. Currently unemployed but hope to gain employment in the _____ sector.
- 3) What are your approximate travel costs to attend the meeting and how much support do you currently have? (After each application is judged for merit, final award decisions will take into consideration each applicant's financial need.)
- Approximate travel costs: \$ _____
 - Current monetary support: \$ _____
 - Comments about other forms of support (e.g., employer approved time off or administrative leave for attendance, sharing a hotel room with a colleague):
- 4) If you are chosen for one of the awards, are you willing to write an [Endowment Fund Testimonial](#) about your experience at the SNA annual meeting? (This is optional and has no bearing on your selection for award; choose one):
- Yes
 - No
- 5) If you are chosen for one of the awards, are you willing to write a conference report about your experience at the SNA annual meeting to be shared with your supervisor and the SETAC office? (This is required, only applicants that answer yes will be considered for the award; choose one):
- Yes
 - No
- 6) Even though the final program may not be available when you apply, please describe your conference plan for attending the SNA annual meeting as specifically as possible. You may wish to include topics such as: topic areas, sessions or symposia that you will attend or present in, society committees or special topic interest group meetings you will attend, your participation in organized networking events with peers and colleagues, organized social events, informal meetings with specific colleagues, or other activities (up to 10 points, limit 250 words).
- 7) List your most important short- (up to 3) and long-term (up to 3) career goals and provide examples of how your conference plan and attendance at the SNA annual meeting will help you reach each of these career goals (up to 10 points, limit 250 words):
- 8) Is there any additional information that you wish to provide concerning the value of this award to you? This response is optional and will not affect your score, but could be used to decide between applicants with the same scores.

Scoring Criteria for Recent Graduate Travel Award Nominations

Reviewers Note: If an application has not had all sections completed, then it will not be scored. Also, an answer of "Yes" has to be provided for Question 5 in order for the nomination to be evaluated.

Please score Questions 6 and 7. Questions 3 and 8 will be used by the Awards and Fellowship Committee to break a tie and make final award decisions.

Question 6) Conference Plan / 20

Important questions to consider when scoring criteria:

(Note: A nominee's application does not need to address all the points below to demonstrate meaningful involvement at the meeting)

- Is the nominee presenting at the meeting?
- Does the nominee clearly explain their topics of interest and rationale for attending the meeting?
- Does the nominee list specific sessions, committees, and/or interest groups that they plan to engage with when at the meeting?
- Does the nominee list important meetings or networking opportunities that would not be made possible without attending the meeting?
- Is the nominee planning to enroll in a professional training course?
- Does the nominee provide an overall impression that they will take full advantage of what is offered at a SETAC NA meeting?

Question 7) Career Goals / 20

Important questions to consider when scoring criteria:

- Does the nominee list short- and long-term career goals?
- Are the listed goals ambitious?
- Are the listed goals reasonable?
- Does the nominee clearly link their career goals to meeting attendance?
- Does the nominee provide an overall impression that they see meeting attendance as an important contribution to achieving their goals?

Total Score / 40