Professional Development Committee

The Professional Development Committee facilitates development needs for audiences of museum professionals, from those starting in the field to established professionals seeking continuing educational opportunities. When appropriate, it supports the planning, organization and delivery of workshops, democamps and mentorship activities. It also contributes to the production of “How-to” leaflets.

The committee consists of two co-chairpersons and any SPNHC member interested in assisting with the committee’s activities.

Workshops

The committee provides lists of workshop opportunities for the conference host institutions and other SPNHC committees, disseminates information about workshops and other training opportunities, and evaluates the impact of these activities.

The committee seeks to identify professional development topics of interest to the SPNHC membership, including basic curatorial practice workshops that may be revisited every few years as well as new subjects of a more temporary yet pressing interest.

DemoCamp

The committee helps organize a half-day session at the annual SPNHC conference that promotes new technological advancements for natural history collection curation and digitization. Live demonstrations are welcomed in any technologies relevant to biologists, collections managers, or biodiversity information managers, as well as technologies that enable the broader use of data, or enable citizen scientist participation. Technologies demonstrated at past sessions have included collections/transaction management software, georeferencing applications, robotic imaging equipment, automated label digitization tools, and programs for analysis of data/images. DemoCamp presentations feature the latest developments in currently available products, software, applications, and tools as well as ongoing research projects and prototypes. DemoCamp sessions also provide a venue for idea exchange and feedback from potential users.

The committee puts out a call for DemoCamp abstract submissions, recruits presenters (if necessary), seeks sponsors, organizes the schedule, and coordinates with the Local Organizing Committee to facilitate session promotion and plan for room and connectivity requirements.
**Mentorships**

The committee works in cooperation with the Mentorship Sessional Committee and the Local Organizing Committees to facilitate the continued success of the Fitzgerald Travel Grant program through recruiting volunteer mentors, pairing these mentors with Travel Grant awardees, and garnering evaluations from mentors and awardees.

**“How-To” Leaflets**

The committee helps produce the “How-To” leaflets designed to convey two-page guidelines for collections care staff on various subjects. The committee recruits authors for needed topics, and arranges for review by peers in the appropriate discipline. Please see the description on the SPNHC website.

**Professional Development Committee Annual Calendar and Deadlines**

**February:** Report of Committee work sent to Newsletter.

**April, October:** Final preparation of drafts of “How To” leaflets sent to peer review.

**May:** “How To” leaflets published on SPNHC website and in Newsletter.

**May or June:** Report of Committee work presented to Annual Business Meeting and to Council.

**May or June, at SPNHC Conference:** Annual Professional Development Committee meeting, annual DemoCamp, biennial survey of workshop interests of 1) members at ABM and 2) first-time attendees.

**July:** Mentor and awardee evaluations sent out. Awardee biographies solicited. Workshop evaluations gathered.

**August:** Report of Committee work sent to Newsletter.

Ongoing: Solicitation of workshop concepts and “How To” leaflet topics.

*Revised by Amanda Neill and Jeff Stephenson July 2013
Reviewed by Jean-Marc Gagnon, July 2013*