



CUAHSI
allied for water science

CUAHSI Board Meeting Minutes

September 20, 2023

Roll Call

12 members are present, 10 needed for quorum. “X” indicates present

Term expires 12/31/2023

Safeeq Khan, Univ. of California, Merced X

Sarah Ledford, Georgia State Univ. X

Margaret Zimmer, Univ. of California, Santa Cruz

Anne Nolin, Univ. of Nevada-Reno X

Term expires 12/31/2024

Alejandro Flores, Boise State University (Past Chair) X

G.H. Crystal Ng, Univ. of Minnesota X

Steven Loheide, Univ. of Wisconsin - Madison X

Ashley Matheny, Univ. of Texas - Austin X

Ashok Mishra, Clemson Univ. X

Åsa Rennermalm, Rutgers Univ. X

Terms expires 12/31/2025

JP Gannon, Virginia Tech X

Drew Guswa, Smith College X

Hoori Ajami, Univ. of California - Riverside

Anne Jefferson, Univ. of Vermont (Chair Elect)

Jay Zarnetske, Michigan State Univ. (Chair) X

Officers: (terms expire January 31, 2024)

Troy Gilmore, University of Nebraska (Treasurer) X

Adam Ward, Indiana University (Secretary) X

CUAHSI Staff Present: Jordan Read

Guests:

Minutes prepared by Ward

Wednesday, 20-Sept-2023

13:01 EDT Call to Order; welcome to new directors Asa Rennermalm and Ashley Metheny

1. Executive Director updates (Read)
 - a. New employees at CUAHSI
 - i. CUAHSI is onboarding four new employees from 9/11 to 10/2
 1. Abnerr Bogan (Syracuse, NY) is a data scientist supporting the Critical Zone Hub project, full time.
 2. Maureen Sabino (LA area) will be our new CUAHSI controller, supporting Uniform Guidance compliance, audits, accounts receivable, full time.
 3. Laura Davis (Boston area) will be our new senior accountant, payables, and awards management. Laura will help keep the lights on while Maureen deals with a very large effort to dig us out of the past, part-time
 4. Lindsay Platt (Madison, WI) will be a part-time business operations data scientist, who will be automating a lot of financial reporting and project personnel allocation and spending. Will help get routine financial reporting to the Board, Part time
 - ii. Read reported that the weekly cost of the three finance / ops roles is a net savings compared to CRCFO completing this scope of work. CRCFO's work on finances will phase out in the coming weeks, but they may continue as an HR provider.
 - b. WaterSciCon 2024 is the rebranding of the prior FIHM conference. The meeting is now open for session, workshop, and townhall proposals and the window for submissions closes Oct 11th. Please share widely and encourage submittals coupling traditional sessions and workshops.
 - c. CUAHSI is continuing to make progress with the renewal proposal and appreciate input from the Board and CUAHSI staff. This is Read's second priority (top being our compliance issues). Read will be meeting with NSF POs in person next week to discuss.
 - d. CUAHSI has signed a six month lease with Workbar Arlington, MA effective Jan 1, 2024 reducing from two to one office. This will reduce the monthly cost by more than 50%, and future locations and/or remote work options will also be considered.
 - e. CUAHSI is working on contingency planning in the event of a prolonged federal government shutdown. This involves shifting work and billing away from NSF prime awards, getting as much invoicing as possible up to date, and queuing up a draw requests for NSF review in September. In the case of a lengthy shutdown, we will need to consider selective furloughs or salary deferment.
 - f. Read is sending a memo to NSF today that provides updates on progress we've made in the last six weeks towards NSF's five milestones. This memo will be shared with the Board and the Audit Committee.
2. Executive Director travel approval (Zarnetske)

- a. Read summarized travel including CIROH fall science meeting (Oct 1-4) and IHTM meeting at NSF (Oct 31-Nov 2).
 - b. Approve Read's travel as outlined above.**
 - i. Motion: Ledford**
 - ii. Second: Flores**
 - iii. Discussion: (none)**
 - iv. Vote: Approved (unanimous)**
3. Audit updates and next steps with Audit committee (Guswa)
- a. Guswa summarized that CUAHSI requires an independent audit each year due to the size and status of the organization. The last year that this was completed was in 2018. He summarized the process and potential outcomes of audits for the Board.
 - b. Guswa reported the outstanding audits were returned by the auditor with four major categories of findings:
 - i. Poor accounting practices
 - ii. Processes to draw funds from the NSF, which were drawn flat and in advances of expenses rather than with documentation of expenses to be reimbursed.
 - iii. Due diligence for payments to vendors
 - iv. Failure to complete and submit audits in a timely fashion
 - c. The audit committee is finalizing their report, which will include a synthesis and summary from the auditors and recommendation for the organization. He indicated that the committee recommendations include two major areas:
 - i. First, the committee is recommended structural changes and employment of financial managers to rectify the structural issues within the organization.
 - ii. Second, the committee identified the need for more transparent and complete communications.
 - d. Guswa noted that this discussion will cover the 2019 audit, but anticipates that the 2020, 2021, and 2022 audits would include similar findings and practices appear to have been consistent through that time period.
 - e. The group briefly discussed future composition of the audit committee potentially including external expertise, ensuring continuity between years in the committee, and reviewing insurance policies for the organization as part of a full review of financial practices and risks to the organization. The group also discussed the potential of establishing a finance committee in addition to the audit committee, separating regular oversight (finance) from annual independent review (audit).
 - f. Flores suggested reflection on if the current Board composition and function are sufficient for the governance of the organization, indicating that critical review of CUAHSI governance may be a useful effort to include in a renewal proposal.
 - g. Zarnetske, Gilmore, Guswa, and others confirmed that communication between Read and the Board are strong and that Read is responding appropriately, transparently, and thoughtfully as he onboards.
4. Director Election (Loheide)

- a. Loheide summarized the recruitment process including an open call for nominees, summarized the committee's process, and ultimately presented a slate of 6 nominees for 4 open positions on the Board of Directors:
 - i. Amy Burgin (University of Kansas)
 - ii. Darren Ficklin (Indiana University)
 - iii. Safeeq Khan (UC Merced)
 - iv. Sarah Ledford (Georgia State University)
 - v. Hamid Moradkhani (University of Alabama)
 - vi. Ricardo Sanchez Murillo (University of Texas Arlington)
 - b. Ward and CUAHSI staff confirmed all are eligible for election.
 - c. **Approve slate of six nominees presented above.**
 - i. **Motion: Zarnetske**
 - ii. **Second: Nolin**
 - iii. **Discussion: (none)**
 - iv. **Vote:**
 - 1. **Approved: All except Khan**
 - 2. **Opposed: (none)**
 - 3. **Abstain: Khan**
 - d. Loheide thanks Ajami and Zimmer for their work on the committee. He reported next steps would be to collect statements from each nominee, which will be made public for the community to review. The committee is working to standardize statements by prompting them to address specific topics or answer a uniform set of questions. Votes will occur prior to the annual membership meetings, and they begin serving in January 2024. He noted that all are familiar with this timeline.
5. Misc. Updates
- a. Zarnetske requested the Board provide asynchronous feedback on DEI grant proposal and SC proposal (we received almost no director feedback last month)
 - b. Review and approve minutes within week of meeting (meeting minutes in each monthly folder here; record approval/abstain etc here)
6. Other business
- a. Zarnetske opened the floor to any other business. Hearing none, the meeting was adjourned for the day.

14:01 EDT Adjournment