

CIRES Members Council Meeting

Minutes

February 17, 2021

12:00-2:00 PM MT via Google Meet

Y/N	CIRES Section	CMC Member	Role
Y	CSL	Joe Katich	Vice Chair
Y	CSL	Yelena Pichugina	
N	East Campus	Molly Hardman	
Y	East Campus	Mistia Zuckerman	
Y	GML	Jon Kofler	Backup Exec / Fellows Rep
Y	GML	Gaby Pétron	OPA Chair
Y	GSL	Eric James	Membership Chair
Y	GSL	Man Zhang	
Y	Main Campus	Ryan Cassotto	Mentorship Program Chair
Y	Main Campus / IT	Meg Tilton	Rendezvous Vice Chair
Y	NCEI	Aaron Sweeney	Secretary
N	NCEI	Adam Woods	Executive Meeting Rep
Y	PSL	Janice Bytheway	Mentorship Vice Chair
Y	PSL	Antonietta Capotondi	Fellows Rep
Y	SEEC	Dawn Umpleby	Rendezvous Chair
Y	SWPC	Eric Adamson	Chair
Y/N	CIRES Section	Liaison	Role
Y	Admin	Lucia Harrop	Administrative Liaison
	CIRES Section	Guests	
	Admin	Angela Knight	
	Admin	Christine Wiedinmyer	
	NCEI	Kelly Carignan	
		Nazrul Islam	

12:05 PM Chair called meeting to order.

Reports:

1. Secretary (Aaron)

- a. See attendance table above, sorted by CIRES Section and last name. Please mark "Y" in the left-hand-column if you are present.

2. Membership (Eric J.)

- a. Need to touch base with Ryan Cassotto about the Main Campus cluster definitions.
- b. In the meantime, we have updated cluster numbers from Lucia Harrop. Under our current cluster definitions, we need one additional representative each from Main Campus, East Campus, and SEEC. See the spreadsheet here:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1JxE7WstF9Nu1tFBKsScVFiKEXHcntKC HvsLJA7S6CA/edit?usp=sharing>

- c. I can work with the current CMC Reps from these clusters to see if we can recruit some additional representatives!

3. Mentorship Program (Ryan / Janice)

- a. No update.

4. OPA (Gaby)

- a. Six nominations have been received so far, two under “Service” and four under “Engineering/Science.” The deadline for nominations is Friday, Feb. 19, at 5pm.
- b. We have a committee to do the review. The list of winners to be shared with Waleed on March 19, assuming all goes as planned.

5. Rendezvous (Dawn)

- a. Finalizing the data for Rendezvous - now May 21
 - Avoid conflict with GSL review? - yes

6. Chair (Eric A.)

- a. Report on monthly meeting with Associate Director for Science
 - CIRES Awards Policy has been amended according to CMC’s suggestion - students now eligible for awards in general
 - Rendezvous conflict, not requesting change, just making note
 - Glad CMC is reviewing main campus representation within CMC
 - Some discussion regarding CGA, will put CMC in contact with chairs to discuss any outstanding need for explicit rep in CMC

Q&A with Christine Wiedinmyer and Angela Knight

...on the topics of Career Track, Supervisory Issues, Equity, Promotion, and CIRES/Fed Expectations.

Note: A CIRES Career Track Survey will be circulated to Associate Scientists and Research Scientists. CMC Members are asked to promote the survey within their sections. The survey is anonymous and responses will not be tracked by CIRES section.

Career Track

1. How many new career tracks are anticipated?
 - a. *TBD. Yelena Pichugina is the CMC Representative on the Career Track Revision Committee and can keep the CMC informed of the committee process.*
2. Will revision of the career track process result in more levels or only tracks?
 - a. *We've only just received the skill survey feedback. It's unknown if we'll add more tracks, or create sub-tracks as an outcome of this review.*
3. Under the restructuring, what kind of career support will be available for various levels and tracks (e.g., portfolio, project and time management, effective communications in large teams, emotional intelligence, effective and inclusive supervisor / team lead training, etc.)? Does CIRES have a budget to offer / support the cost of training for employees? Can we ask CU HR for specific training for a group of CIRES employees and is there a cost associated with this?
 - a. *CIRES may be able to cover the cost of professional development trainings (not technical training) through a "central" CIRES fund (not project funds). CIRES Professional Development trainings are offered by [CU](#) or CIRES and contribute back to your work, so these training are considered part of an employee's work time. CIRES employees can submit a Professional Development request in [insidecires](#). For CU HR led training, group size can be 6-8 and up to 20-25.*
4. Can you provide any updates regarding merit increase expectations for 2021?
 - a. *Currently, a merit increase for 2021 is not expected. It depends on fall enrollment. Campus staff 5% pay reduction will likely be lifted July 1st but no increase is planned. Have not yet seen final campus decision here.*

Supervisory Issues

5. Supervisory duties are not enough to warrant out of cycle salary increases (i.e., supervision is not compensated, specifically) but can be used to leverage career track

advances. How can senior level positions leverage supervisory duties into salary increases? Would out of cycle be appropriate if no other mechanism exists to recognize such increases in responsibilities? Is there an upper limit to how many employees a CIRES supervisor can "manage"? If yes, what is it?

a. *Out of cycle raises can be used for increased responsibilities. There is no official upper limit on the number of supervisees per supervisor. Practically however groups need to make sure every employee has adequate supervision and mentoring between science advisor and CIRES supervisor. It is understood that supervisory duty and engagement can vary.*

6. How often will CIRES supervisor training be offered? Could supervisors request specific training that could help them be more effective and successful? Could supervisees provide feedback on their supervisors? How could this be fair and confidential? Some supervisors supervise too many people or are **not knowledgeable enough about the supervisee's work to be really effective and leading to inequity in the merit increase process.**

a. *CIRES is currently offering supervisor training. The trainings are recorded and will be posted. They are offered twice a year: February and September. An online manual organized by theme would be useful as a reference as well. There is some thinking about supervisees providing feedback on their supervisors, but this hasn't been fleshed out yet. Perhaps this will mimic the peer feedback process, but this is still under consideration. Jimena Ugaz and Nate Campbell are working to gather supervisor information/guidance into a central location/tab. There was a suggestion to include types of rater biases in the introductory paragraph for the Annual Summary of Accomplishments (ASA).*

7. There is inconsistency from one science advisor and/or supervisor to another in defining a CIRES employee's goals for an upcoming year, and in evaluating whether a CIRES employee has met expectations, exceeded them, or other. The process is extremely subjective, and mainly driven by how demanding any given science advisor/supervisor is. The result is that CIRES employees receive different pay increases when in fact their annual efforts and accomplishments are very similar. Should there be training at the science advisor level (this would have to include feds at NOAA) to ensure that ASA's are being evaluated 'against the same measuring stick'?

a. *During the CIRES supervisor training, bias types are highlighted/elevated for awareness and mitigation. It was pointed out that this issue is common to many organizations. Employees can write a statement if they disagree with their ASA assessment. Employees cannot choose their supervisors. If there is an issue,*

please contact Christine. These two resources are provided during the CIRES Supervisor Training:

- *Performance Rating Descriptors:* <https://ciresblogs.colorado.edu/cires-admin/wp-content/uploads/sites/67/2021/02/Performance-rating-descriptors-2.pdf>
- *Mitigating Bias:* <https://ciresblogs.colorado.edu/cires-admin/wp-content/uploads/sites/67/2021/02/Mitigate-Bias-for-Performance-Management.pdf>

During the pandemic, it would be useful to increase the frequency of discussions/check-ins.

8. The role/involvement of a CIRES supervisor outside of the ASA process can vary a lot. Are there guidelines or clear expectations somewhere?

- a. *The CIRES Supervisor Training Series is intended to provide expectations for supervisor role/involvement outside of the ASA process. CIRES HR is working to include tips for employee retention and employee engagement at future trainings.*

9. It seems there is a broad desire by CIRES employees to have more formalized supervision, yet the administration's perspective appears unwavering in its opposition to providing compensation for these responsibilities (perhaps this is due to the nature of the funding source?). Is there any discussion within the administration of providing the compensation required to truly motivate supervisors across the organization to commit to filling such supportive roles, so clearly desired by the employees?

- a. *The structure of the cooperative agreement makes it difficult to compensate for supervisory activities. CIRES Admin is aware of this issue and actively looking at ways to address this in the next NOAA award.*

Equity

10. Noting that CIRES has recently implemented a tool, providing employees a convenient means by which to update their Position Descriptions (PDs), it would be great to see a complimentary effort toward standardizing the level of detail expected within them. Presumably, such a standardized approach to PDs would afford improved alignment between positions and pay. Is any such effort underway, or anticipated?

- a. *Everyone should check if their PD is up to date, if not, update it with supervisor and put it on file with CIRES HR. Make sure to be descriptive enough for responsibilities. The template for Position Descriptions is gathering more information than CIRES had before. CIRES HR is considering the addition of*

“working titles.” CIREs HR will be providing more guidance on how to fill out the template in the future, and is considering how to capture “core competencies.”

11. In discussions surrounding pay equity within CIREs, it is often noted that HR conducts periodic reviews, within each division, of all employees within a particular career track and level (e.g., RS2, AS3, ...). However, it seems common that the responsibilities of individual positions vary drastically within such a career track tier, even within a single division. Thus, comparing an individual employee’s salary to the median salary for those at a “comparable” level within their division, or within the broader CIREs organization, appears to afford little value. Is CIREs admin aware of this? Is there any plan to address this? Has any thought been given to expanding the granularity of the tiers within a track to realize a system more akin to the federal grades?

a. The Career Track Revision Committee is considering tiers within tracks. CIREs HR is meeting with CIREs leads in each unit to review salaries for equity. There was concern expressed that some CIREs leads do not share information (lack of transparency). Budgets look different at the team level within sections (some teams have more money than others). Some of our federal leaders are not aware of how the CO Equal Pay Act may impact compensation for the CIREs workforce.

12. CIREs HR and CU HR have mostly discussed the new Colorado Equal Pay Act impact on new hires or new job openings? This is important but how will the Act impact existing employees and are CIREs leads and CIREs and CU HR the only people aware of the equity evaluation process results leaving employees “blind” to how this is all done and reconciled.

a. See answers to the previous question.

13. Since HR has asked that everyone update their job descriptions over the last few years - could CIREs HR provide broad sample job descriptions for jobs/career tracks that could be created by looking at common job roles and responsibilities from these descriptions? Should some employees' job titles change to be standardized across CIREs?

a. Examples of job descriptions (standard language) will be considered, but will depend on the CIREs Career Track Revision Committee and the Career Track Survey results. It may be challenging to do this due to the diversity of roles across the organization.

14. What is the general expectation regarding out-of-cycle raises? It was my understanding, from a town hall discussion last year, that Waleed has the view that if someone's responsibilities have grown in the short-term, they should receive higher merit increase in the corresponding year(s), and that if such an increased responsibility has become a long-term expectation, a revised PD, accompanied by an out-of-cycle raise would be appropriate to "reset" an employee's annual merit ratings to a standard "meets expectations." Is this accurate?

a. *Out-of-cycle pay increase (OOCPI) is intended to compensate for an increase in ongoing adjustment of duties or compression and equity. If you receive an OOCPI between July 1 and Sept. 30, you would not be eligible for the merit increase that fall.*

15. Regarding promotion and salary considerations between two career tracks: Associate Scientists (AS) and Research Scientists (RS). In some cases, the range of salaries in the same levels between tracks could be very close, while the RS track requires more responsibilities which may lead to a longer period between promotions from one level to another compared to the RA track. Is HR aware of this and is anything being done to address this issue?

a. *It's not true that the RS track has more responsibilities than the AS track. There are different responsibilities, not more. Salaries depend on the duties. One of the deficiencies of the RS track is that some jobs do not allow for time for publications.*

16. Regarding scientists who retire from NOAA federal positions and move to CIRES. Do they go through the regular CIRES process for promotion? Does their salary range depend on the CIRES committee or the Lab Director's decision?

a. *There are only a few employees in this category and they are all Senior Research Scientists (hired at that level).*

Promotion

17. How can employees be sure that promotions are handled fairly between CIRES groups/sections and in a timely fashion? If an employee feels this is not the case, what is the recommended course of action?

a. *They may contact CIRES HR.*

18. How are management responsibilities recognized in promotions?

a. *They are considered as part of the package.*

CIRES / Fed Expectations

19. Some CIRES employees conduct work that should be assumed by Feds and for which the CIRES employees may have limited authority leading to frustration and undue difficulties. Such situations have happened in various labs and groups and can be short or long-term. Employees performing work that “in theory” should be assumed by a Federal employee may not receive training, support or compensation for these responsibilities. This type of situation may not be clear and the issue may not be acknowledged openly either. How can CIRES employees safely discuss such conflicting situations and how can these contributions be adequately recognized for and included in the employees ASA? This issue warrants further discussion with input from enough employees and maybe later follow-up with groups to lead to an improved situation and clarification of roles and expectations in mixed Feds/CIRES teams.

a. *Christine is seeking clarification on this question.*

Actions:

- Secretary to share minutes with Angela, Christine, and CMC Members for approval prior to posting.
- Chair will circulate action items that can be handled via email, prior to the next meeting.
- CMC Members please promote the Career Track Survey within your respective clusters.

Meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM.