



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Science Council

NOAA SCIENCE COUNCIL MEETING

January 9th, 2024

10:00 AM to 12:00 PM EST

Google Meet

MEETING MINUTES

ATTENDEES

Executive

Sarah Kapnick, Chair
Steve Thur, Vice Chair
Celina Harris, Exec Sec
Isha Renta, Exec Sec

Principal

Sean Corson, NOS
Fiona Horsfall, OAR (alternate)
Douglas Howard, NESDIS
Kristen Koch, NMFS
Randall Tebeest, OMAO
Hendrik Tolman, NWS (alternative)

Advisory

Tony LaVoi, Chief Data Officer
Hendrik Tolman, Council of NOAA Fellows Representative
Casey Stewart, NOAA Science Advisory Board Executive Director
Alison Krepp, Social Sciences Committee Co-Chair
Kelly Goodwin, S&T Synergy Committee Chair
Kelly Webster, Technology Partnership Office
Frank Indiviglio, NOAA Chief Information Office
Cynthia Decker, Scientific Integrity Officer

Other Attendees

Greg Frost, OAR
Sharon Yaary, OAR
Eric Bayler, NESDIS
Janet Edelen, NESDIS
Victoria Breeze, OAR
Kenneth Vierra, OAR
Curtis Alexander, OAR
Mackenzie Solomon, OAR
Brooke McHansen, NESDIS
Eric Bayler, NESDIS
Genevieve Lind, OAR
Wayne Mackenzie, OAR
Jonathon Mote, OAR
Shelby Butz, NOS
Terence Lynch, OAR
Sarah Davis, OAR
Ishrat Jabin, OAR
Laura Newcomb, OAR
Melissa Yencho, NMFS
Andrew Peck, OAR
Debbie Sinmao, OFA
Ingrid Ramos-Guasp, NESDIS
Alexandra Neal, OAR
Jessica Morgan, NESDIS
Roxie Allison-Holman, OGC
Victoria Moreno, OAR
Julie Price, NESDIS
Joseph Casola, NESDIS
Victoria Luu, OAR
James Jenkins, OAR
Abigail Arnold, OAR
Tony Wilhelm, PRSSO

APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS

Notify Exec Sec at science.council.execsec@noaa.gov within two weeks of the following meeting if any changes to the minutes are needed.

CHAIR ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- RDEC Chair, Dr. Gary Matlock, has stepped down from his position as of December 29th. The chair acknowledged his service as RDEC Chair.

MINUTES

- Minutes from the November 7th Science Council meeting were **approved**.

ACTION ITEM REVIEW

- The Exec Sec reviewed all current action items.

BRIEFINGS: Briefing materials are available in the 2024 Science Council Meetings folder on Google Drive.

Social Science Workforce Development Report: Alexandra Neal,

Alexandra Neal discussed her slides and provided position descriptions for Social, Behavioral and Economic Scientist (SBES) positions compared against US Fish & Wildlife. She highlighted how NOAA is hiring towards Band 4 for these positions, which makes for more difficulty in recruiting early careers. Federal social scientists have a higher turnover rate and separate from the agency at earlier ages than physical science levels. She recommends NOAA to create a diverse SBES workforce in terms of career stage (need more ZP-3 and early career) and more senior level opportunities (i.e. details) to encourage career advancement and bring more folks to the table at higher levels. Incoming SBES are being asked to fulfill “generic” duties given their broad backgrounds. This makes it harder for people to pass HR certification and also may cause folks to avoid applying if they don’t understand exactly what the job duties entail. There is a one-pager for consideration for crafting SBES positions in development.

Discussion:

NWS shared that they have ~15 people across different position levels and also contracting opportunities and recommended recognizing the diversity of fields in SBES as worthwhile. They stated that setting up Social Scientist teams to work within physical scientist teams is helpful for providing them a location. The Social Science Committee representative stated that they are tracking closely on NWS advances with SBES - very exciting! NWS agreed that this community is very important, they see nuances in the SBES survey data between NMFS, where the majority of SBES workforce currently is, and other line offices as well. The Chair commented that providing access to DOC is a plus for our SBES because they have a lot of data that we can use for evaluation analysis. She also acknowledged that it is a challenge of not embedding this work sooner across the sciences given that there can be a gap in the analysis without having SBES engagement early and often. NWS shared an example of what the Chair was saying in that NWS is rethinking what their "production suite" of operational forecast models should look like. This effort is led by their social sciences group (rather than bringing them in later), which has been game changing and eye opening. NOS shared that their Social Scientists team at NCCOS encourages this across the agency and asked if any engagement has taken place with HR? How can we get more information on the pool of applicants before it gets to the hiring teams? They supported the suggestion of fine tuning KSAs and

PDs for hiring, as a critical step with OHCS to develop this in place with them. They also addressed the challenges over the years to finetune PD libraries when not working with them.

Neal stated that having strong PDs from the beginning sets up a strong relationship with candidates.

NMFS liked the presentation and agreed that OHCS must be part of this effort. They shared that NMFS is making a large IRA investment in social science over the next 2-3 years to expand beyond economics and access non-traditional datasets. They shared that because IRA is temporary and in their own opinion, NMFS has been slow to hire "the other social scientists" (beyond economists) as the other LOs.

NOAA's Reputational Risk: Sarah Kapnick and Joe Casola

The Chair discussed her slides and started by sharing that this topic has come in different ways during her time as Chief Scientist but without an explicit name. She explained that reputation is built over decades but this can be lost with one severe event. She shared that there are Three types of risks: (1) direct due to organization action, (2) employee actions related to fraud and scientific integrity, (3) tangential risks through third-party relationships. She addressed that currently NOAA manages risk primarily for operations. She brought up that people often come to NOAA with a lot of confidence due to our data and services, but that NOAA needs to maintain this if we want people to continue to use our information as decisions get harder in the adaptation and environmental space. NOAA's reputation standing impacts how we use our products and how we recruit workforces in the future. People want to work with us because they trust our brand. We need to consider how partnerships impact us and how they will impact our reputation as we move forward. They shared a link to a poll to identify other forms of reputational risk for NOAA and to share current examples of risks to NOAA's reputation. It was shared that in some private companies about 50% of what the risk managers are handling is reputational risk because this is so tightly tied to their revenue. This also impacts us at NOAA, if people stopped using our services we'd see this impact our appropriations.

Discussion

NMFS shared that this topic should be talked about more than initially thought based on how we think about what falls into this reputational risk. As NMFS is the regulatory side of the agency, there's a bit of risk that may be in this realm that isn't being considered. There's also the risk of how people view us as a partner in the way we partner with other agencies and outside entities. The Vice Chair concurred with the NMFS point. He asked if we currently talk about some of these issues without labeling them as "reputational risk"?, which the Chair defined at the start of her presentation. He mentioned that in OAR, we talk about some of these issues, but not labeling them as such.

A PRSSO representative shared that NOAA's ability to track our weather services should be tracked over our climate services otherwise we may be flying blind. This could be an action item for when we have the lead for a climate ready nation. NWS shared that this is about risk and opportunities and commented that being transparent when we are uncertain and making that a part of the messaging is a way to also build relationships and demonstrate transparency. The Chair commented that this demonstrates how this ties back to SBES and shows that there is a great chance to strengthen what we do and showcase how we do it. The Vice Chair shared that we should habituate how we view evaluation of risk and figuring out how to indoctrinate this will be what leads to lasting change. The Scientific Integrity Officer added that there needs to be a difference between security and reputational risk from research risk that will have high rewards.

The Social Science Committee rep shared the way that state partner community programs are run and how we should try to mimic how they run. The Chair asked how do we freely talk about it and make sure that we have an understanding of the language to discuss the reputation of doing certain science or not? NOS stated that one of the risks we may want to take into account is the political context and the number of issues in the past 10 years or so that have become politicized and added that it is a hard line to set a position and science without the risk of it becoming a political risk as well.

NOAA Research Security: Genevieve Lind

Lind discussed her slides and shared that in light of risk management, NOAA tends to be internally focused but new needs for external focusing have come up in recent years with various memos or acts to look at external risk as well as internal risk. Most recently the SBIR program was reauthorized and includes external risk as a highlight that agencies now need to demonstrate how they will be implementing. These new requirements have led to weekly program manager meetings and interagency forums on specific areas. We have also collaborated closely with NIST over this progress. This has a lot of congressional security and we were required to provide monthly briefings and undergo numerous GAO audits on the implementation process. This will likely continue to be important when the program goes up for reauthorization in 2025. NOAA faced challenges identifying resources and expertise to carry out requirements of the program. The current approach does not meet agency requirements and is unsustainable.

Discussion

NWS asked if we'll get into more trouble in terms of discussions if we need to have it? We want to move forward with open science. OAR shared that Gary Matlock sent a request to all AAs for review of NOAA's draft SBIR Due Diligence Plan on January 5. The Vice Chair shared that we are being asked to create a process where there isn't any yet. There are concerns that these processes won't lead to the outcomes that are being hoped for. The Chair added that it may be good to raise this with Ben Fiedman next because this is being raised as an operational problem for NOAA.

SRM White Paper: Victoria Breeze and Greg Frost

A presentation was shared and they discussed that albedo modification and marine cloud brightening are the main areas that NOAA has dedicated science over the past few years. This research is directed at OAR through a congressional mandate. Additional academic partners and working relationship with NASA and DOE. Initially work has focused on monitoring and characterizing aerosols in the environment. NOAA was a heavy contributor to the 2023 OSTP Report on Solar Radiation Modification (SRM). NOAA has drafted an Earth's Radiation Budget Research Agenda and would like to have it finished by June.

Discussion

The Vice Chair shared that June seems ambitious for congressional delivery. But we should keep this push so we can aim for before November. The Chair commented that there is a climate intervention fact sheet that we are trying to get pushed out on a similar timeline. She added that this is an area that will be increasing numbers of questions about this in the near future and will become critical. NOAA has the lead as the only agency with SRM appropriations. She added that having a strategy will allow us to maintain this lead and also appropriations

moving forward. She commented that it is not necessarily on us to advocate for use of SRM but to determine efficacy and impact. It will be up to policy makers on how they use that information. NESDIS shared that this is a very controversial topic, and requires fundamental scientific understanding that neatly fits into our portfolios but that they stand ready to respond should anyone decide to implement this but we do not take a policy position in this agenda on should this be implemented or deployed. We should be ready if anyone decides to implement this without communicating and detect when folks are implementing this in the future. The Chair commented that other agencies in the intelligence community have an interest in this controversial subject and see us as a responsible scientific group who can understand environmental implications of actions on communities. We will be the second country to say we have a plan on this as the UK only recently released a report on this. It is a tricky problem but we are being asked to lead and identify answers on many fronts.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next NOAA Science Council meeting is February 13th via Google Meet.

ACTION ITEMS

Science Council: This spreadsheet lists all current open action items currently assigned to the Council. Additional information for each entry can be found in the original email assigning this task. If you have any questions, please email science.council.execsec@noaa.gov.

Date Assigned or Action Number	Subject Line	Assigned To	Status
20220510-01	Cooperative Research Committee ToR	Group of NOAA Science Council principals and advisory members	The group is following up on the motion proposed by Gary Matlock at the May Science 2022 Council meeting.
20220830	Science Council ToR	SC/NEP	Needs NEC comments to be addressed and send back to the NOAA Administrator for approval
20221104-2	SoS Fact Sheet - Drought	NIDIS	POC working on updating first draft.
20230716	SoS Fact Sheet - NOAA's Greenhouse Gas Activities	OAR CPO	Initial review comments were addressed and will be sent for showstopper review.
20230920	SoS Fact Sheet - Climate Intervention 2-year review and updates	OAR	Draft received and ready for initial review.
20240109	2024 Work Plan	Exec Sec	SC responses received. Work Plan document needs to be developed.