

CIRES Members Council Meeting

Minutes

June 24, 2021

12:00-1:35 PM MT via Google Meet

Y/N	CIRES Section	CMC Member	Role
Y	CSL	Joe Katich	Chair (Acting)
Y	CSL	Yelena Pichugina	Track Committee Rep
Y	East Campus	Molly Hardman	
N	East Campus	Mistia Zuckerman	
Y	GML	Jon Kofler	Backup Exec / Fellows Rep
Y	GML	Gaby Pétron	OPA Chair
Y	GSL	Eric James	Membership Chair
N	GSL	Man Zhang	
Y	Main Campus	Ryan Cassotto	Mentorship Program Chair
N	Main Campus / IT	Meg Tilton	Rendezvous Vice Chair
Y	Main Campus/HR/Adm	Jimena Ugaz	
Y	NCEI	Aaron Sweeney	Secretary
-	NCEI	(vacant)	
Y	PSL	Janice Bytheway	Mentorship Vice Chair
Y	PSL	Antonietta Capotondi	Fellows Rep
Y	SEEC	Dawn Umpleby	Rendezvous Chair
Y	SWPC	Hazel Bain	
Y/N	CIRES Section	Liaison	Role
N	Admin	Lucia Harrop	Administrative Liaison
	CIRES Section	Guests	
	PSL	Chesley Mccoll	

12:04 PM Meeting called to order.

Reports:

1. Secretary (Aaron)

- a. I will investigate the status and custody of the CMC Bylaws document in our shared Google Drive.

2. Membership (Eric J.)

- a. Hazel Bain has been remotely voted in as a member of the CMC
- b. Do we need to officially vote in Joe as CMC Chair? Joe: I do not see anything in the bylaws that claims I'm automatically Chair in the event that sitting Chair resigns. Job description says "Encouraged to assume Chair responsibilities when the Chair's term concludes". I think we need to vote.
- c. Still need a volunteer for Vice Chair
- d. Three additional interested CMC candidates (from CSL, CIRES HR, NSIDC).
- e. Status of discussion with Ryan Cassotto about the main campus cluster definitions.
- f. Any news for CIRES main campus representation? Ryan has a new list for CIRES main cluster that will be maintained with help from Meg, Lucia and Jimena, students removed. Christine Wiedinmyer mentioned there are new employees in WPC, Maryland. Too small to be a cluster. Suggestion from Ryan: They could be added to the SWPC cluster once SWPC has a representative.
- g. Decision: Keep cluster "Main," which includes CIRES Admin/IT and all groups at Main Campus.
- h. Eric J: several people are interested in joining. Jimena has been voted in. One person each from CSL, Admin, NSIDC, and SWPC.
- i. Aaron: Adam Woods (NCEI) has departed CIRES, so NCEI has a CMC Rep vacancy that we are in the process of filling. Also, Adam had been serving as Executive Meeting Rep, so that position is vacant as well.
- j. Notes: Still down one CMC Rep from CU East Campus. Antonietta is considering stepping down and a potential PSL Rep candidate (Chesley Mccoll) is attending this meeting. Antonietta currently serves as Fellows Rep. Yelena proposed updating the CMC Rep pictures on the CMC website. Fellows Meeting is once per month (2 hrs)--CMC Fellows Rep is an observer (no voting)--gives perspective on how CIRES works. Vice Chair circulates meeting availability survey, sends out calendar invite, sits in on monthly meetings (Chair) with Waleed and Christine, and will likely serve as Chair if Chair steps down.
- k. Action: (All) Reach out to Joe and Eric J. if interested in serving as CMC Vice Chair, Executive Council Rep, and Fellows Rep.
- l. Action: (Eric) Update CMC Rep photos on CMC website.

3. Mentorship Program (Ryan / Janice)

- a. Report on final survey released to the Mentorship Program Committee. Mostly encouraging feedback from participants. Some suggestions for new training

sessions. Overall, a positive experience with 100% of respondents reporting being satisfied with the program and would recommend it to others.

- b. Committee meeting Jul 1 and biweekly thereafter to begin year 3 planning
- c. CMP is co-sponsoring a monthly [career development series](#) led by Bec Batchelor and CIRES E&O. Next workshop is Jul 15 1-2 pm titled **Building a Meaningful Support Network** and led by Christine Wiedinmyer. We are also looking for new topics/ideas for future workshops.
- d. Notes: Surveys (pre-, mid-, and post-) indicate people increased their sense of belonging at CIRES. This year: 34 mentors, 26 mentees (more mentors than mentees).

4. Rendezvous (Dawn/Meg):

- a. Waiting on survey results.
- b. Notes: Thanks to the Rendezvous shepherds! Looking forward to in-person next year. Survey closed last Friday. Christine wanted to pass along Congratulations to the Rendezvous Committee. 93 posters presented.

5. OPA (Gaby) - Sorry nothing to report. Will work on this later this summer

- a. Make a policy saying a nomination is final after its submission explicit for future years (no adding people)
- b. Meg has a list of IT improvements for future OPA cycles that will be tackled after Rendezvous.
- c. More guidance on what can help make a strong nomination: avoid jargon, write for non-expert in the particular field, etc...
- d. Write report with main issues and key information for next OPAC chair and for OPA secretary
- e. Discussion: Members of CIRES Admin have been nominated and received OPA awards in the past. However, during this current OPA cycle, there has been resistance from senior management to nominate or provide support letters. In the past, HR Directors and Associate Director for Science have written support letters. Chair and Vice-Chair to discuss with Assoc. Dir. Science. (**Carry Forward to June meeting**)

6. Diversity and Inclusion

- a. Susan Sullivan working on a strategic plan for CIRES and will circulate draft soon for comments.

7. CIRES Career Track Committee (Yelena)

- a. Notes from previous meeting:
 - Previously the Committee decided on 4 sub-tracks within the AS and RS tracks: Science; Engineering / Applications; Management; Computer Science
 - Discussion: Would be good to have broad input from CIRES employees. Could be accomplished via a survey. Would be good for CMC Reps to have two weeks to review and share materials with their constituents and provide feedback.
- b. The 1 June meeting of the Career Track Committee has been canceled and more time is needed to complete the track review summary. Instead, the summarized job categories, metrics, etc will be shortly sent to the committee members for review and additional comments.
 - The updated draft, with a summary of results from the survey will be sent to the CMC, Fellows, (others?) for a review. The feedback from those groups is expected within a month.
 - The Committee will review the feedback and discuss it at the meeting later this summer.
 - A final product is expected in the Fall.

8. Chair (Joe acting)

- a. Meeting with Associate Director for Science (Christine)
 - Met with Christine
 - Notes: Draft of CIRES Career Track changes to be circulated in a few weeks. Christine has reached out to specific, senior CIRES people in each group and asked for one-page summaries (past work, future plans, tie-in to NOAA goals) for the proposal for a new Cooperative Agreement. Christine and Katy Human are compiling all proposal text from senior CIRES people. Christine will circulate the draft with those who made contributions to the proposal. Jimena: Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) "Recommended Actions" available from InsideCIRES -> A-Z -> Supervisor Resource pages.
 - Action: (Joe) Talk to Christine about [EcoPass](#) renewal. Potential for subsidy in place of ecopass (a la NOAA...extend to all CIRES?)

Open Issues:

1. Organization of CIRES Clusters: (Joe's note: close out)

- a. Should we establish a committee to undertake this effort, or engage the entirety of the CMC? Ryan is investigating how to divide up "Main Campus." **DECISION:**

We will wait until Ryan's findings to make a decision going forward. See previous notes under Membership.

- b. Meg: can create up-to-date cluster lists from emails that do not include students. Main campus: Admin + research.
- c. Ryan had created a google doc, harder to maintain, as he did not know he could get a list from CIRES. What is hard is separating students, but they could be separated by job code.
- d. Meg will check the list again and update a non student list and be in touch with Ryan.
- e. Notes: Ryan: CIRES IT maintains member list, but it requires CIRES Main Reps to remove students and visiting scientists. The process has been documented and shared among the CIRES Main Repts. We can close this issue moving forward.

2. Addressing the lack of raises

- a. On the impact to spending down funds before the end of the current Cooperative Agreement:
 - "...with the CIRES Cooperative Agreement renewal coming up, these salary increase deferrals could actually have an impact on how groups spend down their funding at the end of the current CA term, since some funding sources may end up underspent with no way to increase spending due to these budget decisions. Is CIRES taking any steps to help mitigate this possibility?"
 - Aaron: At the June 8 CIRES Town Hall, it was reported that the current Cooperative Agreement end date is Aug. 31, 2022 and that CIRES is planning on requesting a 12-month no-cost extension next summer. I am in the process of seeking additional comment from my constituents.
- b. On the lack of merit increases (second year):

"The [Dept of Labor's May 2021 Consumer Price Index](#) report states, "Over the last 12 months, the all items index increased 5.0 percent before seasonal adjustment; this was the largest 12-month increase since a 5.4-percent increase for the period ending August 2008." **How does the university expect its employees to accept another year of stagnant wages with such a high increase in living costs?**

Housing costs in Boulder are not remaining stagnant. My partner and I moved here in 2019 with the impression that we might be able to purchase a relatively "inexpensive" condo after a few years. We even put in a contract for the condo in which we are currently renting. We were unfortunately outbid. This same condo is now worth 18% more than what it was listed for when we initially submitted our bid 13 months ago. As I'm sure you are already aware, this is not an unusual example for Boulder. Zillow forecasts an additional 9.6% increase in median home values over the next year which is even more discouraging (percent increase for 80303). Many of our coworkers have elected to move out of the county for more affordable housing; however, those markets are quickly becoming unaffordable as well. Plus, I worked many years with an hour and a half daily commute and recognize that my mental health cannot sustain such long commutes. **How can an early career scientist without existing home equity afford a home within a reasonable commuting distance? My salary of 2019 is not worth the same, and I am being paid less now because everything else is worth more.**

There are a handful of us who started in 2018/2019 and have not received a raise since being onboarded. One of the most appealing benefits of CIRES employment was the heavily implied yearly raise; and yet, many of us are now expected to go 2+ years without any raises. As we continue to grow into our positions and represent CIRES in the utmost professional manner, some of us are becoming supervisors or participants on hiring committees. A few of us were recently on a hiring committee for an entry level position (B.S. only) where the new hire is expected to make only 5-10k less than what the supervisor and I make. We both have M.S. degrees and significantly more work and field experience. Although we are happy for the person being hired, **it is difficult to not feel disgruntled at the fact that our hard work over the last decade - both through higher education and experience - is not reflected in our salaries.** I was taught that the best raise is through new employment, but I love my work at NOAA with CIRES, and I honestly feel that I am the best person for this job.

Like so many others, my partner's work continues to be heavily impacted by the pandemic meaning that we are living off my salary alone. I worked two jobs at one point last year and am considering doing the same again this year. Another year without a salary increase only puts us further behind our goals of homeownership and financial stability. Although I am grateful for the 2% post-pandemic payout, realistically speaking, **the expected post-tax amount is barely enough to cover one third of 1 month's rent for our one bedroom apartment.**

If the university cannot provide raises for another year, then perhaps the university can provide a larger than typical raise for the following year to lessen the financial gap lost during the 2 years of stagnant wages.

I appreciate all CIRES and University staff who listen to and deliberate on these concerns.

Very respectfully,
a CIRES staff member at DSRC"

Aaron: I would like to propose that the CMC write a "statement of concern" regarding the issue of merit increases and present this to CIRES Admin.

Notes: Gaby: Salary increase is part of grant proposal, so those on soft money feel they are being penalized by not receiving a merit increase. Joe: Will raise this with Christine at their next meeting.

Gaby: Feds have merit increase separate from cost-of-living increase. For CIRES, there is no cost-of-living increase, only merit increase. This issue is being elevated within federal labs.

Action: Joe: pass along to Christine: merit increase and cost of living are combined for CIRES.

Feds vs CIRES gap is getting worse. Etc...

Statement of concern from CMC regarding this?

Motion (Molly): Propose that CMC write a statement of concern regarding the need for merit increases, especially given the increased cost of living.

Seconded by Joe.

Decision: Motion passed unanimously.

Action: Gaby and Molly have volunteered to compose a draft. Prepare draft and circulate to CMC before July CMC Meeting. Goal is one-month turn-around.

3. On what CIRES Admin can do to improve the work environment at home:

a. Concern brought forward to Aaron:

- "I'm sure you know about some of the challenges people at NCEI are having getting access to some really important IT equipment within NCEI, which is another morale hit among our

team. Could we ask CIRES to do more to help our employees get access to the resources they need to create better work environments at home?"

- Aaron: I am in the process of seeking clarification on the access issue with my constituents.

4. Calendar links for CIRES events - any updates from IT (David Z.)

- a. Lucia: CIRES weekly events listed in emails can be added to calendars
- b. Notes: Resolved.

New Issues

1. Dawn distributed email regarding [reopening anxiety](#)

- a. Discussion? NOAA and CU are adopting careful approach with employees best interest in mind
- b. Notes: Specific groups are having internal discussions regarding return-to-work plan and anxiety around this. Wait until next CIRES Town Hall for new information on this topic. NOAA putting together a return-to-work document to be announced July 19. Minimum time-at-work is 2 days for CIRES Management Team; 3 days per week to keep an office space. Individual clusters at CIRES have done surveys regarding return-to-work, e.g. NSIDC responses strongly support continued work-from-home and fully-remote work.
- c. Action: Jimena to get an update from Angela about CIRES guidelines for supervisors and employees to draft a work plan for return to office, especially regarding CIRES employees at NOAA-campus.
- d. Decision: Move to "Issues on hold."
- e. Remote work and innovation:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/23/upshot/remote-work-innovation-office.html>

1:35 PM Meeting adjourned.

Actions:

- (All) Reach out to Joe and Eric J. if interested in serving as CMC Vice Chair, Executive Council Rep, and Fellows Council Rep.
- (Eric) Update CMC Rep photos on CMC website.
- (Joe) Talk to Christine about [EcoPass](#) renewal. Potential for subsidy in place of ecopass (a la NOAA...extend to all CIRES?)

- (Joe) Pass along to Christine: merit increase and cost of living are combined for CIRES. Feds vs CIRES gap is getting worse.
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