



CUAHSI
allied for water science

CUAHSI Board Meeting Minutes
June 27-28, 2024

Roll Call

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

Term expires 12/31/2024

Alejandro Flores, Boise State University 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.
Åsa Rennermalm, Rutgers Univ.

Term expires 12/31/2025

JP Gannon, Virginia Tech X
Drew Guswa, Smith College X
Hoori Ajami, Univ. of California - Riverside X
Anne Jefferson, Univ. of Vermont (Chair) X
Jay Zarnetske, Michigan State Univ. (Past Chair) X

Term expires 12/31/2026

Safeeq Khan, Univ. of California, Merced X
Sarah Ledford, Georgia State Univ. (Chair Elect) X
Amy Burgin, Univ. of Kansas X
Darren Ficklin, Indiana Univ. X

Officers: (terms expire January 31, 2027)

Adam Ward, Oregon State University (Secretary) X
Steve Architzel, UC Santa Cruz (Treasurer) X

CUAHSI Staff Present: Jordan Read (full meeting)

Thursday morning only: Emily Clark, Veronica Sosa Gonzalez, Martin Seul

Minutes prepared by Ward

Thursday, 27-June-2024

15:45 US Central Call to Order

Minutes

1. Approval of June 5, 2024 BoD Minutes

- a. Motion: Loheide**
- b. Second: Guswa**
- c. Discussion: (none)**
- d. Vote:**
 - i. Approved. (unanimous expect abstentions by Zarnetske, Ledford, Gannon)**

Discussion/reflections on WaterSciCon (Jefferson)

1. Jefferson initiated an open discussion to review the WaterSciCon event. The group reviewed strengths of the event and opportunities to improve in future iterations:
 - a. Strengths, positives:
 - i. The small, community-centered meeting size was a strength. Several Board members reported hearing positive feedback from early career scientists, particularly related to the ability to feel welcomed into a community.
 - ii. The deviations from AGU's traditional format - for example setting time aside for posters and the series of workshops and smaller group meetings - were positively received. Several people identified the poster session not competing against oral sessions nor workshops as a strength.
 - iii. Having posters up for multiple days, rather than rotating through the week, enabled people to revisit posters or have discussions through the week.
 - iv. Evening happy hours and mixers were viewed as a strength (e.g., the ecohydrology happy hour).
 - v. AGU's events team runs a professional, organized meeting.
 - vi. Workshops were well-attended and broadly regarded as useful.
 - vii. Plenary sessions that were panel discussions rather than isolated lectures were viewed as positive.
 - viii. Explicit engagement of local stakeholders, scientists, and scholars was viewed as a strength. There is an opportunity to continue investing in this in future years.
 - ix. Explicit engagement of social scientists and communication professionals was viewed as a strength.
 - b. Opportunities to improve:
 - i. Cost of attendance was reported as higher than optimal for serving the community.
 - ii. Inviting smaller groups to use the meeting as a way to convene might enhance attendance. For example, using the meeting as a chance for RCN or Powell Center groups to meet in person could be possible.
 - iii. The large number of withdrawn abstracts was notable to community members, and was disappointing as it leaves gaps in programming.

Session conveners and organizers not attending was also noted as a challenge.

- iv. Branding between AGU and CUAHSI felt imbalanced, with AGU being a more visible partner.
 - v. Attendance appeared biased toward earlier-career participants.
 - vi. Competing conferences were viewed as a challenge to attendance.
 - vii. Board interaction with CUAHSI staff at the meeting was a highlight for the Board.
2. On the future of collaborative meetings
- a. The group discussed whether the organization could sustain both the biennial and ICRW organization, in addition to partnering with AGU.
 - b. The Board felt that the visibility of CUAHSI as a partner was important in the future, with a clearly defined role and visibility.
 - c. The future of an independent CUAHSI biennial was discussed extensively. The value of collaborating to reduce meeting competition was viewed as a positive. For example, combining with the Joint Aquatic Sciences Meeting is important. The group felt that having a variety of meeting sizes and types is important for community development.
 - d. The group suggested CUAHSI continue to engage with AGU in good-faith discussions about partnering on future meetings.

Executive Director update (Read)

1. Read circulate a pre-read summarizing important issues and topics for Board engagement. Key points of discussion by the Board included:
 - a. Finances & NSF Renewal. CUAHSI has been invited for a one-year supplement to the existing Core Cooperative Agreement at a funding level consistent with the renewal proposal, which enables continuity for the organization. Read reports building trust with the NSF, including support for completion of audits and working on advance withdrawals to support REU program expenses. Overall, Read is positive and optimistic about the relationship and path forward with NSF. Management of cashflow continues to be a challenge for the organization.
 - b. Outstanding Audits. Read reports that working through the audit backlog continues to be a large amount of work for CUAHSI staff, particularly in parallel with implementation of new fiscal practices. He reminded the group that three audits are occurring in parallel to get CUAHSI up-to-date on the audits, and the status as a high-risk auditee adds additional effort to the fiscal team at CUAHSI. Read continues to communicate with NSF to keep them informed of progress and timelines for completion of outstanding audits.
 - c. Project Portfolio. Read reviewed the current project portfolio and anticipates a small number of incoming, larger awards in the coming months. The challenge of many smaller projects continues to be a challenge to manage.
 - d. CUAHSI Workforce. Read reported that three positions were posted publicly this week, and more than 60 applications have been received to-date. Read reported that staff morale is reasonable, noting that there is a general optimism about current conditions and future directions despite the recent challenges to the organization. One risk to the organization is a bias toward many earlier career

staff, though hiring of the Director of Education & Engagement may help add more senior staff to focus on growth and development of the team. The group discussed possibly including a Board member in the interview process for hires, particularly the Director position. Read intends to work expediently to make hires for the organization.

Advisory Council (Zarnetske)

1. Zarnetske introduced the topic of the Board forming an advisory council that could bring expertise from beyond academia to support the organization. This is explicitly allowable in the by-laws as a ‘senior advisory council’, though one has not been established in the past. The size, responsibilities, composition, and term of membership on such a council is at the discretion of the Board. The president - Read - is also empowered to create advisory committees at their discretion. A key aspect to this effort is the ability for the Board to gain advice from non-academics to support CUAHSI operations.
2. Zarnetske presented draft charges for a Financial Advisory Council to the Board to guide expectations and needs from the organization.
3. Jefferson suggested that any council should include a role to advise and interact with both the Board and the President. Loheide suggested that this is new to the Board and keeping flexibility in future appointments.
4. Ledford reviewed a draft list of potential advisors to appoint to the committee.
5. **The Board directs the ExCom and President to establish, populate, and charge a Senior Advisory Council to the Board and President consistent with: (1) Charge: The senior advisory council serves to advise the board of directors and the President on matters requested by the board or President; and (2) Composition: The senior advisory council will consist of a minimum of two members serving at will of Board of Directors and the President. Each member of the council shall be appointed by a majority vote of the Board of Directors or the Executive Committee.**
 - a. **Motion: Guswa**
 - b. **Second: Loheide**
 - c. **Discussion: Initial expertise for the council and advice is anticipated to include a focus on business operations, fiscal management, fundraising, and similar topics.**
 - d. **Vote: Approved (unanimous)**

Proposed Bylaws Revision (Jefferson)

1. Jefferson circulated a proposed revision to the by-laws for review prior to the meeting, briefly summarizing the proposed changes and their purposes. She discussed background and motivation from the ad hoc committee that led to the proposed revisions, which largely centered on ensuring that the modern Board composition includes all of the skillsets necessary to govern the organization.
2. The group discussed the draft changes, largely focusing on the potential of ‘at-large’ Board members and what requirements should exist, if any, for those positions.

18:45 US Central Adjourned
Friday, 28-June-2024

Updates from CUAHSI Staff

1. Emily Clark, Martin Seul, & Veronica Sosa Gonzalez presented a summary of achievements and major initiatives by CUAHSI staff in the last six months. The presentation is archived in the Board shared drive.
2. The Board discussed opportunities to expand participation in the CUAHSI Virtual University.
3. The Board was enthusiastic about the efforts to formalize project management for the organization. Burgin suggested a logic model might be logical to help explicitly connect resources, activities, outcomes, and impacts.

By-Laws Revision (continued)

1. The group discussed timelines and processes to communicate revisions with the community and ensure legal review to maintain compliance as a nonprofit.
2. The Board discussed a variety of Board structures and compositions, focused on how to ensure that the composition meets the needs of the organization.
3. The group discussed if a prescribed composition for ExCom would need to change, or if ExCom composition would be at the discretion of the Board. For example, some Board members suggested a minimum of one institutional Board member and one at-large Board member should be present. Others voiced the opinion that ExCom is elected by the Board, and leaving flexibility open to future Boards to elect their own leadership.
4. The group discussed whether Board members should be required to serve as member representatives for their institution, and specifically the timing of requirements for serving as a member representative for their institution for at least 30 days prior to the election.
5. The group discussed the potential of appointment of some Board seats as an expedient way for the Board to ensure essential skillsets are present on the Board.
6. The Board iterated through several decision points including Board composition, size, the need for Board members to be representatives, and elected vs. appointed positions on the Board.
7. The consensus of the discussion was:
 - a. At latest 10 Board members should come from member institutions, and up to 5 at-large members can serve on the Board
 - b. All Board members will be elected by the member representatives, rather than including any appointed positions.
 - c. Senior advisory council members will be invited to engage with the Board on an ad hoc nature to further diversity the voices and expertise in Board deliberations.
 - d. Board seats appointed by the elected Board members was viewed as a potentially useful tool. The group noted that many comparable organizations use the structure of their elections to help target specific expertise that is needed on the Board.
8. The Board reviewed a range of more minor changes to the Board, discussing each and their implications. The Board specifically endorsed the recommendations from the audit committee to bolster fiscal transparency and oversight for the organization.
9. The Board developed a final draft of proposed revisions with changes tracked from the prior version, which was reviewed by the Board.

10. **The Board of Directors endorses the proposed changes to the Bylaws as presented and discussed on June 28, 2024. Read, Ledford, and Jefferson are directed to proceed with legal review and discussion with the membership to receive feedback.**
 - a. **Motion: Ledford**
 - b. **Second: Ng**
 - c. **Discussion: (none)**
 - d. **Vote: Approved (unanimous)**

Nominations Committee

1. The Board brainstormed the skill sets that might be beneficial to the Board, including:
 - a. Development
 - b. Business operations
 - c. Legal expertise
 - d. C-suite experience
 - e. Cloud computing and/or technical expertise, including water data nonprofits
 - f. Entrepreneurs
 - g. Nonprofit management
 - h. Traditional ways of knowing
 - i. Federal and/or state agency scientists, including state water resources institutes
 - j. Consultants
 - k. Board members of foundations in the space
 - l. Philanthropists with an interest in water resources
2. Jefferson introduced the responsibilities for the Nominations Committee, reporting that the chair-elect (Ledford) has volunteered to chair the Board. The committee typically includes one additional Board member and one member external to the Board. The work of the committee will generally begin in August and should be complete by November.

Review of the Executive Director

1. The Board entered an executive session to conduct the annual review of the Executive Director.
2. **The board accepts the report from the executive director evaluation committee.**
 - a. **Moton: Ledford**
 - b. **Second: Burgin**
 - c. **Discussion:**
 - i. **The Board requested Read provide any written feedback or responses to the Board for consideration.**
 - ii. **The Board expressed their thanks to Read for his effort and strong performance during the past year.**
 - d. **Vote: Approved (unanimous)**

Executive Director's Travel

1. Read outlined upcoming travel including:
 - a. July 2024, Summer Institute in Alabama
 - b. Aug. 12-13, 2024 - Joint CSSI-Cybertraining-SCIPE PI Meeting in North Carolina
 - c. Sept. 10-12, 2024 - Internet of Water meeting in Colorado

- d. Sept. 30 - Oct. 2, 20224 - AWRA, UCOWR, NIWR Joint Meeting in Missouri
- e. Oct. 14-17, 2024 - CIROH Science Meeting in Alabama
- 2. **Approve Read's travel as outlined above**
 - a. **Motion: Ledford**
 - b. **Second: Loheide**
 - c. **Discussion: The Board noted that only one of these was funded with core cooperative agreement funds**
 - d. **Vote: Approved (unanimous)**

Membership Benefits

1. Jefferson initiated a series of small-group breakouts to focus on current benefits of membership, potential future benefits, and staff costs or efforts that would be needed to realize these benefits.
2. The group discussed that less than 1% of CUAHSI's annual budget is generated from membership dues, articulating a need for some level of access and support for all community members.
3. Summary of brainstorming discussion:
 - a. Current benefits that are exclusive to members
 - i. Voting for CUAHSI governance issues
 - ii. Eligible for Board positions
 - iii. Discounted registration for Biennial meeting, workshops
 - b. Potential Future Benefits
 - i. Reduced costs for fee-for-service benefits
 - ii. HydroShare storage
 - iii. Vendor discounts (e.g. CUAHSI members get discounts from YSI)
 - iv. CUAHSI printing services for posters
 - v. Institutional engagement and usage summaries
 - vi. Virtual University or HydroLearn access
 - vii. Members are featured more prominently on the website (e.g., 'CUAHSI members include...' and a scrolling pane of logos)
 - viii. Prioritized access to computational resources (e.g., as in supercomputer access) or higher storage capacities
 - ix. Reduced cost for job board postings
 - x. Feature on "donor wall" or "donor poster" as events
 - c. Misc. Brainstorming
 - i. Institutions could have tiers of sponsorship that add benefits above-and-beyond those of all members (for example, an institution paying to sponsor might get a feature in the newsletter, free job board postings, etc.)
 - ii. Clarity of the benefits that everyone receives regardless of membership is important. For example, all universities are able to apply for fellowships, use HydroShare, and so forth. Several groups discussed the need for improved communications to highlight CUAHSI's services and activities.

16:00 US Central Adjourned