

National Sea Grant Advisory Board Virtual Meeting
July 12, 2021
Meeting Minutes

Monday, July 12, 2021

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC – 1:00pm – 5:00pm ET

Ms. Holmes, the Designated Federal Officer (DFO) read an official federal statement explaining her role to the group and took roll call of the members of the Board. She then turned the meeting over to Dr. Helmuth who called the meeting to order.

Roll Call

Members of the National Sea Grant Advisory Board (Board):

Mr. Dale Baker, Dr. Peter Betzer, Dr. Paulinus Chigbu, Dr. Carole Engle, Dr. Rosanne Fortner, Dr. Gordon Grau, Ms. Judith Gray, Dr. Brian Helmuth (Chair), Dr. Amber Mace (Past Chair), Dr. Jim Murray, Ms. Kris Norosz, Ms. Deborah Stirling (Vice Chair), Dr. Jonathan Pennock – (*ex officio*) Director of the National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP), Dr. Susan White – (*ex officio*), President, Sea Grant Association (SGA)

Other National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) staff in attendance:

Ms. Susan Holmes – Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for the Board, National Sea Grant Office, Ms. Donna Brown – Project Administrator, Dr. Rebecca Briggs – Program Officer, Ms. Brooke Carney – Communications Lead, Ms. Elizabeth Rohring – (alternate DFO)

1:00pm – 1:05pm – Approval of Agenda and Minutes (Brian Helmuth, Board Chair)

Agenda

Dr. Helmuth gave an overview of the agenda and asked for a motion to approve it.

Motion to approve the July 12, 2021 agenda: Dr. Amber Mace

2nd Kris Norosz

Vote: All in Favor

April 2021 Meeting Minutes

Dr. Helmuth asked for a motion to approve the April 2021 meeting minutes.

Motion to approve the minutes from the April 13-15, 2021 Board meeting:

No Vote: Edits to the biennial report section of the minutes were suggested by Dr. Rosanne Fortner before it can get approval from the board – edits will be made by Susan Holmes (DFO) who will then bring it to the Fall meeting for approval.

1:05 – 1:20pm – Public Comments – (Susan Holmes, Board DFO)

Ms. Holmes explained the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) rules requiring time for public comments during all public meetings. She said that the Board did not receive any written public

comments, but that any member of the public joining the meeting would like to submit comments could do so at this time. There were no public comments or questions.

Dr. Helmuth stated that the next NSGAB meeting is still to be determined and that a doodle poll has been sent out in order to narrow down that date so please respond as soon as possible. He also stated that the future SGA meetings will be held on November 16-18, 2021 in Raleigh, NC (Hybrid Meeting), and that the spring 2022 meeting will be held on March 6-10, 2022 in Washington, DC (Board & SGA Meetings).

A brief discussion followed on the likelihood of being “in-person” for the upcoming meetings. Ms Holmes said that the timing of the Fall Board and SGA meetings made it difficult to hold them in person (due to the need for assurance of hotel rooms and conference space prior to federal employees being allowed to travel).

1:20 – 1:30 – Nomination Committee Decisional (Review and Vote) – (Dr. Brian Helmuth (Board Chair))

The Board is mandated to have an Executive Committee which includes a Chair, Vice Chair, Past Chair and Members-at-Large. Dr. Helmuth said that his term as Board chair will be ending as of December 31, 2021. This requires that the Board vote for two members of the Executive Committee – the Chair and Vice Chair, for a two-year term beginning January 1, 2022. The nominees for these positions are Deborah Stirling as Chair and Dr. Jim Murray as Vice Chair on Member-at-Large Ms. Kristine Norosz. He then asked for a motion to vote on the Executive Committee Nominations for Deborah Stirling as Chair and James Murray as Vice Chair.

Motion to accept the slate of candidates:

Dr. Peter Betzer

2nd Mr. Dale Baker

Vote: All in favor

Dr. Helmuth said that he would move into the Past Chair role, and that Dr. Mace would be rolling off from the Executive Committee as of January 1, 2022. He thanked Dr. Mace for her efforts on the Board as the Vice Chair, Chair and Past Chair and her continuing leadership on the Board.

1:30 – 2:30 – Evaluation Committee Independent Review Panel (IRP) – (Jim Murray, Nancy Targett and Amber Mace)

Purpose of the IRP - Dr. Murray explained that the purpose of the IRP was to assess the overall effectiveness and impact of the National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP) and the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) and the Evaluation Committee did well in holding to that charge. Dr. Nancy Targett chaired the Committee and also included Dr. Mace as co-Chair, Mr. Don Kent (Hubbs-Sea World Research Institute), Ms. Mary Erickson (NOAA National Weather Service), Dr. John Cortinas (NOAA-Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory), Dr. Jim Hurley (Wisconsin Sea Grant), and Dr. Murry (Board member and Chair of the Evaluation Committee).

The Committee developed review criteria that was guided by the National Sea Grant College Program Standards of Excellence used to evaluate the 34 place-based programs but was modified to reflect the broader mission and mandate of the NSGO.

The team was provided information via a briefing book, conducted interviews with staff of the NSGO and got feedback from all of the networks in Sea Grant including the SGA, but SGA Network Advisory Committee, the Legal Network, Extension Assembly, research coordinators, communicators and educators.

The review occurred on May 3-7, and included presentations from nearly 50 different people from NOAA Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric (OAR) leadership (Craig McClean and Ko Barrett), NSGO partners, Sea Grant network and panels highlighting productivity.

Dr. Targett said that the IRP would like to thank the board for participating in this review, and also thanked the NSGO for providing information on the scope and scale of what they do. Dr. Targett and Dr. Mace gave a summative overview and addressed any questions that may arise.

- The key finding, and one that can summarize the overall message from the IRP is that Sea Grant punches way beyond their weight in terms of accomplishments and impacts. The strength of its science and outreach are clear from the independent metrics captured in the PIER database. There is consistent evidence that shows that dollars invested in Sea Grant yield a strong return on investment that is highly impactful.
- The Committee had extensive discussions with OAR leadership and they responded with such positives in terms of diversity and equity and Sea Grant was held up as a model within that arena.
- Every stakeholder talked about the Sea Grant model – because the link between its research and activities is such a signature of Sea Grant - and provided this feedback loop that all sectors that participated seemed to be engaged.
- The Committee found that everyone in the NSGO feels that they are spread very thin and are trying to do more with less, especially during the pandemic.
- It's evident from the data provided that at the overall program level, it is clear how far above its weight Sea Grant punches.

Additional findings:

- The efforts of the NSGO comes at a cost and that is that there is a limit to the number of people available to do what is required of the NSGO. Metrics management and cross training has led to some confusion about roles in the NSGO and doesn't fully solve the problem.
- Various stakeholders have said that the PIER database is clunky and redundant and they would like to see something more up-to-date.

Dr. Amber Mace – Dr. Mace thanked the Committee members and in particular Dr. Targett's leadership. She said that the Committee received a lot of feedback and it helped the Committee identify the pressure points in some areas, and that the report will provide feedback on where there are opportunities to grow and advance the network as well as the overall National Sea Grant College Program.

There are 21 Suggestions – High level overview – The suggestions are designed to encourage and continue NSGO efforts to build collaboration, trust, and transparency with the network.

Dr. Targett said that if this report is adopted the NSGO will have to respond formally to the recommendations such as PIER Database Improvement, PIE Policy Alignment with OAR Program Review Policy, revisit Program Allocation Policy, and the Partnership Framework.

Drs. Targett and Mace said that the next steps were to have a motion to accept the report as submitted and hold a discussion and vote.

Dr. Helmuth asked for a motion to accept the IRP report as submitted.

Motion to accept the IRP report as submitted: Carole Engle

2nd Kris Norosz

Vote: All in Favor

Dr. Helmuth led a discussion on the report. He asked what the committee felt about the 5% administrative cap. Dr. Targett said that it was a difficult point as the funding for the NSGO is seen as less money for the state programs. That means that the NSGO has to do more work, but can't really expand their staff.

Dr. Mace said that a key in the report is that the NSGO needs to be more transparent and better communicate to the network and the Administration what they are doing. Dr. Pennock has been working on better communication with these groups but that it will take time – but it will result in rethinking of the relationship, and this will help the program blossom.

Dr. Pennock said that they have been focusing on partnerships, but it has taken time. The NSGO has had long-term dialogues with partners to find joint priorities. We've used the vision plans to help us identify the priorities. These are now coming together as with the Liaison program. Dr. Targett said that the network seemed very pleased with the increased capacity from partnerships – which are not at their expense.

Dr. Fortner said that she was disappointed that the IRP report only mentioned education once – yet it is a part of the SG model and its effectiveness.

Dr. Helmuth asked if the data sharing issue came up in the IRP. Dr. Targett said that there was a suggestion to work with the network and others in building databases.

Dr. Helmuth asked if there were any specific recommendations that the Board would like to discuss or actions that they could take. Dr. Mace said that she hoped the Board would thoroughly review the report and then follow up with the NSGO to see how the Board can support NSGO leadership in advancing these recommendations.

Dr. Helmuth asked if there were areas in which the Board could help build relationships. Dr. Mace said that connecting with Congress about the Biennial Report, and any way to highlight Sea Grant efforts with NOAA leadership would be good.

Dr. Murray urged the NSGO to really look at the suggestions in the report and look for ways that the Board can help with these. Dr. Engle said that she was very impressed with the report and that if implemented, could take Sea Grant to another level of success.

Dr. Helmuth asked for a vote on the motion to accept the IRP report as written.

Vote: All in Favor

2:30-2:45pm – Break

2:45 – 3:15pm – Resilience and Social Justice Exploratory Subcommittee Decisional (Review and Vote) – (Dr. Brain Helmuth and Dr. Paulinus Chigbu)

Background – (Dr. Helmuth) - As part of the Board Education and Outreach Committee, a Resilience and Social Justice Subcommittee has been created to discuss and explore the critical but often neglected role of social justice in developing and implementing resilience strategies, and the ways that the National Sea Grant program can promote effective mechanisms to support these approaches. So the board must vote on the charge and membership for the creation of a subcommittee.

This is something that grew out of the Biennial Report recommendations and what we will do next. A number of us met regarding what the charge of the subcommittee would be and how we would do that. With the board's blessing we were asked to turn this into a subcommittee. We will lose Dr. Chigbu and need to re-elect the people to serve on the board so I will now turn this over to Dr. Chigbu who will give an overview of those charges.

Subcommittee Charge – (Dr. Chigbu) – To create a subcommittee we must first vote on the charge and membership for the creation of the committee and then vote on it. The Subcommittee is to explore the intersections of resilience and diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) and specifically that social, environmental, and racial justice are inseparable components of resilience and resilience planning.

The Subcommittee will also explore strategies for ensuring that social justice is included in resilience efforts through the Sea Grant program in preparation for setting up an informational panel later in the year. So the Subcommittee is to advise the NSGO on the creation or adoption of metrics that explicitly include aspects of social justice as a key part of resilience. The Subcommittee will then have to identify and collate best practices, literature and case studies from across the network, NOAA, and from sources external to the federal government to help inform continued discussions among the entire network about this critical and rapidly evolving area.

The Subcommittee members are to be made up of the Sea Grant Advisory Board, NSGO, SGA, the Sea Grant network and external experts. Then they should plan to provide updates to the Board during the Fall 2021 meeting and Spring 2022 meeting, after which a report will be forwarded to the Sea Grant Director. Given the rapidly evolving nature of this topic, this committee will continue its work as needed beyond the delivery of the initial report. I will now turn it back over to Dr. Helmuth who will give you the committee membership nominees.

Executive Committee Membership Nominees - Dr. Helmuth – The Board representatives are Dr. Paulinus Chigbu (Chair), Dr. Brian Helmuth and Ms. Deb Stirling. NSGO representatives: Summer Morlock and Brooke Carney. Network representatives: Sam Chan (ORSG) and Linda Chilton (USC SG). SGA representatives: Susan Lovelace (SCSG) and Fredrika Moser (MDSG). External experts: Dionne Hoskins-Brown (NOAA/NMFS) and Joan Fitzgerald (Northeastern University). NSGO staff support: Susan Holmes.

Dr. Helmuth asked for a motion to approve the charge and subcommittee members.

Motion to approve the charge and subcommittee members: Dr. Peter Betzer

2nd Judith Gray

Vote: All in favor

The Board discussed the goals of the committee and how to ensure that the Board's recommendations would not overly tax the NSGO and the network. Dr. Helmuth said that the committee is looking to build on the work that the network is already doing but provide them with information and existing resources to help them continue with best practices – and help them be nimble in this environment.

They further discussed how they might help to identify metrics or performance measures to make sure that they are making the significant changes that are needed. The Board wanted to make sure that the committee clearly defines the goals, what is meant by resilience and social justice, but agreed that they would support the charge with a friendly amendment to let the committee clarify these terms and to fix a typographical error in the charge.

Dr. Helmuth asked for a vote on the two friendly amendments.

Vote on the Charge to fix the typo and revisit language for more clarity:

All in favor

3:15 – 3:30pm – SGA Update – (Susan White (SGA President))

Dr. White gave an update on the Sea Grant Association and their activities.

New Onboarding Directors – Joanna York (Delaware), Julie Lively (Louisiana) and Tracey Dalton (Rhode Island) have joined the Sea Grant network as new directors. She mentioned that the SGA would hold a professional development session during their upcoming meeting to provide the new (and more seasoned) directors information about Sea Grant, the NSGO, and the Board.

2022 Budget – They do not have information on a formal ask currently.

SGA Infrastructure – Activities:

- Programs are having challenges in finding match
- Work with the network on fine-tuning reporting priorities and what makes the best stories.
- Omnibus and how to structure going forward for the PIER process
- Adding the ethics committee as part of the SGA by-laws for accountability and make it an SGA committee.

Spring Knauss Discussions – how we engaged last year was very different and we used a large part of the SGA budget so we need to find ways to engage knauss without it costing too much.

DEIJ – Accessibility is not always included. We had a lot of engagement from Board of Directors and Advisory Board activities and would like to continue this engagement and be engaged.

Fall SGA meeting and dates – November 16-18, 2021 in Raleigh, NC (Hybrid Meeting), and the Spring 2022 meeting will be held on March 6-10, 2022 in Washington, DC (Board & SGA Meetings).

The 2022 SGA meeting will be held in Ohio as a part of the rescheduled Sea Grant Week.

3:30 – 3:45pm – National Sea Grant Office Update – Dr. Jonathan Pennock (NSGO, Director)

Dr. Pennock provided an update from the National Sea Grant Office.

Grants: The NSGO met the deadline for getting all the grant actions into the management system thanks to the hard work of the office.

- There were 530 actions this year.
- \$9.1 million in grant actions
- \$8,000,000 budget of money that does not move into grants actions

Moving NSGAB Nominations Forward – There are currently three NSGAB positions open and we will have an additional four in early 2022. We are working on the nomination package for submission for three of these and will put through additional nominations soon after to make sure we don't get too far behind.

Telework – The NSGO is still on maximum telework mode but by the end of the month it would be a little freeing up regarding flexibility with administrative duties – Coming back to the office things will be different more pressure on building space with moving more people in and telework being more of the option – so we're trying to figure out what that means – reducing footprint, etc. A desire to move telework to 3-4 days a week but the challenges are how do we keep the comradery and leadership open. Our office has a lot of staff with young children, not vaccinated and so it's a concern. Still a lot of concerns, etc. but we're still having discussions around that and travel.

2022 House Marks - A lot of the resilience discussion is being driven by the House – while the Senate has been the chamber that has more of the directive funds – lobster, etc

Service Equity - Sea Grant is one of three offices in NOAA that were asked to work on this subject to determine if NOAA is providing its services in an equitable manner.

3:45 – 4:45 – Education Discussion – (Roseanne Fortner – NSGAB)

Dr. Fortner led a discussion about Sea Grant Education.

Education programs build diversity, individual literacy, etc. The Sea Grant Education Network (SGEN) has begun to establish a "Monthly Connect" starting Tuesday, May 25th to talk about what they are doing. They also have a monthly report.

SGEN Professional Development Initiative: Mid-Atlantic Climate Change Education Conference – June 28-July 1, 2021. The SGEN annual meeting is held in advance of the National Marine Educators Association meeting, July 12th. The discussions included best practices in virtual/hybrid learning and marine education in different settings, and 15 quick tips. Some of the things that came out of the conference included an escape room activity that was a very creative idea which was enjoyed by all. One thing they have done in their monthly meeting is to make a note of the things they've learned or takeaways and they have seen some marvelous takeaways and responses.

Education Discussion – People are doing their professional development but have to revisit metrics and how they are used. The webinar held on June 28th focused mostly on how education works in NOAA – watershed game example, MN to MS-AL regional to national impact – Fresh & Salt – Great Lakes activities and Great Lakes to Ocean connections, and metrics and valuation. There was a graduate student from MS who did a presentation investigating the impact of the Roving the Gulf Class and how the gender gap was reduced.

Dr. Joshua Brown (NSGO) led a discussion about coding of impacts and education for reporting. He said that the omnibus proposals need more specific information on the topics of the activities, not just the four Sea Grant focus areas. The NSGO proposed revisions for reporting on education and extension will add to these conversations.

Dr. Fortner said that the issue they are facing is valuing the educators for the state programs. The educators are trying to raise their salary money; the Board can't officially advise the network, so she is looking for an idea from the Board. She said that the Board talked about the standing up of a committee and wanted to know if that was still an idea for discussion.

Dr. Fortner opened the discussion for the Board.

The Board discussed how they can provide input to the Sea Grant programs on advancing education and workforce development.

Dr. Pennock said that Education is one of the NSGO and Sea Grant priorities. He said that if Sea Grant were to get a large increase in appropriations, the decisions on how to prioritize those funds need to happen soon. He said that a charge to the Board would be a good place to figure this out and get input from the SGA.

Dr. Grau and Dr. Fortner discussed the idea of using resilience funding to promote education programs for historically black colleges and under-represented groups to focus on issues of climate change, storms, and other resilience issues.

Dr. Pennock asked if the money was targeted to education development would that still be favorably looked upon by educators as an opportunity or would there still be frustration?

Dr. Fortner replied that yes, but still does not help with the issues with educators' salaries.

Dr. Helmuth said that the Board should develop a panel on the education issues across the network for the next Board meeting, and through that they can work on an Education committee and charge for the Board. Dr. Grau said that he would be interested in being on that committee.

4:45 – 4:55 pm - Guam Institutional Status Update – (Dr. Peter Betzer (Chair) and Joshua Brown (NSGO))

Criteria - Dr. Betzer noted that he received a draft agenda of the virtual meeting that will be held and conducted over a week or two on the evenings in September and the final report will be presented to the NSGAB at its November meeting. It will be based on the criteria in the Federal Register Notice (leadership, organization, relevance, programmed team approach, education and training, extension &

advisory services, relationships, productivity, support, and continuity of high performance) which are the Sea Grant Standards of Excellence.

He then gave an update on the members of the committee: Judith Gray (Chair), Peter Betzer (NSGAB member), Jim Murray (NSGAB member), Rick DeVoe (External Reviewer), Rebecca Briggs and Joshua Brown (NSGO Support). He added that Judy Gray was going to take over as chair of this committee. He then asked if anyone had any questions and turned the meeting back over to Dr. Helmuth.

4:55 pm – Wrap up

Dr. Helmuth thanked the Board and those involved in the discussions and presentations. He asked if there were any follow-up questions. Hearing none, Dr. Helmuth adjourned the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 4:56pm