

SSR Trainee Affairs Committee: Standard Operating Procedures

Excerpt from the SSR Bylaws Article XI, Section 3. (k)

“Trainee Affairs Committee: The Trainee Affairs Committee shall be composed of a minimum of seven or more trainee members including two Trainee Representatives to the Board of Directors and two faculty advisors (Regular SSR Members). The Trainee Affairs Committee shall be responsible for the planning and coordination of those SSR activities (Trainee Forum, Travel Awards Distribution, Placement Service, and the Trainee/Mentor Luncheon) that focus on trainee development at the Annual Meeting. Two trainee-elected Trainee Representatives shall serve on the Board of Directors. They will be responsible for channeling the concerns and viewpoints brought forth by the Trainee Affairs Committee and the Trainee Membership to the Board.”

A trainee member is defined as any member of the Society who is still participating in some form of training within the field of reproductive biology, be that undergraduate, graduate or post-doctoral.

The Trainee Affairs Committee (TAC) Representatives are trainee members of SSR who are elected to serve by their peers. These two trainees serve two distinct roles: 1) trainee representatives on the SSR Board of Directors with a single collective vote and 2) chair and co-chair of the TAC. As leaders of TAC, these trainees facilitate the interactions of their fellow trainees with non-trainee members of SSR, and develop and supervise trainee activities. The TAC chair and co-chair oversee all activities of the TAC and report to the President, Vice President, and Board of Directors (see Appendix A for TAC members and reporting structure). As Trainee Representatives to the Board of Directors, the Senior Trainee Representative has one vote; if the Senior Trainee Representative is not present, the voting responsibility passes to the Junior Trainee Representative.

Revisions to this SOP can be proposed as needed to the Board and all changes must be approved by the Board of Directors before they are implemented. The revised document (preferably with changes tracked) and a summary of proposed changes should be provided in advance of Board meetings.

Responsibilities of TAC members serving on other SSR committees

Trainee members of other committees are appointed as official members to their respective committees by the SSR Vice President and are also official members of the TAC by virtue of this appointment. The Vice President typically asks for assistance in identification of trainees from the TAC co-chair. As members of the TAC, appointed trainees represent trainee interests and facilitate communication between their respective committees and TAC. TAC members in other committees report back to the TAC chair and co-chair on any information pertinent to trainees. However, their efforts within those committees will be guided by their respective committees SOPs and committee chair requests.

Trainee Volunteer Subcommittee (TVS) Activities and Guidelines

The Trainee Volunteer Subcommittee (TVS) shall handle the daily duties of organizing the trainee volunteers at the annual SSR meeting. TVS shall be co-chaired by two (2) trainees; one (1) experienced chair (from the immediate past meeting) and one (1) incoming co-chair (appointed by the SSR Vice-President). TVS co-chairs report to the TAC co-chairs, the Executive Director, and the Meeting Organizer. For further information please consult the TVS SOP.

Responsibilities of the Junior Trainee Representative / TAC Co-Chair

Miscellaneous

The TAC Co-Chair is responsible for working with the Business Office to update those portions of the SSR website that are relevant to trainees. This includes ensuring that references to trainee events and TAC members are current. The Co-Chair may work with another member of the TAC (e.g. Publications or Public affairs committee trainee liaisons) for these tasks but the Co-chair is responsible for oversight.

July

- Identify trainees to recommend to the VP to serve as coordinators for the Trainee-Mentor Luncheon (TML), the Larry Ewing Memorial Trainee Travel Fund (LEMTTF), and the Roommate Referral Service (RRS) for the upcoming year. These are full members of the TAC and will need to be approved by the VP. (See appendices D, E and F for full descriptions).
- At the end of the SSR annual meeting, the TAC Co-Chair will respond to any questions regarding Placement Service postings during the meeting.
- Thank you letters should be sent to the TML mentors and coordinators for the annual meeting. The SSR business office can provide an electronic version of the current SSR letterhead. Letters should be sent as signed PDF documents attached to emails.

August

- If you would like to have a trainee mixer, get in contact with the Annual Meeting and Industrial Relations Subcommittee Chair to help identify funding sources.

October

- Send out a call for nominations (via the Business Office) for a Junior Trainee Representative during your year as chair. Trainee members can nominate themselves or be nominated by other members of SSR. All nominations should be received by the TAC Co-Chair and will be vetted by the Business Office to confirm their status as a trainee.
- Identify a trainee or trainees (In the past, it has been useful to recruit a trainee located at the meeting site), or the TAC co-chairs may elect themselves, to draft a T-shirt design and ensure that they understand the guidelines for T-shirt design. Avoid designs that will be costly to produce or that use trademarked/copyrighted materials. Use brightly colored fabric for the shirts printed for the trainee volunteers so they stand out. T-shirt designs (2-3 unique designs) must be presented for approval at the winter meeting of the Board of Directors, with a final version submitted to the Business Office no later than 3 months prior to the meeting. The proceeds of the T-shirts, less the cost of production, are used to help support the LEMTTF.

January

- Send thank you letters to LEMTTF contributors. A letter should also be sent to Mrs. Ewing. Examples of previous letters may be requested from the TAC Chair. Propose a list of trainees, plus some alternates, to fill the slots of retiring members of TAC and submit the list to the Vice President for his/her consideration. The list should provide broad geographical, expertise, gender, and ethnic representation.

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- Attend the Winter board meeting. Nominate LEMTTF, TML and RRS coordinators for membership in the TAC. Submit T-shirt designs to the Board of Directors for selection and approval.

February

- Compile all nominee packets for junior trainee representative to the Board and send it to the Business Office. The Business Office will confirm trainee their status and add the nominations to the rest of the ballot. The Junior Trainee Representative will notify all nominees of election outcome via phone. The newly elected representative should be invited to help with the annual meeting activities and to attend the summer Board meetings (attendance at the pre-meeting is optional; **attendance at the post meeting is required**). Send the final t-shirt designs to the Business Office. The Business Office will be in charge of negotiating costs with a local printing company and organizing the production and shipment (if necessary) of all t-shirts.

March

- Begin planning for the Trainee Booth at the Annual Meeting. Check with the Business Office to determine exhibitor space layout for that year. Determine which activities/services will be offered at the Booth. Ideas in the past have included the following; 1. Distribute LEMTTF checks to grantees. 2. Encourage trainees to sign the Volunteer interest sign-up sheet for future SSR service. 3. Courtesy laptop access for SSR placement service. 4. Survey or quiz, could hand out small gift in return. 5. Comment box. 6. Flyers with SSR membership info and/or list of trainee activities at the meeting (like a pocket guide). 7. Picture-board introduction to TAC members. 8. Raffle for items the Business Office may be able to purchase with rewards points or donated items.

May

- The TAC Co-Chair should send the newly elected representative a copy of the TAC SOP and discuss TAC responsibilities with him/her. Invite the rep-elect to help with the Trainee Booth or other activities. Also, include the rep-elect on all TAC communications so they can learn how the committee is operating.
- Welcome the incoming TAC members and make sure they have seen the SOP of their assigned committee. Let them know they are welcome to participate in the TAC meeting during the annual meeting. Encourage the liaisons to introduce themselves to the chair of their committee and ask the date, time and location of the committee meeting that will take place during the annual SSR meeting.
- Check the meeting program and work with the Business Office to identify potential times to hold the TAC Meeting during the annual meeting. Contact TAC members via email (including incoming members) to schedule a time and send them an agenda. This meeting is the time for you to begin transitioning into your new role as TAC Chair (which officially begins at the SSR Business Meeting at the end of the annual meeting) and to communicate with continuing and incoming TAC members.

June

- Junior and Senior trainee representatives must attend the summer board meeting prior to the annual SSR meeting. Attendance of the newly elected representative is not required but welcomed. All three trainee representatives need to attend the Business Meeting at the end of the Annual Meeting where leadership officially changes over. The newly installed trainee representatives must then attend the post-Annual Meeting Board Meeting.

Contact the Business Office prior to the annual meeting to confirm availability of supplies for the Trainee Booth.

150 During exhibitor set-up period, work with the TAC Chair to set up the TAC booth with access to the placement
151 service web site.
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153 **Trainee Affairs Booth and Placement Service:** Ensure that the booth is up and ready. Trainee representatives
154 should take turns with members of TAC to be at the booth and provide information about TAC, SSR trainee
155 membership, the Placement Service, LEMTTF grants, and opportunities to serve SSR. Activities or features can be
156 added/removed from the booth depending on TAC's priorities for that year.
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158 • **TAC Meeting:** After the outgoing chair has introduced you as the incoming TAC Chair, outline upcoming events
159 and explain what is expected/encouraged over the coming year. The incoming chair will also introduce new and
160 continuing TAC members serving in similar positions so that the outgoing or continuing members can help
161 incoming members understand their new roles.
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164 • At the end of the meeting the TAC Chair and Co-Chair should take down the booth display. Any sign-up sheets
165 sign-up sheets and/or comments provided in the comment/suggestion box need to be scanned and saved
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Responsibilities of the Senior Trainee Representative / TAC Chair

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July

- Begin brainstorming Trainee Forum topics for next year’s annual meeting. The TAC Chair is responsible for choosing a topic and inviting the speaker(s). The representative is free to consult with the rest of the TAC and others for input about potential topics. It is best to contact the Program Chair early to secure space within the Program. The Program chair may also want to help with developing the topic and selecting speakers, etc . The topic, speakers and, if necessary, a budget must be approved by the Board of Directors at the Winter Board Meeting, typically held in February. If approved, the TAC Chair is responsible for inviting the speaker(s) and publicizing the forum. You should follow up with the Program Committee Chair to confirm or arrange for a time slot for the forum. The TAC Chair needs to provide the Business Office with the names of the confirmed speaker(s) so that the office can send the speaker(s) the pertinent meeting information. If the speakers are not members of the SSR, funds for speaker(s)' travel must be approved by the Board of Directors, and travel arrangements must be coordinated with the Business Office. Recruiting SSR members that already attend the meeting saves money and showcases our wonderful members!

August

- Begin writing the Fall newsletter. Approximately 2 months in advance of publication of the newsletter, the editor of the newsletter will contact all chairs to ask for articles. The deadline for submission of articles is generally the second Friday of the month before publication. It is the responsibility of the TAC Chair to use the newsletter to pass on any information that is of interest and importance to the trainee members. Previous newsletters are available on the SSR website for reference.

September/October

- Confirm with the TAC Co-Chair that the call for nominations for Trainee Representative will be distributed to the membership.

November

- Compose a request for donations to raise money for the LEMTTF grant and send it to the Business Office for distribution.

December

- Prepare an article for the Winter newsletter.

January

- Work with the TML Coordinator to begin planning the event. (Appendix D).
- Check in with TVS Chair to make sure a call for volunteers will be sent out with the call for abstracts and that the TVS co-chairs are beginning to organize volunteer tasks (Appendix C).
- Provide the Business Office with the information they will need for SSR meeting pre-registration forms (name and contact info for LEMTTF, TML, roommate referral service coordinators, the T-shirt design, information on the

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trainee forum if pre-registration will be require, etc). Prepare the Winter Board report. All requests for funds (food/refreshments for the Trainee Forum, printing of booth supplies, flyers, raffle prizes etc) must be approved by the board in advance. You will receive an e-mail from the President asking for the report. It is the responsibility of the Senior Trainee Representative to write the report and send copies to the Junior Trainee Representative, the TAC advisors, the President, and the Business Office. The report should contain information about the previous year's placement service, travel fund, forum, and T-shirt sales. The report should also request board approval of the trainee forum speaker(s) and allocation of money for the trainee travel fund and T-shirt production. This information can be obtained directly from trainee representatives. Additionally, the report should contain any additional information that requires Board approval. Previous reports are available on the SSR web site.

February

- **Winter Board Meeting:** Both the Senior and Junior trainee representatives are required to attend the meeting. The Senior Representative will present the TAC report. Both representatives can voice their opinion but will share a single vote on Board actions. Notify the T-shirt Design Coordinator of the approved T-shirt design and inform them that the final design must be sent to the Business Office by the end of Febuary.

March

- Confirm with the TAC Co-Chair that all nomination packets are ready, that the trainee members have been vetted by the Business Office, and that trainee rep ballots are scheduled to be sent with the SSR election ballots.
- Touch base with the TML coordinator to see if they need any help.
- If a trainee mixer will take place at the annual meeting, follow-up with the TAC Co-Chair to ensure that a trainee on the Local Arrangements Committee has agreed to help organize it.

April

- Prepare article for Spring newsletter.
- Touch base with LEMTTF Coordinator to check on progress (guidelines in appendix B).

May

- Finalize plans for the TML. The TAC Chair should contact the TML Coordinator to ensure they have received confirmation from the mentors. The coordinator needs to send the finalized list of mentors to the Business Office no later than May 15. Confirm that the mentor-request form has been sent to trainees who pre-registered for the event.
- Confirm with the LEMTTF Coordinator and the Business Office that the travel awards have been or are ready to be distributed.

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- Write the Trainee Report for the Summer Board Meeting. The Summer report contains information about what has been accomplished since the Winter Board meeting and preliminary information regarding the Annual Meeting.

July: Annual Meeting

- Finalize the annual meeting arrangements. The TAC chair and co-chair should contact the business office, the LAC, and the other TAC members to ensure everything is set for the meeting. Publicize the Trainee Forum using an email invitation via the Business Office to all trainees.
- **Summer Board Meeting:** Both trainee representatives must attend the Summer meeting. The newly elected trainee representative is invited to attend the meeting but attendance is not required. The outgoing representative presents a final report and introduces the new representative.
- **Trainee Affairs Booth and Placement Service:** Ensure that the booth is up and ready. Trainee representatives should take turns with members of TAC to be at the booth and provide information about TAC, SSR trainee membership, the Placement Service, LEMTTF grants, and opportunities to serve SSR. Activities or features can be added/removed from the booth depending on TAC's priorities for that year.
- **TAC Meeting:** The TAC Chair will welcome the newly elected trainee representative, recap the year's activities and turn the meeting over to the incoming TAC Chair.
- **SSR Business Meeting:** The TAC Chair, Co-Chair and newly elected Trainee Representative must attend the SSR Business Meeting that occurs on the last day of the meeting. It is at this meeting that the transitions to past chair, chair, and co-chair occur. At the business meeting, the outgoing TAC Chair presents a final report on the number of participants at the luncheon, the forum, and on the placement service. The outgoing chair also thanks all of the trainee helpers and introduces the incoming co-chair and chair.

300 **Appendix A: Guidelines for Organizing the Trainee - Mentor Luncheon (TML)**

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302 The TML Coordinator shall be recruited and appointed by the TAC Co-Chair to organize the luncheon. The TML Coordinator
303 is responsible for choosing approximately 25 SSR scientists to participate in the luncheon, inviting the scientists to the
304 luncheon, sending out pre-registration forms to trainees, and assigning which trainee eats with which mentor.

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306 January/February

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- 308 • Contact the previous year’s coordinator to obtain detailed information and suggestions about TML.
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- 310 • Contact the SSR Business Office to introduce yourself. The Office will provide helpful feedback and instructions.
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- 312 • Contact the chair of the Local Arrangements Committee (LAC) and make sure they know that the TML has
- 313 historically drawn around 200 people. Coordinate with the LAC and Business Office to identify suitable facilities for
- 314 the TML.
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- 316 • Contact several trainees, faculty, and Board members for suggestions of Members who they feel would facilitate a
- 317 good discussion. It is helpful to choose a diverse group of scientists including people in academia, industry, and
- 318 government. Also include the SSR President, trainee forum speakers, visiting speakers, award winners, and mini-
- 319 symposium speakers, fill in as needed. The coordinator should initially contact only 25 mentors but generate a
- 320 larger list of 35-40 mentors in case of declinations.
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322 March

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- 324 • Send out letters/e-mails inviting the SSR scientists to participate as mentors. The TAC Chairs will have a template
- 325 of SSR letterhead. The TML Coordinator should contact additional members as needed. When a mentor consents
- 326 to participate, the Coordinator should respond to confirm the acceptance, thank the mentor, and request a
- 327 biographical sketch.

328 April

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- 330 • Provide the Business Office with a list of the 25 participating mentors including name, affiliation, area of research,
- 331 qualifications (MD, PhD, etc), and biographical sketch.
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- 333 • The Business Office will create a website where trainees can review mentor biographical sketches and indicate
- 334 their selection on the mentor choice form. The TML coordinator must ensure that the website contains the correct
- 335 information and supply suggested changes if necessary. The web site must be set to time stamp requests, so that
- 336 preference can be given to early requestors.
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338 June-July

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- 340 • Contact the TVS co-chairs and request a specific number of volunteers you to assist with the TML.
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- 342 • The TML Coordinator will send a reminder email to those who have not completed their mentor choice form.
- 343 Trainees who do not respond can be assigned to tables randomly or based on interests indicated on their meeting
- 344 registration forms. Once the submission deadline has passed (no less than four weeks before the annual meeting,
- 345 set by the TML Coordinator with help from the Business Office), the coordinator must assign trainees to the
- 346 mentors and notify the trainees and mentors of their assignments.
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- 348 • Coordinator should send trainees a reminder e-mail with the time, location of the TML and of their mentor
- 349 assignment two weeks prior to the annual meeting.

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During the Annual Meeting:

- During the meeting, a list of the mentor-trainee matches should be posted in the information area by the on-site Business Office and outside of the room where the lunch will be held. If there are still seats available for the luncheon, a list of available mentors can be left with the Business Office at the meeting, so that additional Trainees can sign up on-site.
- It is helpful to have the table numbers easily identifiable and to have place cards for all of the trainees. Work with the SSR Business Office in advance to have materials printed.
- There should be volunteers collecting tickets at the door, as well as directing trainees and mentors to the appropriate tables.

After the Annual Meeting:

- The TML Coordinator should contact each mentor, thank them for his or her participation, and ask for recommendations to improve the TML for the next year.

Appendix B: Guidelines for the Larry Ewing Memorial Trainee Travel Fund (LEMTTF) Coordinator

A LEMTTF Coordinator shall be appointed by the TAC Co-Chair to organize the LEMTTF application and granting process.

November

- The LEMTTF Coordinator shall work with the business office to compose an e-mail to be sent to trainees directing them to a website detailing the procedure and eligibility criteria for applying for a LEMTTF grant at the SSR website. It is the responsibility of the coordinator to ensuring that the information in the website is both current and accurate.
- Applications to the LEMTTF should be submitted on a Google form listed on the SSR website. In addition to ensuring that the information regarding where to send applications is accurate, it is suggested that a pre-directed fax coversheet be provided such that faxes do not get lost within departmental offices. Applications must be received by a designated date (traditionally about a month and a half prior to the annual meeting).
- Applicants must be active SSR trainee members (membership fee paid and mentor signature on file by the due date of abstract submission), scheduled to present a platform or poster presentation at the annual meeting, and demonstrate financial need.
- Once an application is submitted, the LEMTTF Coordinator will e-mail each applicant to confirm receipt of the application. At that time, if needed, the coordinator may ask for missing details or documents.
- The LEMTTF Coordinator will document all applicant information in an electronic file that periodically will be sent to the SSR office to confirm eligibility on a biweekly basis.

April

Following the application submission deadline, the LEMTTF Coordinator should contact the business office to ascertain how much money is available for the grants. If the business office is unable to provide the value of the available funds, the coordinator will need to contact grantees and indicate that the final grant amount will be made available at a later date.

Funds are awarded at the LEMTTF Coordinator’s discretion in coordination with the TAC chair and co-chair. The monetary award value for each applicant should be determined using the LEMTTF rubric and (below). In addition to distance travelled, those travelling from a developing country (as determined by the World Health Organization) receive an additional \$200 to support their attendance to the annual meeting. To calculate the amount of grant authorized for each trainee, we propose to use a simple algorithm in which a trainee submits his/her application for an LEMTTF grant.

$$\text{LEMTTF grant \$} = (\text{category \# table})(100) + (\text{WHO status}/1)(200)$$

WHO status → Developing country=1; Developed country=0

Example- A trainee traveling from China would get the following:

China # on table=6; WHO code=1

$$\text{LEMTTF \$} = (6)(100) + (1/1)(200) = \$800$$

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The coordinator is encouraged to consult with the business office, and/or the TAC chair and co-chair regarding the final amounts to be given before finalizing the grants.

Travel category	Average distance relative to North America	Value of award
1. North America (local)	0 km / 0 miles	\$100
2. North America (other)	0 km / 0 miles	\$200
3. Central America	5,000 km / 3,000 miles	\$300
4. Europe	6,000 km / 4,000 miles	\$400
5. South America	8,000 km / 5,000 miles	\$500
6. Asia	10,000 km / 6,000 miles	\$600
7. Africa/Australia/Oceania	14,000 km / 8,000 miles	\$700

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July

- The LEMTTF Coordinator will contact the SSR office and the coordinator is responsible for notifying the applicants regarding the status of their application and to provide the Business Office with the final list of recipients and amounts no later than three weeks prior to the annual meeting

At the Annual Meeting

- Grant notice letters may be held at the registration desk or at the TAC booth for pick up at the Annual Meeting.

425 **Appendix C: Guidelines for the Roommate Referral Service Coordinator**

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The roommate referral service is offered to SSR meeting registrants to assist in identification of potential roommates for the annual meeting. The RRS Coordinator is appointed by and reports to the TAC Co-Chair. The coordinator is responsible for composing an e-mail (obtain previous messages for reference) announcing the service and having the business office send it out. This message should direct interested trainees to contact the RRS Coordinator with their information (name, gender, rooming preferences, et cetera). The coordinator will then be responsible for maintaining a spread sheet with this information. Once several interested trainees are on the list (or after a chosen deadline) the coordinator should e-mail trainees the list of possible matches. Trainees should be advised to contact one another and then notify the coordinator to remove them from the list as they identify roommates. The list can then be sent periodically as needed to the remaining trainees with these updates and additions so that unpaired trainees know who is still available up until the annual meeting. The RRS Coordinator should give an update as to use of the service at the annual meeting.

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