

Dues Structure Concerns – Next Steps

While response to the new dues structure has been primarily positive from the membership, shortly after membership renewal forms began to arrive in the mail, concerns about the new dues structure were expressed by a few members on the SD listserv and in an email to the Society office authored by Jim Berger.

Concerns included statements that 1) this decision had been taken without any input from members, 2) obvious alternative structures had not been considered, 3) the income levels associated with membership fees were threatening to members' privacy, 4) the Society continues to be US-centric because the dues are figured and collected in US dollars (and calculating the exchange rates is a hassle for members in other nations), and finally, 5) charging different fees for the same service to different members is disagreeable to them.

The Dues Committee proposes the following actions to address these concerns:

- Put a short article on the website articulating the goals we had for the new dues structure, the alternatives we considered, the iterative feedback process we used with a group of members, and the conclusion we drew. This article would be an informational piece with a positive message, not a "reaction" to the controversy. A committee-reviewed version of this article, titled "Income-based Dues Structure", has been uploaded to the meeting website and addresses all but the privacy concern (the PDF conversion logo will not be in the final version!).
- Include the article in the upcoming March newsletter.
- Consider including this article, or portions of it, with the renewal forms.
- Send a pointer to this article to 1) Jim Berger and perhaps 2) an ANNOUNCE to the SD Listserv.
- Change the renewal form and our database information to make the income ranges less "privacy" threatening. Jim Lyneis has a suggestion for this.
- Link to a currency converter from the SDS website and let people know about this in the renewal form. This could also be near the online renewal process page(s).
- Update the summer meeting reports to reflect what was agreed to (versus what was proposed -- changes were made real time at the meeting which are not reflected in the reports), and link those reports to the website.
- Announce these changes so people experience that we are responding to their suggestions/concerns.
- Inform the committee charged with making conference fees more inclusive about the member responses and our actions.