

April 3, 2017, 14:00-15:00 EDT Webinar

Polar Programs Subcommittee (OPP SC) participants: W. Berry Lyons* (Subcommittee Chair), Stefanie Brachfeld, Jo-Ann Mellish, and Greg Sullivan* (*designates subcommittee members who are members of the full AC GEO). Lisa White of the full AC GEO also participated.

National Science Foundation (NSF) Division of Polar Programs (OPP) participants: Kelly Falkner (Director, OPP), Scot Arnold, Andrew Backe, Scott Borg, Jessie Crain, Terri Edillon, Anna Kerttula, Dan King, Maggie Knuth, Vladimir Papitashvili, Polly Penhale, Frank Rack, Lisa Rom, Ben Roth, Kate Ruck, Eric Saltzman, Simon Stephenson, Marc Stieglitz, Cynthia Suchman, Neil Swanberg, Thom Wilch, and William Wiseman.

Discussion Notes

The agenda developed by OPP senior staff and the subcommittee chair was outlined in a set of power point slides provided to all invitees prior to the webinar. The discussion began with a roll call. The main webinar agenda items reviewed were as follows:

1) OPP Staffing Update

Kelly Falkner referred participants to a slide outlining updates in OPP Staffing since September 15 (the previous OPP SC webinar), including departures, internal reassignments, additions, vacancies, and details:

A) Departures

Julie Palais – Antarctic Glaciology Program Director

B) Internal Reassignment

Paul Cutler – Antarctic Glaciology Program Director (previously Antarctic Integrated System Science Program Director)

C) Additions

William “Scott” Carr - PESH Management & Program Analyst

Cynthia Suchman - Arctic Natural Sciences Program Director

Frank Rack - Arctic Research Support & Logistics Program Manager

Jennifer Mercer - Arctic Research Support & Logistics Program Manager

Alexandra Isern - Research & Logistics Integration Program Director

Anjuli Bamzai - Arctic Natural Sciences Program Director

Gary James - Aviation Program Manager

Michael Gencarelli - Facilities Construction & Maintenance Manager

Lt. Col. Adam Thomas – Air National Guard Liaison

Jeremy Rusin - NOAA Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program

Andrew Titmus - Knauss Sea Grant Fellow

Lt. Col. Roger Shapiro - Air National Guard Liaison/Department of Defense Liaison

Polar Programs Subcommittee of GEO Advisory Committee

D) Vacancies

Antarctic Infrastructure and Logistics Chief Program Manager

Antarctic Infrastructure and Logistics Section Head

Antarctic Earth Sciences Program Director (IPA/Rotator)

Antarctic Integrated System Science Program Director (IPA/Rotator)

E) On Detail

Scott Borg - Acting Assistant Director for Geosciences

Maggie Knuth - Acting Section Head for Antarctic Infrastructure and Logistics

Karen Sloane - Program Specialist, NSF Travel Office

II) Arctic Sciences Section (ARC) Portfolio Review

Simon Stephenson, the ARC Section Head, presented this topic. He noted that mathematics, physics, geo-space and other programs within NSF recently engaged with their respective communities to gain external input regarding NSF's portfolios. The Arctic Sciences community is evolving, new research questions are emerging (such as those raise in the National Research Council (NRC) report [The Arctic in the Anthropocene](#)), and ARC's portfolio could benefit from such an external review. Simon Stephenson proposed to create an interdisciplinary subcommittee of the re-established Advisory Committee for Polar Programs (AC OPP). A charge will be prepared for that subcommittee to perform an ARC portfolio review.

Berry Lyons asked what the timeline for the review will be. Simon Stephenson recommended that the charge for the review be initiated once AC OPP memberships are finalized (which is anticipated to occur by the summer of 2017). The review would be completed by the summer of 2018.

III) "Navigating the New Arctic" Update

Cynthia Suchman, an Arctic Natural Science Program Director, presented this topic with additional input from Simon Stephenson. "Navigating the New Arctic" (NNA) is one of NSF's [10 Big Ideas for Future NSF Investments](#). NNA is envisioned as a combination of: 1) Science & Technology Centers, 2) Long-Term Observation Programs and Sites, 3) Research Coordinated Networks, and 4) basic proposals. NNA will facilitate the developments of connections within OPP (e.g., AON, ARSS, & ASSP) and across the entire Foundation (e.g., CISE, EHR, ENG, SBE, and BIO). A Leadership Group, Steering Committee, and Working Group have been established in relation to the 10 Big Ideas initiative. On April 3, 2017, a [Dear Colleague Letter](#) was published calling for "convergence research" between NNA and other Big Ideas.

IV) Continued Community Engagement during the AIMS MREFC Process

Maggie Knuth (AIL Acting Section Head), Ben Roth (AIL Facilities Engineering Project Manager), and Scott Borg (GEO Acting Assistant Director) presented this topic.

First, community interaction leading to AIMS was reviewed. This interaction included: 1) activities (e.g., surveying 200 members of the research community, and briefings with other USAP Federal agencies) that informed the NRC 2011 report [*Future Science Opportunities in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean*](#); 2) research community input through a virtual “Town Hall” website, WEBEX meetings, and regional Town Halls, and briefings with other USAP Federal agencies that informed the NRC 2015 report [*A Strategic Vision for NSF Investments in Antarctic and Southern Ocean Research*](#); and 3) workshops/charrettes (attended by participants from 49 agencies/institutions), AIMS status updates on station and at national conferences, and the [*Future USAP*](#) website for encouraging and soliciting input for the AIMS Design Phase.

Second, potential future activities were considered. These include: 1) updating content and adding FAQs to the [*Future USAP*](#) website; 2) more research community interactions through webinars, Twitter/Reddit Q&A, and a (soon-to-be released) AIMS construction video; and 3) further community outreach through developed/updated outreach materials, outreach at national meetings and conferences, and briefings to the AC OPP.

Scott Borg noted that the Preliminary Design Review conducted in December of 2016 recommended movement into the Final Design Phase. The NSF Office of the Director (OD) and the National Science Board (NSB) need to provide approval. OPP will engage the research community in the Final Design Phase once approval has been secured.

Greg Sullivan asked when AIMS would be funded. Scott Borg noted that the goal was to have funding by FY19. Ben Roth noted that actual construction would take place between FY21 and FY26, with closeout occurring in FY27. Scott Borg noted that all dates will be driven by budget and, hence, have uncertainty associated with them.

V) Status of Proposals for “Thwaites: The Future of Thwaites Glacier and its Contribution to Sea-level Rise

Eric Saltzman reported the status of this initiative, which is a joint initiative between NSF and Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) of the Research Councils UK (RCUK). The deadline for submissions was March 1, 2017. A “healthy” number of proposals were submitted. Selections are underway for panels and reviewers. A joint NSF-NERC panel is expected to take place in June of 2017. Joint logistics evaluations are expected to take place in September 2017. Awards are expected to be announced in FY18. Logistics staging is planned for the FY18/FY19 season, with major field seasons occurring in FY19/20 and FY20/21.

Jo-Ann Mellish asked for elaboration on what is meant by a “healthy” number of proposals. Eric Saltzman noted that it reflected an assessment of the ratio of total funding requested from proposals to total funding available.

VI) OPP Director's Remarks

Kelly Falkner and (where noted below) OPP staff reported on the status of a number of issues:

A) **Conclusions of the GEO/PLR Merger Review:** The NSF Director presented the conclusions of the GEO/PLR Merger Review to the NSB at a meeting held on November 8-9, 2017. The conclusions included: 1) Polar Programs will undergo an official name change from the Division of Polar Programs (PLR) to the Office of Polar Programs (OPP); 2) the budget for OPP will be presented separately from GEO in NSF's budget; 3) as NSF proceeds with a selection of the next leader for OPP, an open national search will be initiated for nominal renewable terms of 4 to 5 years; 4) the OPP leader will actively participate in NSF Senior Management Roundtable meetings, giving them voice and visibility in making key decisions for the agency; and 5) OPP will have an advisory committee, with membership representing all directorates, reflecting their broad purviews across the agency and beyond. Management and infrastructure for OPP general operations and administration will continue to reside under GEO. These conclusions have been reviewed and approved by the NSB and the Union. The name change has been implemented and the status of re-establishing the Advisory Committee for Polar Programs is provided below.

Gregg Sullivan asked why management of general operations and administration for OPP will stay under GEO rather than shift to the OD. Kelly Falkner replied that the OD does not have the staffing necessary to perform such diverse management.

B) **Re-establishment of the Advisory Committee for Polar Programs (reported by Andrew Backe):** In January 2017, OPP staff coordinated with the NSF Committee Management Office to revise the previous Charter and Balance Plan for the AC OPP. Following revisions, the Charter and Balance Plan were reviewed and approved by the AD GEO, NSF OD, and GSA. After an announcement was published in the Federal Register for 15 days, the Charter was filed with the U.S. Congress on March 14, 2017. The process of filling memberships on the AC OPP will take place into the summer of 2017. The first AC OPP meeting is anticipated to take place in November 2017, after NSF relocates to its new headquarters building in Alexandria, VA.

C) **Report on OPP Senior Staff Retreat on Sexual Harassment:** OPP held a Senior Staff Retreat on March 9, 2017. The topic of the retreat was Sexual Harassment in Fieldwork and on Ships. Multiple participants throughout NSF (e.g., GEO, BIO, MPS, the Office of General Counsel, and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion) attended the retreat. Action items were developed that have application across NSF-funded contexts as well as in Polar Regions. Kelly Falkner will discuss some of these action items during the AC GEO Meeting on April 12, 2017 (1:30pm-2:15pm) when she gives a presentation titled "Update on Measures to Address Harassment at NSF Facilities."

D) Potential Topics for OPP Subcommittee “Committee of the Whole” session at the upcoming AC GEO Meeting (April 13, 2017, 11:15am-12:15pm): In addition to topics reviewed in previous sections of these webinar minutes, other potential topics include: 1) interface between the re-established AC OPP and the AC GEO and ACs in other NSF directorates; and 2) the process for acquiring nominees for the AC OPP.

During this portion of the webinar, Stefanie Brachfeld asked about two topics: 1) the timeline and research impacts for moving core samples from Florida State University to Oregon State University; and 2) the status of budget regarding research vessels. These topics will be addressed as prescribed in the action items section below.

E) COV for Polar Special Initiatives (reported by Lisa Rom): This COV will review educational proposals that were submitted to the Polar Special Initiatives program in FY2014-2016. The COV will be held May 16-17, 2017. Professor Berry Lyons is chair of the COV.

Action Items

- 1) Eric Saltzman and Thom Wilch will prepare a response for Stefanie Brachfeld and the broader community regarding the timeline and research impacts for moving core samples from Florida State University to Oregon State University.
- 2) Andrew Backe will send out to the OPP Subcommittee the link to the [*Dear Colleague Letter*](#) on convergence research. Peter West will disseminate the link to the broader research community via social media.
- 3) The topic on the status of budget for research vessels will be included in a future AC OPP meeting or a related forum.