Promotion and Membership Committee

This committee has been making constant efforts to attract members from various parts of the world to make the World Aquaculture Society (WAS) a truly global organization. The membership fee is one of the major hurdles for the developing country individuals to join the society. Even if the individuals are willing to pay the fee, there have been difficulties involved in making payments through a bank. WAS has been examining ways to mitigate such problems and attract more members.

New measures introduced

To avoid problems involved with annual renewal, a five-year membership has been introduced with a 10 percent discount. A good number of people have taken up membership under this category. In order to help the developing country individuals, e-membership has also been introduced. However, the growth of membership under this category has been slow. There are still several communication issues, but with the improvement in the internet service, this category of membership is expected to grow.

The WAS board has also approved the provision of a maximum of six complimentary memberships to the deserving applicants from the developing countries. This membership, once secured, can be renewed up to five years. The Rhode Island University Sea Grant Program in the United States and the Institute of Aquaculture in the United Kingdom have also provided some complimentary membership. The winners of these memberships have been assisting WAS in promoting WAS activities in their area.

China

China, the world’s largest aquaculture producer, hosted the 2002 World Aquaculture Conference in Beijing. The China Society of Fisheries is an affiliate of WAS. Membership from China is small at present and the committee has placed a special emphasis on increasing membership and enhancing the role of WAS in Chinese aquaculture activities. WAS power point presentations and the WAS poster have already been translated into Chinese. Several presentations were also organized in the leading Chinese aquaculture institutions by the two of our committee members, Dr. Junda Lin and Dr. Donghuo Jiang. These individuals recognize that awareness about the society is poor and strong publicity is needed to attract more members from China.

Power point and poster on WAS

The WAS poster and the power point presentation have been translated into various languages and uploaded on the website (www.was.org). Anyone wanting to translate the materials into other languages should contact the WAS Home Office.

Fellow of World Aquaculture Society

The Board of the World Aquaculture Society has proposed establishing a World Aquaculture Society Fellows (WASF) Program to honor outstanding WAS members for their achievements in aquaculture. Fellows will be individuals “who have made outstanding achievements in aquaculture science, industry, outreach or extension as recognized by their peers.” A WASF program will bring a greater level of respectability to WAS since Fellows will provide additional leadership for the Society, and will serve as ambassadors involved closely with the Society’s growth and development. WAS Fellows will serve as distinguished colleagues to whom the WAS and its members can look for guidance as global aquaculture evolves.

Criteria for nomination and selection have been developed based on the suggestions provided by members. The final proposal will be discussed and finalized during World Aquaculture 2009 in Veracruz, Mexico.

Promotion of membership in Africa

The committee made a special effort to organize sessions related to Africa during WAS 2008. An email group has also been established to connect those interested in establishing an African chapter of the WAS. The membership was promoted during the PAFFA (Pan-African Fish and Fisheries Association) conference held in Ethiopia and in the 8th International Symposium on Tilapia in Aquaculture (ISTA) held Egypt during 2008. Dr. Bill Daniels and Dr. Imad Saoud represented WAS in PAFFA and were instrumental in recruiting a large number of members. Dr. Imad Saoud also assisted in the ISTA conference to promote WAS. As a result of these efforts, there are now 70 members from different African countries.

As in other countries, payment of dues is the major challenge to increasing membership in Africa. There is not only the difficulty of money transfer, but many countries also require payment of transaction fees.

M.C. Nandeesha and Junda Lin
Co-Chairs

Dr. Barry Costa Pierce, Hoang Tung, Donghuo Jiang and Graham Mair,
Members