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Frontiers of Biogeography

Title

President's note to IBS members

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Journal

Frontiers of Biogeography, 6(4)

Author

Gillespie, Rosemary Grace

Publication Date

2014

DOI

10.21425/F5FBG25307

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President's note to IBS members

The international Biogeography is a young, vibrant, and growing society. Now in its second decade of life, the embryonic society held its inaugural meeting in Mesquite, Nevada, in January 2003, the outcome of an effort led by Jim Brown, Mark Lomolino and Dov Sax which also resulted in the publication *Foundations of Biogeography* (University of Chicago Press). Since that giddy time of its debut, the society has started to grow up, with meetings held every other year, and alternating between North America (Shepherdstown, WV, USA 2005; Yucatan, Mexico 2007; Miami, FL, USA 2013) and Europe (Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain 2007; Crete, Greece 2011; Bayreuth, Germany 2015). I am only the seventh President of the society, following a celebrity line-up starting with Jim Brown, and followed by Mark Lomolino, Brett Riddle, Vicki Funk, Rob Whittaker, and Larry Heaney. As the society has increased its following and importance, and as we approach the seventh biennial conference, we now have the challenge of how best to manage our growth, specifically how to reach our international audiences, how to encompass the breadth of the discipline of biogeography, and how to make ourselves more relevant to applied areas of global change and policy.

One important element that is universally valued by our members is the intimacy of our society and conferences – being able to discuss issues with our peers, including both leaders in the field as well as eager students, in an informal and friendly setting. As we grow, our ability to foster such interactions has become increasingly challenging, yet we have held this as a high priority through all of our discussions on future planning.

In terms of our geographic scope, a key question has been: how do we become more international? We know that scientific endeavors are often removed from the biodiversity action. For example, while >90% of the world's major universities are in temperate areas, 80% of biodiversity is in the tropics; we all need to work towards building local capacity. To develop a globally informed understanding of biodiversity, the society has initiated small, more focused, satellite workshops and meetings, the first held in Oxford, England, September 2012, and more recently in Montreal, Canada, November 2013, and Canberra, Australia, January 2014. We plan another next year in

Beijing, China, and are investigating additional locations responding to needs of members, and emerging topics. One clear benefit of these workshops is the informality that is so fundamental to rewarding interactions. Other avenues we are exploring to enhance our global reach are to include an expanded, dynamic, and more globally accessible web site with direct links to research tools, new media for communication with younger students and researchers, and online access to presentations from meetings.

A second major issue is our conceptual reach and relevance. The conceptual diversity of the field of biogeography is enormous, including basic sciences (historical biogeography, macroecology, physiological biogeography, remote sensing, paleobiogeography, ecoinformatics, etc.) but also social sciences (linguistics, cultural biogeography, etc.), and applied disciplines (global change biology, invasion biogeography, disease ecology, environmental health, etc.). Though the society has developed with a focus on the basic sciences, there is an increasing necessity for relevance, especially in developing countries. One possible avenue here is to partner with other societies through occasional joint meetings, so as to bring biogeography into the spotlight in fields such as Conservation Biology, Remote Sensing, etc. We are also looking for ways to enhance our relevance and accessibility to groups interested in policy and management.

Being still a very young society, the coffers of IBS are not exactly vast! We continue to be limited in our ability to support student travel and to initiate society-led activities and we must be cautious with the vicissitudes of holding workshops and conferences, while also exploring the potential of these for budgetary augmentation. However, there is one important thing we do have - a very active, keen, and hard-working board. But to achieve our goals of becoming more global in scope, and conceptually diverse and relevant, we now need more. For this, we will be seeking input from you, our members. We plan to open additional roles and positions within the society and will solicit nominations and input. I look forward to our discussions in Bayreuth.

Rosemary Gillespie
IBS President