

AFS Special Committee on Educational Requirements Status Report
Presented to the AFS Administration Section
May 16, 2013

This AFS special committee was established in late 2012 by President John Boreman to accomplish the following tasks:

1. Assemble a list of North American universities offering undergraduate and graduate degrees in fisheries-related disciplines (e.g., fisheries science, fisheries biology, fisheries ecology, fisheries management, fisheries policy, and fisheries economics). Publish the list on the AFS website.
2. Survey major employers hiring graduates with degrees in fisheries-related disciplines in the next 5-10 years to determine what coursework those graduates will be expected to have taken that would be most germane. Publish survey results in *Fisheries*.
3. Compare coursework expectations of the employers with the current coursework requirements of a selected subset of universities offering fisheries degrees. If the comparison indicates a misalignment, recommend ways in which an alignment can be made, which could range from simple advice to the colleges and universities to an accreditation program administered by AFS (or something in between).
4. Compare coursework expectations resulting from the survey to degree requirements for certification as a Fisheries Professional, and recommend changes that would bring degree requirements into alignment.
5. Compare coursework requirements to educational requirement standards for grade-level entry into the 480 job series of the US OPM, and recommend changes that would bring the OPM standards into alignment. If possible, perform a similar comparison for federal employment standards in Canada and Mexico.
6. Publish the results of the recommendations developed under Tasks #3-5 as a series of articles in *Fisheries*.

The Committee has had several conference calls and is actively working on tasks 1 and 2 through separate subcommittees:

1. List of Schools – A spreadsheet format to gather information on schools has been established. There will be separate spreadsheets for traditional fisheries programs and related programs like marine science and environmental science. Each subcommittee member is working on the states and provinces within each AFS Division. Canada and Mexico are included. They are using a variety of techniques to gather this information. Their next conference call to review results will be May 30.
2. Employer Survey – Goals and objectives for the survey have been established. The subcommittee decided that the AFS member list can serve as the sample frame. An initial draft of a survey has just been developed. It will be reviewed on a subcommittee conference call on May 16. At their mid-year meeting, the AFS Governing Board approved up to \$2000 for survey expenses.

Work on tasks #3-6 will likely not start until after the AFS 2013 meeting. After establishment, the special committee found out that an AFS 2013 symposium titled “Preparing Students for the Challenges Ahead:

Will Our New Recruits Continue Meeting the Needs of Our Current Employers” was being planned. There were not enough presentations for a full symposium, but at least six presentations will be grouped as a mini symposium during the morning of September 11. The special committee will provide a presentation titled “AFS Special Committee on Educational Requirements: What the Society is Doing to Help Fisheries Students Find Work.” Two organizers of this AFS 2013 effort have joined in on committee efforts.