

**Title:**

Student Subsection of Education Section Undergraduate Travel Assistance Award

**Contact:**

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**Project description:**

Membership in the American Fisheries Society (AFS) is decreasing (Wuellner and Jackson 2012). This decline is likely a result of decreased recruitment and retention of new members, particularly undergraduate students who may lack travel assistance to attend the Annual Meeting.

Accordingly, we propose to continue a travel assistance award for undergraduate students interested in fisheries or a closely related aquatic science discipline. The Undergraduate Travel Assistance Award (UTAA) provides monetary support for undergraduate students with financial need demonstrating involvement in student and professional organizations. The UTAA promotes increased undergraduate involvement in the AFS Parent Society, the Education Section, and the Student Subsection by providing opportunities for learning and networking at the Annual Meeting. As such, this award is directly related to the second and third objectives of the Education Section (i.e., promote exchange of education information, techniques, and materials among educators, and foster improved communication and information exchange among fisheries educators, employers, and students). The UTAA complements the existing John E. Skinner Award by providing travel assistance to students that are unlikely to be competitive for the more merit-based Skinner Award.

The UTAA is intended to defray costs associated with attending the annual Annual Meeting. Travel awards in the amount of \$500.00 (intended to be used for early registration, Parent Society membership,

and per diem for 5 days) will be given to four deserving undergraduate students.

The UTAA will be administered primarily by the Student Subsection with support of the Education Section. Applicants will be judged according to their reasons for attending the meeting, their involvement (past, current, and anticipated future) in student and professional organizations (including AFS). We do not wish to determine whether one student's financial need is greater than another's and therefore assume that all applicants have similar financial need. The award selection committee will consist of Student Subsection Division representatives and at least one non-student AFS member. Award recipients will be polled after each Annual Meeting to gather feedback on the award and for the selection committee to identify potential areas of improvement. Continued AFS involvement of awardees will also be monitored using membership directories.

The UTAA is designed to complement the Skinner Award by providing travel assistance to undergraduate students that would otherwise lack the financial means to attend the Annual Meeting. Therefore, undergraduates that receive full Skinner Awards will not be eligible for the UTAA. However, undergraduates that receive honorable mention Skinner Awards are eligible for the UTAA.

#### References

Wuellner, M.R., and D.C. Jackson. 2012. Population characteristics of AFS membership: special focus on the Millennial Generation of fisheries professionals. *Fisheries* 37:60-65.

#### **Time to completion:**

Applications will be due annually by June 1.

#### **Amount requested:**

We request \$2000.00 annually for the next three years.

#### **Other funding sources:**

At this time, none.

#### **How will the contribution of the Education Section be acknowledged?**

The Education Section will be acknowledged in on the Student Subsection Facebook page and website and at the Subsection Business Meeting as a

contributor to the 2014 UTAA. Award recipients will be required to attend Student Subsection Business Meeting and the student colloquium. In addition, they will be encouraged to attend the Education Section Business Meeting and participate in all student activities throughout the meeting (e.g. student mentor lunch, volunteering).

**Disposition of unused funds:**

Leftover funds will be used the following year or returned to the Education Section.