

## **COLUMN: STUDENTS' ANGLE**

# **Education, Networking, and Fun: A preview of student activities at the 2008 AFS Annual Meeting in Ottawa**

The AFS Annual Meeting has always been a great opportunity for students to learn, share ideas, develop connections, and most of all, to have fun. Education, networking, and fun are the three predominant themes that we wish to highlight for the exciting student activities that are planned for the AFS Annual Meeting in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, 17–21 August 2008. The meeting will provide students with the opportunity to deliver and observe conference presentations, participate in student activities, and best of all, socialize and enjoy the great entertainment that Ottawa has to offer. This column aims to highlight these opportunities and to provide a “sneak peek” into the fun and exciting student activities that are planned for AFS Ottawa 2008 and to provide information to ensure a smooth travel experience.

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## PLANNING YOUR TRIP TO OTTAWA

International travel can sometimes be challenging, but the information below should help guide visitors on planning their travel to Ottawa. There are several options for accommodations in Ottawa's downtown. Students may choose to stay at Westin, which is the meeting hotel. Other nearby hotels include the Novotel or the historic Chateau Laurier, although there are some cheaper alternatives if you don't mind walking (see Table 1 for lodging information). In addition, the University of Ottawa offers additional student-friendly accommodations. Please refer to the meeting website for lodging updates.

Visiting citizens or permanent residents of the United States will require a passport, Nexus card (cards designed for those who frequently travel between the United States and Canada; see Table 1 for the link to the Nexus card website), or other applicable ID upon their return to the United States. Kiosks for Nexus card holders are available at the Ottawa, Toronto, and Montreal airports. For specific details on U.S. passport requirements, please refer to the U.S. Department of State website (Table 1). Canadian border requirements are detailed at the Canadian Border Service website (Table 1). If you are from a country other than the United States and are not a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident, you will need a valid passport or travel document. A list of countries whose citizens also require visas to enter Canada is provided on the Canada Citizenship and Immigration website (Table 1).

## EDUCATION AND NETWORKING

### Oral Presentations and Posters

Students attend Annual Meetings to learn more about

the fisheries profession and to discuss shared interests with other scientists. Activities planned for the Ottawa 2008 meeting are designed to help students do just that. As always, presentation and poster sessions will offer students an opportunity to present their own research and to learn about research being conducted by their colleagues. Dozens of symposia and hundreds of talks are expected, so students may have a difficult time choosing which oral presentations to attend! For the second year in a row, the Annual Meeting will include a symposium for the "Best Student Paper" finalists (see Sutton et al. 2007 for more information on how to qualify for this award). Come learn about the research and experience of other students and learn what it takes to design and deliver a great presentation!

Students who are presenting posters may wish to present a traditional poster or try an exciting new presentation format called a "speed presentation." In this new format, authors are allocated a strictly enforced time slot of three minutes and are permitted only three Microsoft PowerPoint slides to deliver a focused oral presentation that highlights the key points of their poster. This format will be introduced along with the traditional

poster session. The goal of this approach is to provide authors with the opportunity to publicize their posters to a broader audience and to facilitate greater interactions among poster presenters and their audience during the traditional poster session. For students, this is a great chance to share either completed works or "works in progress." Students can gain experience with delivering oral presentations without feeling the pressure of delivering a full-length oral presentation to an audience of experts. Those students wishing to submit a traditional poster for presentation may apply for the "Best Student Poster" award (see Sutton et al. 2007 for a list of qualifications).

## STUDENT DAY IN OTTAWA

A full day of student activities is planned for Tuesday, 19 August. The day starts off with the increasingly popular Student-Mentor Lunch, where students are given the opportunity to dine and converse one-on-one with mentors from industry, government, and academia. Students and mentors will be able to come together to share their experiences and discuss the challenges and opportunities that they have encountered in fisheries science. The Student-Mentor Lunch has

been gaining attention over the past few years, so make sure to take advantage of this intimate networking opportunity. Please check the online meeting registration form (Table 1) for instructions on how to sign up.

After lunch, the Student Subsection of the Education Section will be sponsoring its annual Student Colloquium. This year's topic will be "Employment Opportunities in Canada and the U.S." A panel of experts representing academia, state and federal agencies, and the private sector will be on hand to discuss the job forecast and answer questions on how to find employment within your sector of choice. Five attendees will win a free copy of *The AFS Guide to Fisheries Employment, Second Edition* (Hewitt et al. 2006). Students will have the opportunity to exercise their new-found knowledge of fisheries employment during the Career Fair later that same day. This event brings together industry, government, and academia to educate and recruit students and young professionals. Employers from across North America and beyond will be participating.

Student Day at Ottawa is capped off by the annual Student Social. Located only five minutes away from the conference hotel, the Byward Market offers a lively venue

**Table 1.** List of important websites and resources for planning your trip to AFS Ottawa 2008.

Category	Website
General Conference Information	<a href="http://www.fisheries.org/afs08/index.html">www.fisheries.org/afs08/index.html</a>
Registration	<a href="http://www.fisheries.org/afs08/registration.html">www.fisheries.org/afs08/registration.html</a>
Continuing Education	<a href="http://www.fisheries.org/afs08/continuinged.html">www.fisheries.org/afs08/continuinged.html</a>
Lodging in Ottawa	<a href="http://www.fisheries.org/afs08/lodging.html">www.fisheries.org/afs08/lodging.html</a>
Lodging: Westin Hotel	<a href="http://www.starwoodhotels.com/westin/ottawa">www.starwoodhotels.com/westin/ottawa</a>
Lodging: Novotel	<a href="http://www.novotelottawa.com">www.novotelottawa.com</a>
Lodging: Chateau Laurier	<a href="http://www.fairmont.com/laurier">www.fairmont.com/laurier</a>
Lodging: University of Ottawa	<a href="http://www.uottawa.ca/services/matmgmt/hospitality/index.html">www.uottawa.ca/services/matmgmt/hospitality/index.html</a>
Travel Requirements	<a href="http://www.fisheries.org/afs08/plantrip.html">www.fisheries.org/afs08/plantrip.html</a>
Nexus Card	<a href="http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/prog/nexus">www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/prog/nexus</a>
U.S. Passport Requirements	<a href="http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html">travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html</a>
Canadian Border Requirements	<a href="http://www.cbsa.gc.ca">www.cbsa.gc.ca</a>
Canadian Citizenship and Immigration	<a href="http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/index.asp">www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/index.asp</a>
Travel Awards and Grants	<a href="http://www.fisheries.org/units/edustu/awards.htm">www.fisheries.org/units/edustu/awards.htm</a>
John E. Skinner Memorial Award	<a href="http://www.fisheries.org/units/education/AFS_education_awards.htm">www.fisheries.org/units/education/AFS_education_awards.htm</a>
Equal Opportunities Section	<a href="http://www.fisheries.org/units/eos/">www.fisheries.org/units/eos/</a>
Peter A. Larkin Student Travel Award	<a href="http://www.canadianaquaticresources.org">www.canadianaquaticresources.org</a>
General AFS Information	<a href="http://www.fisheries.org">www.fisheries.org</a>
Complete List of AFS Sections	<a href="http://www.fisheries.org/afs/units.html">www.fisheries.org/afs/units.html</a>
Student Subsection of the Education Section	<a href="http://www.fisheries.org/units/edustu/index.htm">www.fisheries.org/units/edustu/index.htm</a>

for great live music, tasty food, cold beverages (age of majority is 19 in Ontario), and lively conversation. We have booked an entire nightclub and a fun band to keep things hopping. Not only is this event a fun way to catch up with old friends and meet new ones, but academics will be on hand to recruit students for graduate school. As the night draws to a close, students will have the option to peruse (aka "bar hop") around the other great establishments in the market.

### OTHER EDUCATIONAL AND NETWORKING PLATFORMS

The AFS Annual Meeting offers countless opportunities for students to learn more about the profession and AFS. Students may choose to learn new research technology or refine their skills at one of the Continuing Education Workshops (see Table 1 under "General Conference Information"). Opportunities to learn more about and become involved in AFS can be found at the many Section meetings (see Table 1 under "General AFS Information"). And, of course, students are highly encouraged to attend the Student Subsection (Table 1) meeting to provide input on how AFS can better assist students. Workshops and Section meetings often recharge students to become better professionals when they return back to their respective campuses at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting.

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR MORE FUN IN OTTAWA

The downtown core of Ottawa, called the Byward Market, is situated between the scenic Ottawa River and the historic Rideau Canal, recently designated as a World Heritage Site. The geography of Ottawa lends itself to some unique opportunities for students to take advantage of outside of the meeting. With plenty of access to these waterways from downtown by foot, bike, or bus, countless sight-seeing, boat tours and angling opportunities (muskellunge, smallmouth bass) abound. Many fun events are being coordinated by AFS, including the always popular "Spawning Run." Keep an eye on the meeting web site for details and registration information for this and other great activities. Affordable bike rentals can be conveniently made near the conference hotel, allowing students to tour the city of Ottawa, cross the Ottawa River to explore the city of Hull, and explore the scenic Gatineau Park in the province of Québec. Ottawa is home to many of Canada's national museums and galleries, most of which are located within walking distance from the conference hotel. Renowned for its multiculturalism, Byward Market is home to a melange of exotic restaurants and traditional pubs that offer fantastic food and drink options at student-friendly prices. In fact, since Ottawa is home to two universities, much of the downtown area has a distinct student-

friendly atmosphere. For evening socializing, the market has dozens of bustling clubs, pubs, and bars to fit everyone's tastes.

### HOW CAN I AFFORD ALL OF THIS? I'M JUST A POOR STUDENT....

Often students miss out on AFS Annual Meetings due to higher travel costs and lower student incomes. However, there are numerous ways in which students can offset or entirely cover their expenses. Many Sections of AFS offer monetary awards for outstanding students; a complete list of offerings can be found on the "Awards" page of the Student Subsection website (see Table 1 under "Travel Awards and Grants"). The Skinner Award and the Equal Opportunities Section Travel Award are two such sought-after prizes (Table 1). Canadian students should consider applying for the Peter A. Larkin Student Travel Award from the Canadian Aquatic Resources Section (Table 1). Students can also work at the Annual Meeting for pay. Student assistance with A/V-issues and on-site registration is always appreciated and pays up to \$10/hour of work--details will be posted on the meeting web site soon. Students who are looking for persons to share hotel or other travel costs can post their inquiries on the AFS Student Listserv ([students@fisheriessociety.org](mailto:students@fisheriessociety.org)). With all of these possibilities to offset your Ottawa meeting

costs, you really can't afford to miss out on the meeting!

### CONCLUSION

The AFS Annual Meeting in Ottawa is sure to be an event that students will not want to miss. Presentations, student-centered activities, workshops, and meetings will provide students a plethora of educational and networking opportunities. And the amenities of Ottawa are great sources for fun! For more information on this exciting event, please see the AFS Ottawa 2008 web site (Table 1) or contact Michael Donaldson ([mdonald2@connect.carleton.ca](mailto:mdonald2@connect.carleton.ca)) or Melissa Wuellner ([melissa.wuellner@sdstate.edu](mailto:melissa.wuellner@sdstate.edu)). ☺

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