

Society for Range Management

Recommendations for Meeting Organizers to Improve Diversity and Inclusion at Annual Meetings

Adopted by the SRM Board of Directors, July 16, 2019

Introduction

The SRM Diversity Task Force was established in 2016, in response to member identified concerns brought before the SRM Board of Directors to have a more inclusive society. The Diversity Task Force was charged by the SRM Board of Directors to “Prepare a briefing document that can be used by Annual Meeting Planning Committees to encourage participation from underrepresented individuals and/or groups in plenary panels and other Annual Meeting functions (e.g., symposia, field tours)”. These recommendations were developed by the Diversity Task Force and adopted by the SRM Board of Directors.

This document should not be interpreted as requirements but a list of recommendations that can be utilized to help meeting organizers be inclusive of a wider diversity of people, beliefs and backgrounds. The unique nature of our profession means that meetings will often take place in rural or outdoor settings. While some conditions may present challenges, the Society’s commitment to diversity and inclusion does require a good-faith effort in all Society-sponsored activities.

Many of these guidelines can also be applied to SRM Section meetings. Although Section meetings are often held in smaller venues with limited facilities, consideration of these items can help meeting organizers develop a more inclusive and welcoming meeting.

Preface

Diversity refers to differences among people concerning their origins, life experiences, and views, and include individual differences due to gender, ability, socioeconomic status, age, race, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, religion, occupation, discipline and other social differences.

Inclusion means accepting and supporting individuals or groups that are different from one’s self so that everyone feels welcomed, valued, affirmed, and invited to participate fully and actively in the organization.

Commitment to diversity and inclusion comes from the understanding that diversity contributes to organizational excellence, and inclusion is an ongoing process that must be embedded in all aspects of organizational structure, culture and function. As such, increasing diversity and inclusion within SRM and our annual meetings calls for SRM leaders, meeting organizers and members to commit to continuing self-assessment and self-education to achieve a more diverse and inclusive professional society. This document is based on several sources including 1) feedback at SRM diversity and inclusion listening sessions, 2) SPARC (2017) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Learnings & Next Steps: An Opencon Report on Conference

Planning, 3) Sardelis et al. (2017) Ten strategies to reduce gender inequality at scientific conferences, and 4) input from the SRM diversity task force and other SRM members.

Overall Diversity and Inclusion

- Appoint a diversity and inclusion committee to coordinate with other AM committees in identifying opportunities to improve diversity and inclusion.
- A list of diversity and inclusion resources and recommended readings is included at the end of this document.
- Acknowledgement of indigenous land territory and peoples during the conference opening when appropriate.

Representation

- Meeting Organizing Committees should attempt to include representation across gender identities, underrepresented groups, diverse racial backgrounds, disciplines, occupations, etc.
- Program includes presenters from a wide range of contexts.
- Actively solicit participation from underrepresented groups.

Inclusive Programming

- When organizing plenary sessions and symposia, consider the composition of the speakers. Do they represent a diversity of perspectives, disciplines, backgrounds, genders and ethnicities?
- There are nearly always highly qualified individuals from a variety of backgrounds who can be invited to speak on a given topic. However, it is important to invite people who have a significant contribution to make to the session based on their unique knowledge, experience, and perspectives and not because they are being asked to represent a particular demographic group (i.e. the “token” woman on the panel).
- Consider a diversity and inclusion themed symposium or session.
- Offer diversity/inclusion training workshops to help members develop cross-cultural competency, and greater awareness, knowledge and skills.
- Organizers could seek input from experts in the diversity and inclusion field on programs, speakers and themes before conferences.
- Alert plenary speakers to SRM’s Inclusion Principles so speakers are aware of the audience.
- Incorporate participant input into program choices.

Facilities and Accessibility

- Ensure facilities are ADA compliant and that trade-show, meeting room, and poster sessions are set up to allow room for a wheelchair to navigate.

- Keep hotels and conference facilities in one venue whenever possible to make it easier for mobility-impaired participants to participate.
- Provide ample breaks during the day for those with health considerations.
- Provide resources for hearing and visually impaired participants to obtain sign-language or vision interpretation (including for tours, etc.) when requested.
- Provide referrals for language interpreters and/or allow conference participants to indicate their ability/willingness to translate for others (e.g. Ribbons that say “Hablo Español” etc.).
- Include questions on accessibility needs in the registration form.
- Offer option of discussing accessibility needs over the phone.

Guidelines for Professional Behavior at SRM Sponsored Activities

- Adopt the “SRM Guidelines for Professional Behavior at SRM Sponsored Activities” that address conduct, teacher/judge conduct, overall professional conduct, guidelines for professional communication, and explicit definition and consequences for harassing/bullying behavior. These guidelines include a zero-tolerance policy for intentional discriminatory behavior based on identity, and zero-tolerance of physical, verbal, sexual or any form of harassment.
- Ensure meeting attendees read and acknowledge this code of conduct during the registration process and is displayed on the SRM website or sent to all conference attendees before the event.

Inclusive Media and Engagement

- Microphone is used for all presenters and Q&A sessions for both speakers and those asking questions.
- Facilitators monitor who is asking questions to insure participation of all attendees.
- Allow alternative ways to participate in Q&As (e.g. online, via twitter, note-cards).
- Send presenters guidelines on easy to read slides (font, color, composition etc.).
- Live-stream or offer recordings or slides after the event.

Inclusive Culture/Environment/Activities

- Ask participants their preferred pronouns at registration and have the option to include on name tags.
- New member breakfast.
- New member mentor/ambassador.
- Develop non-competitive student activities, including some that facilitate interactions between students from different cultural and language backgrounds (e.g. Native, Mexican, other international and other domestic students).
- Provide and identify gender neutral/family restrooms.
- Provide space for prayer/reflection/retreat.

Parent Accommodations

- Provide lactation rooms.
- Provide on-site daycare (for infants and toddlers) and/or referrals to reputable and convenient off-site day-care or day-camp facilities.
- If no on-site daycare, provide a family room with toys, games, couch etc.
- Allow two career couples who are sharing childcare duties during the conference to share a single full-price registration, provided only one person attends at a time while the other is caring for the child/children.

Dietary

- Include questions about dietary needs in the registration form.
- Provide food options for vegetarians (no meat) and vegans (no animal products, including dairy).
- Provide options for people with food allergies (gluten-free, dairy-free, nut-free).
- Provide food options to meet requirements of major faith groups (i.e. non-pork and meatless options; kosher options).
- Make sure buffet-style meals are clearly labelled.
- Ensure water is easily accessible.

Venue

- Venue has elevator access, accessible entrances, ramps and clear, legible signs.
- Venue has gender neutral/family washrooms or is open to designating specific washrooms as gender neutral.
- Designate a maternity/lactation room.
- Designate a prayer/reflection/quiet room.

Transit

- Provide clear text and image instructions on how to get to the conference venue and other relevant locations (hotels, etc).
- Make sure instructions are print friendly.

Diversity and Inclusion Resources for Annual Meeting Organizers

Favaro, B. et al. 2016. Your science conference should have a code of conduct. *Frontiers in Marine Science* 3(103): 1-4.

Sardelis, S., S. Oester, and M. Liboiron. 2017. Ten strategies to reduce gender inequality at scientific conferences. *Frontiers in Marine Science* 4(231): 1-6.

SPARC. 2017. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Learnings & Next Steps: An Opencon Report on Conference Planning. <https://sparcopen.github.io/opencon-dei-report/>.