

October 2, 2020

Dear Nancy and GCFI Nominations Committee:

Please accept my application packet for consideration for a position as a director of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute. Through this packet, I seek to demonstrate the skills and experience I would bring the board, my past interactions with GCFI, and also present preliminary ideas on areas I hope to contribute to as a director during my tenure.

The Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute represent the only conference and association that directly integrates my geographic area of study and my field of study. I have attended the three previous GCFI meetings in Merida (2017), San Andres (2018), and Punta Cana (2019). I am the past recipient of a 2017 travel award to attend the meeting in Merida. In addition to these interactions, from 2019, I also sit as a member of the Fisheries for Fishers committee. Similarly, in 2020, along with fellow GCFI student member, Catherine Alves, I submitted a proposal to the board to establish a student chapter of GCFI. In light of this, I see my potential contributions to GCFI to be twofold: (1) fostering student participation through lobbying for a student affairs committee and (2) promoting greater recognition and programming that enhances the Institute's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout its programming.

The first main contribution I seek to lobby for as a director is the creation of a dedicated student affairs committee. This committee would handle student-centered programming, extending the scope of the current student awards committee. In this committee, activities for students would be more centralized including but not limited to the administration of student awards, the student welcome reception, and more student-centered activities both at the annual conference and throughout the year. The creation of this committee would see GCFI adding student-centered programming similar to large associations including the Society for Conservation Biology (SCB), Ecological Society of America (ESA), and the International Coral Reef Symposium (ICRS).

The second contribution that I am looking forward to making as a director is fostering of creating recognition and advocacy around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within the Institute. I believe there exists an important opportunity to include DEI initiatives in the new strategic plan for GCFI. This includes but is not limited to increase participation of women, greater racial and gender diversity on the BOD, and the creation of opportunities for the increase and equitable geographic participation in GCFI. In the current strategic plan 2015-2019, there exist no provisions for considering diversity in GCFI and therefore the opportunity is ripe for its inclusion in the new strategic plan.

In summary, my experience with GCFI is varied and has progressively increased over the years, demonstrating my commitment to furthering the mission and goals of the Institute. My proposed contributions have identified two areas that my experiences are best suited to. I am confident that these initiatives will directly serve to ensure the continued sustainability of the Institute. As demonstrated in my attached curriculum vitae, I believe I possess the necessary skillset and experience to actively contribute to GCFI.

Thank you in advance for considering my application for an open director position at GCFI. I look forward to the opportunity to continue contributing to the development of GCFI as it works to achieve its mission and goals. I welcome the opportunity to discuss any questions or clarify any of my intended plans as a director.

Sincerely,

Eric A. Wade
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