



AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY

153rd Annual Meeting

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The Future is Now: Supporting Students and Early Career Professionals in AFS

Supported by:

Equal Opportunities Section
International Fisheries Section

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Abstract:

Student and Early Career Professional (S&ECP) involvement in AFS is critical for the growth of our society. However, at all levels, S&ECP membership and involvement has declined. The goal of this two-part symposium is to support the success and retainment of S&ECP and identify a vision for AFS that is engaging and rewarding for this upcoming generation of fisheries.

The first half of the symposium will consist of a first-time presenters session. Presenting to a room of seasoned professionals can be intimidating to S&ECP. This portion of the symposium is focused on the needs and growth of first-time presenters (i.e., feedback, discussion, supportive, a low stress environment, minimizing nervousness). A first-time presenter space allows for S&ECP to form deeper connections with one another and steer the future of fisheries science.

The second session will include a facilitated discussion centered on the voices of S&ECP and their opinions on involvement in AFS. This provides a safe space for all S&ECP individuals to openly discuss their needs from AFS. Discussion topics were determined through the synthesis of survey answers and interest areas of S&ECP conducted within the North Central Division (NCD). The discussion will be as follows:

- Do you feel connected and supported within AFS?
- What are barriers to your AFS involvement?
- What are your thoughts about DEIJA and its role in fisheries?
- Do you feel AFS is relevant and what has/would motivate you to join? At what levels?

These topics will be met with free flowing discussion and invitation for individuals to share their thoughts. Students and Early Career Professionals are the future of AFS, and should be given a voice within the society to better communicate their vision for what this society could become. In order to see these talks come to fruition, the discussions will be summarized to create actionable next steps to better serve the S&ECP members of AFS. The discussions will be accessible for all AFS members via the Equal Opportunities Section news and the SECP subsection website.