

THE ANIMAL BEHAVIOR SOCIETY STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2017 AND BEYOND.



MISSION

The Animal Behavior Society (ABS) is a non-partisan, non-profit, 501(3)(c) professional organization dedicated to promoting and advancing the scientific study of animal behavior. Members of ABS study behavior across all levels of biological organization, under natural and controlled conditions, and using descriptive and experimental approaches. Together with its sister organization, the Association for the Study of Animal Behaviour (ASAB), ABS edits the field's flagship scientific journal, *Animal Behaviour*. ABS also sponsors annual research conferences, educational programs, outreach activities, student research grant competitions, and a professional certification program.

CORE VALUES

ABS includes world experts in animal behavior research.

Animal behavior occupies a central role in the biological, psychological, and anthropological sciences. Understanding behavior provides unique insights into the fields of evolution, ecology, physiology, perception, cognition, and the neurosciences. Advances in animal behavior research bear directly on open questions about human behavior, evolution, development, health, and the environment.

ABS members are passionate about teaching, outreach, and mentorship.

We recognize that animal behavior offers, for students of all ages, an exciting entry point into the world of science and the scientific method. Animal behavior studies provide unusually compelling illustrations of how hypotheses are constructed and tested.

ABS maintains a long-term commitment to diversity, equality, and inclusion.

We firmly believe that our society is enriched by a broad membership. We celebrate the representation and contributions of diverse nationalities, cultures, religions, ethnicities, races, genders, ages, sexual orientations, gender expressions, and physical abilities.



Working towards a better understanding of animal behavior

SOCIETY CHALLENGES AND GOALS

Recruit and Retain a Diverse Membership.

ABS is the principal society of its kind in the Americas, but current membership does not fully mirror hemispheric cultural and ethnic diversity. We seek mechanisms to fix this imbalance. We are especially interested in enhancing our connections to and partnerships with institutions serving traditionally marginalized communities. These goals might build upon several society programs already in place including the Diversity committee, the Latin American student travel award, the Latin American affairs committee, and the Charles Henry Turner award program.

Advocate More Strongly for Animal Behavior Science.

Research in animal behavior is funded by a diverse array of public and private foundations and governmental agencies. Despite growing costs to support students and research activities, funding levels have been stagnant or falling relative to inflation. We seek new mechanisms for interacting with key stakeholders to convey our passion for animal behavior research, and to describe the broad value our research has for the general public. Towards this end we also seek to strengthen partnerships in communicating science with allied scientific societies such as the American Society for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and the Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology (SICB).

Enhance Outreach and Teaching Efforts.

Communication strategies in science outreach and education are evolving very quickly, and we seek to be more proactive in embracing new platforms and approaches. Towards this end we are in the process of establishing new Public Affairs Officer and Graduate Student Representative positions on the society's Executive Committee, to help implement and coordinate new communication efforts via blogs, social media, videos, and podcasts. We would also like to establish a new "media fellowship" for one or more tech-savvy graduate students, to assist with such efforts. Our society website could also be revamped to make it more public-friendly and interactive, perhaps including summaries of recent research that would be a go-to source for journalists. Finally, we could work to provide a web-based clearinghouse for teaching materials and curricula that could be shared among members.

Support ABS Members.

Our society seeks new mechanisms to enhance membership value, in directions guided by member feedback. A major ongoing goal is to expand our student grants competition, which has become a significant source of funding for ABS graduate student research. To help ensure positive experiences at our conferences, we are implementing an attendee code of conduct. To enhance the voice of our society's graduate students, we are also in the process of adding to the executive committee an elected graduate student representative. It would be helpful to develop and implement new professional development workshops and mentorships programs, and to help our members form collaborative networks. It is also imperative that we maintain low meeting costs, and attempt to schedule our meetings at times and in locations where a majority of members can attend and participate, which might include options for remote access to the annual meeting. Finally, there is room for improvement in facilitating interactions among members with basic versus applied research emphases.

CONTACT US:

The Animal Behavior Society

2111 Chestnut Ave, Suite 145 | Glenview, Illinois 60025, USA

info@animalbehaviorsociety.org

Phone: (312) 893-6585



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