

STAC 2014 Annual Meeting Summary

The 2014 STAC Annual Meeting was held on Saturday, February 1, 2014, in the Grand Ballroom B of the Omni Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia. Approximately 22 Boards and Committees were represented. The theme of the meeting was “What do we want STAC to be?”

Commissioner Ward Seguin introduced past Commissioner, Mary Cairns and newly appointed incoming Commissioner, Dave Stensrud. After the brief introductions and a call for agenda updates, Ward provided a brief overview of STAC activities and responsibilities. STAC is one of six Commissions and is represented on the Committee on Public Policy, the AMS Council, and the Award Oversight Committee. The STAC terms of reference state that STAC is to keep watch on progress in research and operations, and provide guidance to the Council on where additional support seems to be needed. STAC fulfills this mission by sponsoring numerous conferences and symposiums both at the Annual Meeting and throughout the year. STAC also plays a key role in the preparation and updating of AMS policy and information statements.

The intent of the theme of the meeting was to encourage STAC Boards and Committees to step back and ask how STAC should evolve. The Weather and Climate Enterprise has just undergone a substantial reorganization. The Publications Commission has enabled a rapid growth in submissions and there is no longer a charge for color. The Publications Commission is ready to work with STAC Boards and Committees to publish special collections that might come from sponsored conferences and symposiums. The idea of an atmospheric chemistry journal is being discussed. STAC Boards and Committees have shown a greater interest in co-sponsoring joint program and symposium sessions with other STAC and other Commission programs. Two years ago, Mary Cairns worked to ensure all Boards and Committees have student members. How do we want these students to participate in Board and Committee activities? To facilitate discussions, background information was presented and contributed by key AMS Headquarters staff and the Commissioners for Weather and Climate Enterprise and Publications. These discussions were then followed by open discussions by Board and Committees present at the meeting. Slides and presentation materials from these information sessions will be posted on the STAC web site.

Mohan Ramamurthy brought up the issue of data citations in publications. How much does the AMS get involved with storing data associated with papers? Our Society is evolving but our capabilities are fluid due to rapidly changing technology and financial constraints. This is an area where STAC Boards and Committees can help assess and influence future direction.

Stephanie Armstrong, Director of Development, summarized the AMS's Student Travel Funded Programs, the Fellowship/Scholarship Program, the Student Conference, and the Conference for Early Career Professionals. There is confusion about the various funding programs available for students. The conference and symposium program funds provided by the AMS are not intended to fund Board and Committee student members' participation in the specialty meetings. At Council direction, these funds must be open to all students and awarded on a competitive basis. However, at the request of Ward, this year Stephanie's Student Travel Grant program and Student Program included a question on the application asking if the student served on a STAC Board or Committee. Stephanie indicated her office received many applications from qualified students and it helped them identify another level of commitment by the student when making decisions. Stephanie's office did award funding to four Board and Committee student members last fall for this year's annual meeting. Additional information about the programs Stephanie covered can be found at the following web links (<http://www.ametsoc.org/amsstudentinfo/index.html>). Ken Carey of the STAC Satellite Committee pointed out that it often helps to contact Board or Committee student's faculty adviser, who might be able to provide partial support for the student's travel to conferences and symposiums. Just letting the advisor know the student is a committee member is helpful.

Tom Champoux, the new Director of Communications for the AMS, discussed communications, marketing, and branding and how we best unify them for success, i.e. getting the AMS word out. He pointed out that the AMS targets many different audiences and these audiences receive messages in many different ways (e.g. blogs, social media, advertising, promotions, etc.) One area that will be impacted by Tom's efforts will be AMS Statements. STAC Board and Committee members can spend many hours preparing and updating AMS Statements but without communicating them to intended audiences, they serve no purpose. This will be one of the functions of Tom's office. Tom also talked about elevating AMS organizational value to a level that makes broader audiences more aware of AMS's work, purpose, and assets.

Claudia Gorski, Director of Meetings, then provided an update on her office's responsibilities as they relate to specialty and the annual meetings. She provided a list of 34 specialty meetings holding conferences at the annual meeting, the specialty meetings scheduled for later in 2014, as well as the currently planned specialty meetings to be held the week of the 2015 Annual Meeting. She mentioned that conference contracts have been signed for annual meeting through 2032.

This past year Ward worked with Claudia to find sponsorship for eight conferences and symposiums that were not previously aligned with any Commission Board or Committee. In the future, if new conferences or symposiums are proposed that will become part of the annual or

specialty meeting rotation, we will work to find sponsorship by STAC Boards and Committees or other Commissions. This is important because the commission boards and committees are the reporting vehicle to the Council. If these proposed conferences and symposiums wish to hold the programs the week of the Annual Meeting, STAC Boards and Committees can play a key role in the scheduling of these programs. Claudia provided tables on the growth and declines of abstract submissions for some of the representative programs, which can be used as guidance in scheduling future conference sessions. The idea of remote access to meetings was also briefly discussed and Claudia mentioned that the AMS has looked into this, but the high cost needed to support remote talks makes it difficult at this time. We will continue to post the presentations of all talks that have been approved by the speaker. Following the STAC Annual Meeting, Claudia met with new program chairs responsible for planning the 2014 and 2015 specialty sessions.

Matt Parker and Mary Glackin, Commissioners for the Weather and Climate Enterprise (CWCE) provided a briefing on the mission of their Commission, the results of a recent reorganization, CWCE upcoming events, and key activities. They discussed how STAC Boards and Committees might work with CWCE Boards and Committees on cross-sector issues, Congressional visits, and joint sessions and panels. They encouraged STAC representation at this summer's CWCE Community Meeting. Matt and Mary highlighted a major activity within CWCE, the Forecast Improvement Group (FIG) which is seeking to bring together the public, private and academic sector and identify steps that would improve U.S. forecast performance. The scope of this effort ranges from observations to generation of forecasts and they are discussing how to best address the all-important topic of forecast communication. See AMS FIG Summary Recommendations for work to date. The FIG group believes that a closer connection to STAC would be beneficial.

These presentations and discussions were then followed by the first of two open discussion period. Two topics were addressed during this first open discussion: 1) developing plans for the future and 2) a proposal to allow the position of deputy chair for Boards and Committees. Many of Boards and Committees only focus on planning for the next conference program, and yet, these Boards and Committees can offer so much more to the science community by supporting other activities such as working with the CWCE on Congressional visits, offering AMS short courses, supporting Weatherfest, and ensuring Society members are recognized through the awards process, and working with the Publications Commission to prepare special collections or to contribute summary articles to the Bulletin, to name a few. Ward proposed that each Board and Committee develop a five year plan as a way of focusing attention on these other activities. In making this proposal, Ward is not looking for long prose documents, but rather a one to two page document by each Board and Committee that identifies objectives by year. A bullet list of objectives by year will be sufficient provided individual bullets are clear in their objectives. Responsibility for leading activities should be shared with Board and Committee members including the student members. The idea is to complete these plans by June 30 to allow Ward to share these with the other Commissioners in September when all of the Commissioners

meet in Boston just before the Council meeting. The AMS is planning to revisit the Society's Strategic Plan this year, and STAC's collection of five year plans will potentially be helpful in updating the Strategic Plan.

During the membership renewals this year a couple of Committees requested they have co-chairs. Mary and Ward discussed this idea and Ward then discussed this with the AMS Secretary-Treasurer, Rick Rosen, a former STAC Commissioner. The consensus of both Mary and Rick was that co-chairs might lead to some confusion as to who was responsible for what. With this background, Ward brought up the subject at this meeting and offered as an alternative the position of deputy chair for Boards and Committees that want such a position. The participants offered both supportive and concerned comments for this proposal. Some of the concerns included the added bureaucracy it might involve, and for very small Committees this position was not necessary. Ward point out that some chairs find it difficult to complete Chair duties because of their day jobs, and a deputy might be helpful to them, particularly if they expand their activities as proposed in five year plans. Clearly some small Committees may not need deputies, but some of the larger Boards and Committees, which sponsor multiple programs, may welcome a deputy.

Ward also asked the Boards and Committees be more active in seeking nominations for Society Awards. Individuals involved in seeking or preparing nominations cannot be part of a nomination review committees if they are connected to a nominee, but they can actively contact colleagues and encourage them to submit nominations. Woody Roberts pointed out it is sometimes hard to recognize individuals involved in systems development but don't publish in refereed journals. Ward mentioned the Special Award as one possible way to recognize these individuals.

During a working lunch, Mary Cairns, who is also the Chief Editor of the Glossary of Meteorology, provided an update on the Glossary. STAC Board and Committee members have been called upon to assist in creating or updating glossary terms. As of the presentation date, four terms have been updated, and eight new terms added the glossary. Six are currently under review, one revision and five new terms.

Bill Gail, now Society president, and president elect, Sandy MacDonald stopped by the STAC and briefly discussed their thinking and planning for 2015 and 2016 Annual Meetings.

Brian Mardirosian, our IT focal point briefly discussed updates and improvements to the web pages which are coming. He reminded everyone they have web editing capabilities and can easily add content to their pages. Ward has proposed several organizational changes to the web page to make it easier for users to find: news and reports, links to calendars and meetings, contacts, forms etc. The plan is to implement these changes this spring.

Incoming Commissioner, Dave Stensrud briefed the group on recent activities of a committee he chaired to update statement Guidelines. The committee was established by Council in September because statements are not being updated in a timely manner and it is becoming more difficult to recruit writing

teams. The updated Guidelines will be provided to the Council members in March after AMS editors review the document.

Then Ward, Mary, and Dave proposed to the Council new procedures to be used by STAC to review award nominations. The motivation is to bring STAC procedures more in line with review procedures followed by other Commissions, make the procedures more uniform within STAC, include other Commission members in the STAC reviews, and encourage senior scientist representation on the committees. The next step is for the Commissioners to draft guidelines for the Council to consider and approve.

At 3:15, the annual STAC meeting adjourned.