

National Sea Grant Advisory Board (NSGAB) Spring Meeting  
March 6-7, 2017  
Meeting Minutes

Washington Plaza Hotel  
10 Thomas Circle NW  
Washington, DC 20005

Monday, May 6, 2017

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC 9:00am – 5:00pm EST

**Introductions, review of agenda, approval of minutes, etc. (D. Baker, Chair, NSGAB)**

Jonathan Eigen (Designated Federal Officer) read an official federal statement explaining his role to the group. He also announced that the meeting would be voice recorded for use in completing the meeting minutes.

**Roll Call**

Members of the Advisory Board:

Michael Orbach, Jim Murray, Paulinus Chigbu, Rosanne Fortner, Dick Vortmann, Judith Gray, Dale Baker, Gordon Grau, Amber Mace, Patricia Birkholz, Jim Hurley, Brian Helmuth

Amanda McCarty - NSGO  
Jonathan Eigen – NSGO  
Jonathan Pennock – NSGO  
Elizabeth Rohring – NSGO  
Brooke Carney – NSGO  
Chris Hayes – NSGO  
Jonathan Lilley – NSGO  
Joshua Brown – NSGO  
Maddie Kennedy – Knauss Fellow with NSGO  
Chris Ellis – NOS Detail with NSGO  
Dorn Carlson – NSGO

Jonathan Upton – Climate Central journalist  
Jim Faulk – Delaware Sea Grant  
Sylvain De Guise – Connecticut Sea Grant Director  
Darren Lerner – Hawaii Sea Grant

**Welcome, review of agenda, approval of minutes, Chair's Update (D. Baker, Chair, NSGAB)**

*Topic: March 2017 Agenda*

Mr. Baker made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Dr. Orbach and Dr. Mace. All were in favor (voice vote).

*Topic: September 2016 Meeting Minutes*

Mr. Eigen explained that the September 2016 meetings are not available for the current meeting, but would be forthcoming.

**Chair's Update (D. Baker, NSGAB)**

*Topic: Replacement of the Advisory Board Members*

Mr. Eigen explained the process for replacing new board members. Approval is at the discretion of NOAA, including OAR, the Chief Scientist, and then the Administrator. Ms. Rohring added that the White House liaison and Security are also involved in the approval process. Mr. Eigen continued to add that two more members would be leaving in the next year and that a new Federal Register Notice (FRN) was sent out in January 2017 and closed March 1, 2017 that resulted in 10 qualified nominees.

Dr. Mace asked if the process was always a rolling nomination or a yearly notice. Mr. Eigen explained the decision to put out a period of nomination once a year. At the urging of the Board, Mr. Eigen agreed that another announcement FRN could be posted resulting in further nominations. Mr. Baker clarified that the board could not nominate candidates, but could discuss what kinds of qualities to seek in replacement members. Dr. Mace asked if the charter could be changed to allow the executive committee to provide nominations for candidates. Mr. Eigen replied yes. Mr. Eigen explained that previous nomination announcements did not have a deadline and therefore did not get many nominees, however the recent announcement that contained a deadline received a large group of good nominees. He added that there were no rules limiting the creation of an additional FRNs.

*Topic: Afternoon Business Meeting*

Mr. Baker shifted topics to the afternoon's Business Meeting, which will include Budget & NSGAB's role moving forward and meetings with Commerce, NOAA, and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

**9:30am - National Sea Grant College Program (J. Pennock, Director)**

Dr. Pennock stated that the presentations would deal with the general business of the NSGAB, but time would be set aside for to discuss the weekend's events

*Topic: 2015 Reporting and What NSGCP Has Accomplished*

Dr. Pennock reminded all how much NSGCP has accomplished with a relatively small budget (\$73M + \$9M aquaculture). Resulting in an 850% ROI via state partners and matching funds from NGOs, private, other agencies by continuing to use research/ extension/ education power. NSGCP is effective because the work is from the ground up via an iterative process between the federal, state, and local priorities. He pointed to specific examples in sustainable coastal tourism, sustainable fisheries and aquaculture and stated that the main question moving forward is how to continue to be effective.

*Topic: Governmental Transition*

Dr. Pennock went over several key facts since the Presidential election including:

- No contact between the Transition Team below the level of Acting NOAA Administrator.
- Secretary Ross was confirmed by Senate last week – no movement on NSGAB nominees without filling in leadership positions below Secretary Ross.
- No information about potential candidates for the NOAA Undersecretary.
- NSGCP provided OAR with data from the PIER reporting database and delivered to the Transition Team.
- Some interest expressed by the Transition Team in aquaculture (request for more info). NSGCP has been providing info to Fisheries.

Mr. Vortmann asked about open positions in the Commerce department.

Dr. Pennock explained that all political appointees had left the department, but career senior staff had moved up for the time being and that the hope was to fill positions as soon as possible.

Dr. Orbach asked about the current Acting NOAA Administrator.

Dr. Pennock clarified that the current AA is Ben Friedman, formerly the Deputy Undersecretary and that he is familiar with the NSGCP.

Dr. Orbach further stated that in the past some Secretaries have been surprised that half of the Commerce department's portfolio is NOAA.

Dr. Pennock further stated that the Secretary had been briefed on NOAA and had learned more about it, but his understanding of the NSGCP was unknown.

Dr. Hurley reminded the group that Ben Friedman would be speaking tomorrow at the Knauss Reception and SGA panel about working across line offices.

*Topic: Budget Update*

Mr. Baker asked if there was any new information about FY 17 budget.

Dr. Pennock stated that he would talk about anything he could talk about, and gave the following information:

FY17:

- FY17 continuing resolution continues until April 28, 2018
- National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) has received ~50% Base Funds, and moved 50% to the State Programs and full funding for 2017 Knauss fellows
- Released Aquaculture Federal Funding Opportunities (FFOs) to ensure adequate time for competitive review

FY18:

- Not much information available with the exception of the Washington Post article
- No passback has been provided to NSGO
- Once the budget does come out (March 14<sup>th</sup>), NOAA and NSGO will support that budget. SGA and NSGAB can support NOAA and NSGO in other ways.

Mr. Vortmann asked about the process and discussion between Commerce and NOAA in terms of the budget

Dr. Pennock speculated that the new administration probably did not look at the previous administration's FY18 budget, as they have their own priorities. If the White

House did provide NOAA with a budget, NOAA had less than 24 hours to respond to the new budget.

Dr. Orbach asked what would happen if NSGO was zeroed out in a new, unapproved budget, and a new CR was approved for FY17.

Mr. Eigen replied that it would depend on details within Congress's CR language which could be based off of last year budget and progress made with this year's budget bills.

Dr. Pennock further clarified that there could be no assumption that NSGO would move forward with the same exact budget, as Congress could change any aspect of it.

#### *Topic: Reauthorization Update*

Dr. Pennock continued with his presentation, describing NSGCP reauthorization efforts, including:

- S. 129 - early in 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, led by Senators Wicker, Sullivan, Schatz and Cantwell
- Referred out of Commerce Committee
- Senator Markey had the only dissenting vote due to the legislation's Knauss Fellowship "equitable distribution" language
- Last year – House of Representatives introduced two bills (Representatives Huffman and Lawrence)
- Language between the two chambers has been similar with some small differences
- During Hill meetings, Dr. Pennock had the chance to speak with staff from the offices of Representatives Huffman, Lawrence, Young concerning the possibility of a single bipartisan bill this Congress

Dr. Grau suggested that since the 2001 reauthorization, the new American Samoa delegate is Republican. He stated that even though the delegate does not have floor voting power, they can vote in committee and could be a potential good person to start with a bill this year.

#### *Topic: Staffing Update*

Dr. Pennock continued his presentation with updates about new staff to NSGO:

- Introduced of Kelly Samek (Gulf Lead), Eva Lipiec (Assistant to the Director), Maddie Kennedy (Knauss Fellow), and Chris Katalinas (Knauss Fellow)
- Fully staffed with the exception of an aquaculture lead which will be left unfilled due to the hiring freeze
- Detailees – Kola Garber (LCDP) and Julia Galkiewicz (OAR to Program Coordination Office)
- Jennifer Hinden moved to NOS

#### *Topic: 2016 Initiatives*

Dr. Pennock reviewed last year's initiatives and their progress:

- Almost completed:
  - Biennial report to Congress
  - 2017-2021 Strategic Planning

- 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- Knauss Fellowship Program Balance
- Messaging Sea Grant with NOAA Leadership
- Partnership Network Analysis
- New Staff Orientation and Assimilation
- In Progress:
  - Partnership Initiative
  - SWOT Assessment (NSGAB, SGA, NSGO)
  - PIE II and Liaison Assessments

*Topic: 2017 Initiatives*

Dr. Pennock continued with goals for 2017:

- Completed:
  - Red Snapper Initiative
  - Aquaculture Initiative
- In Progress:
  - Partnership Development (goal of 2-4)
  - PIE II policy
  - Liaison Policy and Process
  - Actions based on SWOT
  - Omnibus Guidance
  - Lake Champlain Institutional Status
  - Focus/ Theme Teams Generation II
  - Sea Grant Library Assessment

*Topic: Aquaculture Scenarios (pending appropriations)*

Dr. Pennock described the two national FFOs (Barriers to Entry vs. Impediments), further work needed with state and regional mechanisms, and 2020 national competitions.

*Topic: Operations Goals for NSGO*

Dr. Pennock updated the Advisory Board about NSGO operations goals:

- Completed: program officers more engaged and connected
- In progress:
  - Communications beyond the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
  - Enhance professional development opportunities
  - Increase nominations of Sea Grant for NOAA awards
- Challenges:
  - Improve, increase efficiency for travel, PIER database, and shared file space

*Topic: 2017 Requests/Focus of the Advisory Board*

Dr. Pennock finished his presentation requesting help and brainstorming from the NSGAB on several topics moving forward, including:

- Lake Champlain institutional status

- Outreach to incoming Leadership (i.e., DOC Secretary, NOAA administrator, etc.)
- NSGO communications plan
- Sea Grant liaison policy
- Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation (PIE) policy
- Focus/ Theme Teams generation II
- Sea Grant Library assessment
- MS-AL Sea Grant Program topical assessment team (TAT) – would like a committee to help MS-AL director look at integration of extension

After Dr. Pennock’s presentation, there was Advisory Board discussion about taking shorter breaks during the meeting in order to discuss pressing issues. The conversation shifted to several of Dr. Pennock’s requests.

Mr. Baker asked if Dr. Pennock could further describe the URI Sea Grant Library assessment. Dr. Pennock explained that in the past, the library had needed and utilized two full time employees and therefore more funding, that the library was needed to keep track of the Sea Grant network’s publications and reports, but a physical location was now duplicative due to the similar capabilities of the NOAA OAR library. He further stated that NSGO and NSGAB would need to decide if the library was the best investment moving forward.

Mr. Vortmann expressed his belief that the NSGAB should agree to come up with a plan for NSGAB leadership to meet with NOAA incoming leadership. He further stated that it would be best for NSGO to create a plan for employees on how to move forward if the worst were to happen in terms of the budget. Dr. Gray clarified that the new legislation would have specific language for what would happen with employees of cut programs.

Dr. Murray stated that the theme/ focus team process was necessary for the network to prioritize new initiatives, partnerships, etc. and that no matter who had responsibility, the new process should be established to think big.

### **11:00am - Sea Grant Association Update (J. Hurley, SGA President)**

Dr. Hurley introduced himself as SGA President, spoke about his background in the sciences, work in the Wisconsin DNR, association with WI Sea Grant since 2000, Assistant Director for Research and Outreach at UW starting in 2002, IPA detail at NSGO (2007-2008), and Chair-elect of Sea Grant Assembly (2007-2010). Hurley described the Baltimore Leadership retreat (February 2-3, 2017) and its goals.

#### *Topic: External Relations Committee (ERC) Path*

- Finalized Transition Team memo – Sent to Scott Rayder and forwarded to rest of Transition Team
- Proposed to expand ERC membership

- Developed Congressional Engagement activities:
  - Webinar training
  - Hill visits
  - Visit to OMB
  - Hill briefings
  - Government relations boot camp
  - Track activities and evaluate approach
- Reach out to DOC, OMB, continue NOAA line office education
- Conference call (February 28, 2017) – range of conversations with 21 of 33 state Sea Grant directors who have only known an Obama Administration
- Action Items – next steps
- Responses to suggestions to SGA

*Topic: SGA Issues for Advisory Board*

- What is the proactive NSGAB vision to enhance NSGCP visibility?
- Process to develop recommendations within the Biennial Report to Congress?
- Questions about Advisory Board membership/ nominee process (could activate SGA to help)

*Topic: A coordinated response to recent budget articles*

Dr. Hurley stated the need for a calm, collected, coordinated response via SGA, and that the Baltimore meeting laid the groundwork. He further stated that the need to cultivate Congressional Sea Grant champions is even more important.

Mr. Baker shared that the last time the NSGCP has budget concerns (during the Reagan era), the SGA had asked program beneficiaries to write letters, visit leaders, with coordination at the state level Sea Grant. Dr. Hurley replied that the response would be led SGA, and the hired lobbying firm.

Mr. Vortmann asked if the current Transition Team were part of the Department of Commerce or part of the White House Transition Team? Dr. Pennock replied that the Trump campaign chose members of the Transition Team to work at Commerce. Mr. Eigen clarified that the Transition Team only existed between the election and the inauguration.

Ms. McCarty further stated that internal career NOAA employees have also been helping with transition and would until political appointees are nominated.

Dr. Mace asked how members of the original Transition Team (i.e. Scott Rayder) were still involved. Mr. Eigen replied that they are likely considered “volunteers” with the Trump Administration.

### **11:30am - Lake Champlain Institutional Status Update (E. Rohring)**

Ms. Rohring talked through the status update, including:

- Process is behind by about 3 weeks,
- CFR almost ready to go out next week,
- Lake Champlain would then have 30 days to send in letter of intent to become a Sea Grant program,

- Committee will review letters of intent,
- All worthy will be invited to submit a proposal (i.e., briefing book)

Dr. Murray asked if Lake Champlain would be addressing the nine FRN criteria. Mr. Eigen further clarified that NGSCP was required to put out FRN, but only programs that have already demonstrated the capability to enact the nine criteria are eligible to reply. He continued that at this point, the only two programs following the criteria are Lake Champlain and possibly SUNY Plattsburgh. The notice of FRN formally allows the NSGCP to consider Lake Champlain as an institution. Ms. Rohring stated that several Advisory Board members had volunteered to stand the subcommittee, including Dr. Mace, Mr. Helmuth, Ms. Gray, and Dr. Murray. Mr. Eigen further stated that a charter could be submitted to indoctrinate the subcommittee needed for institutional status, but that a meeting vote was necessary.

Dr. Mace made a motion to set up the NSGAB subcommittee to evaluate the Lake Champlain process.

Dr. Gray seconded the vote. All were in favor (voice vote).

Mr. Vortmann asked about the requirements to create a subcommittee. Mr. Eigen replied that the requirements were imposed by NOAA.

Dr. Orbach asked the reasoning behind the Advisory Board's involvement in determining a new program's status.

Dr. Murray replied that the involvement was part of the formal legislation language that had created the Advisory Board that requires the Advisory Board to advise the Secretary on the establishment of new Sea Grant programs. Dr. Orbach further asked if the requirement included a recommendation from the Advisory Board. Dr. Murray replied that if based on the nine criteria, the program passes the standards, the Advisory Board would send a recommendation to the Director, with a final recommendation to establish the institution. The recommendation would be between the Advisory Board and Director at first, and then passed up the chain of command in NOAA. Dr. Orbach further asked if a similar process was taken for the establishment of the Virginia Sea Grant program, including the creation of a subcommittee. Mr. Eigen replied that there was, in fact, a subcommittee, but at that time there was no requirement to have approval from NOAA to stand a subcommittee.

Mr. Baker suggested the moving presentations to end lunch earlier and start up again at an earlier time. Ms. Rohring explained that changes could be made to the agenda with approval from the Advisory Board.

Dr. Gray made a motion to move the Sea Grant Communication Update to 1pm, insert a thirty minute public discussion time post-update, and begin the Advisory Board Liaison Report Update at the scheduled 2pm start time. Dr. Grau seconded the motion. All approved (voice vote).

**1:00pm - Sea Grant Communication Update (B. Carney, NSGO)**



Ms. Carney updated the Advisory Board with information about communication initiatives and results from 2016, and work for 2017.

*Topic: 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Goals and Results*

1. Host three events on Capitol Hill (kick-off, CHOW, Fish Fry, Sea Grant Week, Spring SGA Meeting)
2. Produce and share 50<sup>th</sup> doc with Congress – 14 documents, all being used
3. Produce and share 50<sup>th</sup> doc with NOAA – 3 NOAA-specific (NOS, NMFS, and OAR)
4. Provide one briefing to DOC/ NOAA - 3 briefings
5. All Sea Grants programs host a 50<sup>th</sup> event – maybe? Plans to do so
6. Provide briefing materials for state Sea grants to assist with 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary local events

Impacts: work plan not designed for metrics, need time to measure, social media and web numbers have increased

Benefits: large toolkit, coordination among communicators, added exposure, raised the bar for outreach

Dr. Mace congratulated and thanked Ms. Carney for her hard work and success. Dr. Orbach further stated that Ms. Carney was tremendous and stepped up, and has also been clearly thinking ahead. Dr. Mace asked if even though there were no measurable goals for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary communications plan, would measurable goals be created moving forward? Ms. Carney responded that it was her plan to do so. Dr. Murray asked about the reaction from NOAA in terms of event communications. Ms. Carney replied that fellow communicators were communicating not only about the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, but using it as a conservation starter to talk about Sea Grant. She further stated that as a result of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, NSGCP cultivated better and more relationships with others at NOAA.

Reflections:

Duce (2002), Whitman (2003), 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary work plan, 2017 NSGO communication plan – all have common goals

- Communication goals consistent across time
  1. Increase strengthen Sea Grant's brand
  2. Increase awareness within NOAA
  3. Develop a Sea Grant story
  4. Have internal communications to support those external efforts
- New approaches
  1. Link goals with specific actions and measures of success,
  2. Evaluate and assess,
  3. Integrate messages with partnerships effort and network communicators,
  4. New graphic and social media tools,
  5. Reaching out to new audiences

Current Focuses:

- Planning and strategy
- Partnerships
- Digging for stories, writing when we can
- Sharing and engaging online
- Layout and design
- Staffing support

Plans for 2017:

- Starting a new website
- State-specific handouts for the Hill
- Mission awareness in our office
- Partnerships support
- SOPs for Sea Grant network communications
- “Next 50 years” video project
- Photo and video libraries
- Supporting the Sea Grant Communities Network
- Message training for NSGO staff

SWOT Proposed Actions:

- Branding Sea Grant with proposed actions

Dr. Gray asked if the focus of the communication could be the programs major stakeholders. Ms. Carney replied that yes, this includes major stakeholders, examples about which are already available from the network. She further stated that it’s a matter of gathering those stories for use at the national level. Dr. Murray stated that he felt like Sea Grant could do well telling its stories on the television or radio, especially as the Discovery Channel and National Geographic offices were physically close by. He asked if attempts were made to reach out and get Sea Grant scientists on TV. Ms. Carney replied that yes, it was something she was keeping in mind, but just needed a bit more capacity to move it forward. Ms. Rohring further stated that NOAA had tried to work with both companies in the past, but ran into issues with owning the information and distributing it. She added that Sea Grant and NOAA had more avenues via the Smithsonian Sant Ocean Hall. Ms. Carney continued that there could be potential in getting stories and scientists connected with NPR and PBS though.

Sen. Birkholz shared that it would be the best time to get onto the radio, in terms of the new A1 program, to talk about cuts to science, NOAA, and the Great Lakes. Dr. Mace added that the podcast Science Friday would also be another great venue. Ms. Carney reminded the Advisory Board that there were a specific set of ways NSGO could share its stories, and therefore it was reliant on the network. Sen. Birkholz stated that private citizens and the Advisory Board could use the messaging developed by the NSGO.

Dr. Orbach stated that after working on the Louisiana Coastal Master Plan, the head of the effort was quoted on NPR, but the speakers didn’t know. He asked if there was any way to track Sea Grant researchers and their work? Ms. Carney replied that there is no

really good system available to track that kind of information, but it would be great to have.

### **1:30pm - Discussion Time**

#### *Topic: Vice Chair Nomination*

Mr. Baker stated that the nomination committee met in the morning, and nominated a Vice Chair to start January 1, 2018. The nomination was Dr. Brian Helmuth, with Dr. Mace to become Chair January 1, 2018. Mr. Baker then asked if there were any other nominations for the position. Mr. Vortmann asked about any other members of the Executive committee. The Advisory Board replied that Dr. Jim Murray has just started as Member at Large.

Dr. Mace moved a motion to appoint Brian Helmuth as Vice Chair. Mr. Vortmann seconded the motion.

All approved in the voice vote.

#### *Topic: Subcommittee Assignments*

Dr. Gray stated that since all subcommittees have been disbanded, it'd be helpful to get an updated list of board assignments.

Dr. Mace further asked for an update about where the Advisory Board was with subcommittee assignments.

Dr. Orbach also asked for a listing of Member terms.

#### *Topic: Next Biennial Report*

Ms. Fortner asked about the process to set up the next biennial report, including the steps the Advisory Board needed to take with the report. The Advisory Board replied that the process would start with the next fall meeting.

Dr. Mace suggested the Advisory Board should revisit the scope of that report, including its extensiveness.

Mr. Vortmann advised that the SGA should have opportunity for input into the next report.

Ms. Fortner stated that the 2016 report had no input from the SGA, which was pointed out SC Sea Grant Director Rick DeVoe.

Ms. McCarty added that Dr. Pennock had been discussing a quadrennial report, to match up with the omnibus cycle, with staff on Capitol Hill.

Dr. Mace asked if the Advisory Board had control over what is included in the biennial.

Mr. Baker replied yes.

Mr. De Guise asked about shifting from 2 year intervals.

Ms. McCarty replied that the Advisory Board would be shifting from a large 2-year report to a larger 4-year report with 1-year handouts.

Ms. Carney stated that with re-authorization, NSGO could align the PIE process, Strategic Report, and other reports with the 4-year Omnibus.

Mr. Baker stated that at the current moment the Advisory Board would probably have to move forward with completing a biennial report, especially if Ms. Fortner could continue leading the effort.

Ms. Fortner replied yes, with the help of Dr. Gray.

*Topic: Subcommittee Creation*

Mr. Vortmann asked if approval from NOAA would be required for the creation of the committee or for the individuals that were part of the committee.

Mr. Eigen explained that the approval would be less concerned with individual, but NOAA would still need to know who the committee was bringing on the board.

Mr. Vortmann asked if there was a distinction between a person joining a committee versus advising a committee.

Mr. Eigen replied that yes there was a distinction, as no approval would be needed to advise the committee.

Mr. Baker stated that the NSGAB hopes to move forward with the biennial effort with the help of NSGO's Ms. Carney.

*Topic: Looking Ahead*

Dr. Grau opined that meetings have been very useful, but participants haven't had a chance to engage and come up with shared ideas to advise NSGO on how coasts have changed in the last 50 years and how they will in the next 50 years and how Sea Grant can be involved. He further stated that the NSGAB does not engage constituencies such as building industry and others, to advocate for NSGO and the badly needed science to make better choices. He suggested a retreat style meeting with some time set aside to discuss.

Mr. Baker replied that the Advisory Board could discuss such ideas during the next day's presentation with Dr. Pennock.

Mr. Vortmann agreed that it would be great to take a step back, and discuss more generally where Sea Grant should be going.

Dr. Grau suggested adding an extra two days to current meetings since the current meeting is mostly about listening to presentations.

Mr. Vortmann suggested the Advisory Board could talk about research as a central part of the Sea Grant and if there are there other actions the Board and NSGO could be taking.

Dr. Mace reminded the Advisory Board that the working groups and SWOTs have been going through similar exercises, but that it could also be done as a larger group in a one day meeting with a facilitator.

Dr. Grau suggested issues to tackle - how often a program is reviewed and that visioning must be separate from bureaucratic issues.

Dr. Orbach suggested that the conversations would have to be based on background material that have not been provided yet but could utilize information from a postponed Futures Committee document.

Dr. Mace agreed, stating that a similar process was completed with the SWOT. She added that having suggestions and assignments ahead of time to submit would be helpful.

**2:00pm - Liaison Report Update (E. Rohring, NSGO)**

Ms. Rohring gave an update about the liaison assessment, including:

*Topic: Current Liaisons – with no complete definition of a liaison*

- 13 in total
- Six: OAR labs (GLERL, AOML, NSSL, PMEL x 2, NWC)
- One: NWFSC
- Five: NOAA Sentinel Sites
- One: Alaska

Major Findings:

- Valuable, but with different degrees of involvement
- Genesis, goals, and support are all very varied

Progress in NSGO:

- Trying to better integrate into the network (some need help, some appropriately supported)
- Recently had a conference call with all liaisons to keep NSGO updated

*Topic: Report Comments and Critiques:*

- SGA concerns
- More oversight vs. less oversight by NSGO
- Relationships to state program/ network overall?
- NOAA looking for more liaisons
  - Tool for building partnerships
  - Further Sea Grant mission

Ms. Rohring began to speak about the budget and the cost-sharing aspects of it.

Mr. Eigen further clarified that the type and process of obtaining a liaison depended on each program and the year, and went through each program through each position.

Depending on the year, Sea Grant is receiving about a 2:1 cost-share commitment.

Ms. Rohring and Mr. Eigen further stated that the SGA was worried that no set process was in place to obtain a liaison, leading to a more opportunistic process. Additionally, some programs were reaching out to NSGO for help, while others didn't know it was a possibility. In turn, when the most recent liaison position was created for the National Water Center, NSGO based it upon SGA and Advisory Board recommendations.

Dr. Orbach suggested that the outcomes from having a liaison should be advertised.

Dr. Pennock added that no new commitments, since the NWC, had been made and this would be the opportune to make an assessment of this kind and determine priorities to weave into the Omnibus process.

*Topic: Path Forward?*

Many questions still about:

- position development,
- prioritization,
- funding, and
- time commitments,
- ensure the flow of info, and
- goals for liaisons versus overall liaison programs

Dr. Murray agreed that there were some issues to deal with, including how to sunset the positions. He added that in order to be more helpful to NOAA, through national competitions, NSGO could create a NOAA partnership competition similar to the rip current project with NWS in the last decade. The open competition could be between the state program and NOAA to create liaison positions.

Dr. Hurley added that the SGA had found that the network wanted liaisons to attend the SG Assembly meetings to better understand the network and Sea Grant.

*Topic: Action Steps*

- Convene group of experts to define the goals of the liaison program
- Implement the recommendations of the board
- Ask the SGA, NSGAB, Extension Assembly, and NSGO for experts by end of March 2017
- Input to team from the network by the end of May 2017
- NSGO-led report completed and shared with recommendations with network by mid-July 2017
- Make any changes and recommendations to include in Omnibus by November 2017

Mr. Baker asked if the Advisory Board should recommend 3-4 experts from the NSGAB to move forward with the action steps.

Ms. Rohring suggested that two experts from each group would suffice to keep the effort manageable.

Dr. Gray stated that as one of the creators of these positions, these positions often grow organically to fit the needs of the program, and that she did not want the process to be too top-down and prescriptive which would take away the value of the position. She added that it was important that people are aware of the possibility, but not the solution to all problems.

Dr. Pennock added that there is a lot of good info from the report that the NSGO agrees with outright. He added that the harder part would be how to not be prescriptive but define the bounds, perhaps by utilizing the current focus areas. He continued that as the partnerships come to shape, there should be guiding principles to create the position. He ended stating the need to have rules in place, and the need for a discussion about the numbers as continuity is as necessary as well as new perspective.

**3:00pm - Partnerships Update (A. McCarty, NSGO)**

Ms. McCarty introduced herself and her background in science, as a Knauss fellow, and within NOAA (climate planning lead, UNFCCC negotiator). She then spoke about her role as assistant director of partnerships including:

*Topic: Partnership Survey*

- Sea Grant capacity
- National/ regional projects
- What are possible Sea Grant's niches
- What agencies/ NGOs/ private/ philanthropic groups can we join?

*Topic: Goals/Criteria for Partnerships:*

- Resources (\$, knowledge, tools, etc.).
- Access and legitimacy
- Efficiency
- Four Main Partners – Office of Coastal Management (OCM) (CZM, NERRs, Digital Coast), NWS, NMFS, Sanctuaries Program
- Next: NOAA (IOOS, COS, Office of Response and Restoration, CPO)
- Next: Non-NOAA (USACE, FWS, USGS, EPA, USDA, NPS)

She stated that not many similarly scaled non-federal partners exist and she has started to engage with those main partners.

Dr. Mace asked why Ms. McCarty had chosen the four organizations

McCarty replied that NSGO already engages with them, some based on their large line office mandates, others based on their common interests.

Ms. McCarty continued stating that she hopes Sea Grant can act as a facilitator in coastal projects to learn more about those projects (i.e., fly on the wall). Further, she looked into multiple reports from the NSGAB and SGA to garner ideas and prioritize partnerships. She noted that potential partners should have the following qualities:

- Missions and value must align
- Have to make sure partner has to work at state level
- Really have to understand the honest broker role
- Range of formalities for any agreements

Dr. Grau asked if, in terms of partnerships within NOAA, Ms. McCarty had been able to develop relationships with coastal development agencies.

Ms. McCarty and Dr. Brown replied that not specifically coastal development, but alongside OCM Smart Growth, geodetic survey, HUD, and a continued partnership with EPA. They continued that it could be a good space for Sea Grant to get into.

Dr. Helmuth asked why Sea Grant would not partner with groups based solely on similar interests.

Ms. McCarty replied that oftentimes groups can be operating in the same space, but with very different goals.

Dr. Murray stated that partnerships in the past between agencies have been on a very small scale, between programs and initiatives, and very opportunistic, which required a lot of personal relationships. He suggested that constant contact with other NOAA programs is key. He again suggested that a vehicle to promote Sea Grant could be an outreach competition, via a mutual competition between Sea Grant and other NOAA programs for creative competition ideas or through a budget initiative process.

*Topic: Specifics about the Partnership Team:*

1. Communications
2. Fellowships (Knauss and NMFS Sea Grant)
3. Strategic Priorities
  - a. 7 main contacts (communicators, educators, extension, fellowships, research, fiscal, legal)

- b. Around the main strategic areas (resilience, restoration, weather, tourism, aquaculture, OA, coastal management, EBM, invasive species, diversity and inclusion)

Dr. Orbach asked if when dealing with different entities, NSGO and Ms. McCarty have to play the “re-naming” game?

Ms. McCarty replied that yes, but sometimes it’s okay, sometimes it’s not okay and provided the example of blue carbon which has been packaged and re-packaged to highlight different topics depending on the audience.

Dr. Orbach asked how often Sea Grant partnered with state agencies.

Ms. McCarty replied that National Sea Grant has focused on national agencies, while state programs have partnered with their state agencies.

Dr. Orbach asked about international partnerships.

Ms. McCarty responded that it is not a top 5 priority for the group, however there are existing partnerships with Korea, Indonesia, Japan, and potentially Cuba.

Dr. Orbach asked about linking with US groups that work in the international space.

Ms. McCarty replied saying that while there is a culture shift occurring, USAID and others work differently with others, and do not follow a similar work management process as Sea Grant.

Dr. Grau asked if NSGO and Ms. McCarty were aware of the NOAA and EPA partnership focusing specifically on coastal development that may be worth re-newing.

Ms. McCarty replied that the SmartGrowth initiative is being moved forward by Joshua Brown.

Dr. Brown further explained that formal MOUs have ended, and NOAA did not feel like the MOUs were useful. He continued that NSGO is exploring if specific agreements are possible.

Dr. Helmuth asked about partnerships related to coastal resilience and national security.

Dr. Brown explained that NSGO has worked with DHS, Center for Coastal Resilience, and Office of University Programs, with little overlap (cybersecurity, counter terrorism, etc.). He continued that NSGO is making inroads to partner with FEMA, but is looking for more consistent ways to engage.

Dr. Murray opined that in the past, NSGO has been weak in partnering with associations at the national level as allies.

Ms. Carney replied, stating that communication can help build and cultivate those relationships. She added that once connections are made, they can be added to the distribution list of news updates and periodic publications.

Dr. Grau suggested that NSGO utilize people that used to be associated with Sea Grant with a lot of history and connections, to not re-invent the wheel when trying to find partners.

Ms. McCarty added that SGA were set to have this discussion to determine their role in finding partners.

### **3:45pm - Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation (PIE) Report Update (J. Pennock, NSGO)**

Dr. Pennock updated the NSGAB about the progress and next steps for the PIE process.

*Topic: PIE II report to NSGAB – May 2016*



General Findings:

1. Meets federal requirements,
2. But process is too complex, costly and the timing is off

Dr. Pennock added that the NSGO would appreciate additional assistance from the NSGAB.

*Topic: Challenges Identified*

- Inadequate annual feedback to programs
- Site review teams are valuable but have little weight
- Performance review panel are too complicated and costly
- Evaluation-based merit funding is applied at too high of a scale
- Timing is off
- Issues with reporting vs. evaluation
- Do not have an evaluation of the program as a whole

*Topic: Planning and Progress*

1. Clarify guidance (Addressed)
2. State programs should develop plans (Addressed)
3. NSGO program officers should be more involved in planning progress (Addressed)
4. NSGO should formally review and approve plans in a timely fashion (Addressed and Ongoing)

Dr. Pennock noted that NSGO needed help on improvements in timing and in which way performance metrics are integrated – the current system had created angst for the state programs

*Topic: Implementation Progress*

1. NSGO should take responsibility for:
  - a. Coordinating Sea Grant activities (Ongoing)
  - b. Identifying new opportunities (Ongoing)
  - c. Fostering external partners (Ongoing)
  - d. Marketing Sea Grant (Ongoing)
2. NSGO program officers should consult with programs (Addressed)

*Topic: Evaluation Progress*

1. Current evaluation system can be greatly improved – will ask joint NSGO, NSGAB, and SGA to review
  - a. Limit the number of impact statements (Agreed, need to make sure there is parity between programs)
  - b. State directors should submit 1-2 page summary with annual report
  - c. NSGO should visit each program annually (Ongoing, but challenged by budget and travel cap)
2. Annual reporting and review (Agreed, but consider varying levels of intensity over time)

- a. State program directors should have opportunity to respond to qualitative annual review (Agreed)
- b. NSGO program officers should provide timely formal feedback to the program on each annual report (Agreed)

Dr. Pennock stated the need to set a process for the next cycle (2018-2021) first, and then step-back to come up with a process for the current cycle.

3. Site Review Team evaluation

- a. NSGO supports increasing role of SRT in evaluation process and should all Sea Grant Standards of Excellence
- b. SRT reports should include executive summary (Agreed) – need to figure out the timing, and to get a better match between omnibus and SRT reviews.

Mr. DeVoe suggested that the new process give the Site Teams more substance, without duplicating efforts when evaluating.

4. Independent Review Panel (IRP) Evaluation

- a. PRPs should be replaced with and IRP (Agreed)
- b. IRP should consider materials including Annual reports and responses, summary of performance metrics, and additionally
  - i. SRT reports
  - ii. Video conference with Program Director
- c. Ask IRP to evaluate the NSGCP as a whole

5. Merit Funding

- a. Merit funding would be based on IRP
- b. NSGO recommends rating categories (Superior, Strong, Meeting Standards, Unsatisfactory) with corresponding dollar amounts

Mr. DeVoe asked if the Standards of Excellence were defined by the 1979 CFR.

Dr. Pennock replied, yes exactly.

6. Report to Congress

- a. Reauthorization would change biennial to quadrennial reporting requirement, with a less consuming biennial mid-term report (with support from authorizing Senate committee).

*Topic: Next Steps*

- Formalize NSGO draft response to PIE II report
- Convene 1-3 virtual discussions with ad hoc group of NSGO, SGA, and NSGAB to determine recommendations
- Q&A with program directors
- Incorporate recommendations into new guidance for new Omnibus/ reporting cycle

Mr. Vortmann asked if there would be a fixed dollar or percentage amount for the programs that were rated as “superior”.

Dr. Pennock replied that currently, the dollar amounts to add for superior rating system would be fixed known amounts in order to account for the budget at hand.

Dr. De Guise asked what actions would be taken to account for the cycle that’s about to end.

Dr. Pennock noted that this was a challenge for NSGO, but the hope would be to set up a 2018-2021 system and back into the 2014-2017 process with as much of the system as possible.

Dr. De Guise noted issues with the submission of program impact statements.

Dr. Pennock replied that these were fixable issues with proper guidance.

Dr. Moser stated that while the overall vision was good, the group was being overly optimistic that Directors would want to move forward with 2018-2021 without knowing 2014-2017 metrics.

Dr. Pennock replied that it was his hope to not get behind by getting bogged down in current cycle issues.

Dr. Moser suggested presenting the plan and conundrum to the SGA.

Dr. Chigbu asked how long it will take the IRP to review all the reports.

Dr. Pennock replied that the process is a heavy lift, but in the past, it has taken over a year. He continued that with more staff, the NSGO can be more efficient to schedule evaluations in advance.

Mr. Hayes added that the way timing has been set up, it has been difficult to connect the evaluation to the budget, with a need to be more strategic about timing.

Dr. Pennock also noted that there has been discussion about de-coupling the cycle, within the 4-year omnibus cycle.

Dr. De Guise opined that implicit language to de-couple exists and that the programs don't need to necessarily wait for all the impacts to come in to properly assess.

Dr. Pennock suggested that the process with moving forward, but the key parameters to change have had general consensus.

#### **4:40pm - Meeting Recessed**

---

Tuesday, May 7, 2017

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC 8:30am – 12:00pm EST

#### **8:30am - Call to Order and follow-up from previous day's meeting (D. Baker, NSGAB Chair)**

Mr. Baker updated the Advisory Board on the Leadership Meeting the previous night.

- Included Murray, Mace, Baker, Pennock and Eigen,
- Spoke about how states should react, how to unleash the constituents, moving forward based on the Washington Post article vs. with a full budget later on

#### *Topic: Action Steps re: NSGCP Budget*

Dr. Mace reminded the Advisory Board that there will be a knowledge gap until the full budget came out in May.

Mr. Vortmann asked the Advisory Board whether they should wait for the final budget or pre-empt it with action.

Dr. Mace suggested the Advisory Board engage now, with the understanding that constituents would be asked to re-engage in a few months again.

Dr. Helmuth asked how common it was for an administration to leak a budget to test the waters.

Mr. Baker stated that he didn't remember it ever happening.

Dr. Grau asked if there was a way to figure out how much support NSGCP had in the House.

Mr. Vortmann noted that the Advisory Board could not assume support based on historic votes, as the current administration is very different.

Dr. Mace stated that so much has changed now versus how it used to be that it would be hard to speculate.

Dr. Murray reminded the Advisory Board that the SGA is working and weighing in on the budget and next steps.

*Topic: FACA Restrictions*

Dr. Orbach stated he was still troubled by restrictions as Advisory Members and "federal employees". He asked if the restrictions were the result of the FACA or by being special government employees, and asked the DFO to clarify. He added that he felt the Advisory Board was neutered as effective advice providers. He noted from the online FACA ethics website, that the Advisory Board may speak as individuals with advice for the Secretary.

Mr. Eigen reminded the Advisory Board that the restrictions only apply when speaking to folks outside of the government, i.e., the public.

Dr. Orbach asked further if the restrictions were due to their being paid as Advisory Board Members, since getting paid is very unusual for a FACA. He added that if getting paid results in restrictions, the Advisory Board may want to reconsider.

Mr. Vortmann asked what could be said if the conversation falls under government business but in a public setting.

Dr. Grau further asked if anything related to the budget can be said during a public meeting with no public present.

Dr. Mace and Ms. McCarty both replied that the public meeting would end up on the public record either way.

Dr. Orbach asked about the penalty to discussing budget reservations.

Mr. Baker asked the DFO Mr. Eigen to find out and clarify.

Dr. Mace reminded the Advisory Board that speaking about the current versus future budgets would have different restrictions.

Mr. Vortmann asked if the Advisory Board Members could advocate on the Hill for future budgets.

Dr. Mace replied that yes, but as a private citizen with their own money.

Dr. Grau asked, in terms of the retreat, if he was responsible for setting it up and how to do so logistically.

Mr. Baker stated that there would be time to discuss later.

**8:45am - Strategic Planning Update (J. Pennock, NSGO)**

Dr. Pennock gave an overview of the Strategic Plan and upcoming action items.

*Topic: Progress*

Start – January 2016

Still to do: Discussion at Sea Grant Week & Draft state plans and revisions

Final National Plan – May 2017

Progress:

- Revised the Vision and Mission Statement
- 2018-2021 National Focus Areas: Healthy Coastal Ecosystems, Resilient Communities & Economies, Sustainable Fisheries & Aquaculture, Environmental Literacy & Workforce Development (due to state level work)
- We will discuss “mile wide, inch deep” critique
- Deep effort to analyze these focus areas via Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) and SGA Survey (very little evidence for removing any of the Focus Areas, more support for making small changes)
- Include Diversity and Inclusion in the Strategic Plan

Dr. Gray reminded the Advisory Board that she has been participating in the Diversity and Inclusion planning within the SGA.

- Strategic Plan includes Core Values, Cultivating partnerships, Enhance Diversity and Inclusion

Mr. Vortmann asked if informing NOAA leadership about the Strategic Plan was a formal process.

Dr. Pennock replied that informing them did not need formal correspondence, but rather that Sea Grant is coming out with a strategic plan, OAR knows about it, with few edits likely.

Dr. Helmuth asked how much consideration has been given to duplicated efforts with other funding agencies/ opportunities.

Dr. Pennock noted that this was dialogue that NSGO would have to have, especially with NSF and others. He noted that there have been good examples of alignment (in Virginia), with a need to emphasize the four focus areas with room to move national strategic initiatives (i.e. aquaculture).

Dr. Gray noted that a recent Portland, Maine article struck her with its comparison to the Agricultural Extension Program. She noted that it was an argument that can strengthen NSGCP budget argument.

Dr. Orbach noted that the question of funding students versus research is not unique to Virginia. He added that an interesting problem arises when you review the proposal as a science proposal and its likelihood of success or failure, you really couldn't do that because most of the funding for the actual research was coming from somewhere else in another proposal you haven't seen. It puts the reviewer in a peculiar situation, and all of that needs to be thought about.

Ms. McCarty added that the Sea Grant perception has been “a mile wide, and an inch deep” exists, but some state Sea Grants have done a really good job to find their unique niche. Additionally, she noted that if NSGCP wanted to be more like Ag Extension then the Program would have to dive deeper into the private sector.

Dr. Helmuth stated that he did not think the mile wide deep thing was a problem, as Sea Grant is the implementation and the deep dive may be a private sector partnership possibility.

Dr. Grau completely disagreed with the characterization, as it did not characterize the strengths of Sea Grant.

Dr. Pennock added that he did not want the state Sea Grants to lose their strengths, but to possibly narrowing down the topic areas with flexibility for change.

Dr. Chigbu asked if NSGCP had considered the possibility of funding programs with NSF.

Dr. Pennock believed there had been efforts, but not recently. He added that State Sea Grants had taken advantage of the individual grants but there was room to grow.

Ms. McCarty stated that NSF was high investment funding program, with high turnover and more personal investment necessary that currently available, and not a top priority right now.

### **9:00am - SWOT Update (J. Pennock, NSGO)**

Dr. Pennock continued with a review of SWOT process. He spoke about nine high level themes with associated levels of activity (actively being addressed/ short term/ long term).

Mr. Vortmann stated that the SWOT analysis was well received by the participants and strongly suggested that the process be repeated in the 6-9 months before the next strategic plan. He also noted that by condensing down into themes, much of the important detail was lost.

Dr. Pennock clarified that the detail was still there, just narrowed down for the presentation.

Dr. Helmuth asked if the mention of climate was the only time climate adaptation was noted in the report.

Dr. Pennock explained that climate was within all of the projects. He added that some funded projects were climate focused (i.e. on a specific fishery), while others were resilience- adaptation focused especially through extension.

Ms. McCarty added that NSGCP has a smaller role to support community scale mitigation activities in renewable energy and sequestering carbon.

Dr. Helmuth opined that solutions were the best space for Sea Grant programs.

Dr. Orbach asked Dr. Pennock if he has felt frustration at connecting with other parts of NOAA.

Dr. Pennock stated that the Assistant Administrator has more than invested in moving Sea Grant into larger NOAA discussions. He added that in a limited budget environment, there has been a lot of elbowing historically, but he has spent more time with NMFS and NOS, and the discussions have been rich. He opined that all state programs should be ambassadors for WeatherReady Nation.

Dr. Grau asked about the value of being included in those NOAA discussions.

Dr. Pennock replied that if the Program is not at the table, it's not getting anything. He highlighted Sea Grant's ability to be truly nimble and to help other line offices to move money quickly, i.e. NMFS trying to move money quickly in Alaska when the budget comes out.

Dr. Brown noted that there has been success in getting people that are spending money to work directly with Sea Grant (i.e., resilience, Sentinel Sites, etc.).

Ms. McCarty further stated that NSGCP was seeking opportunities to enlist the fellows, such as in NWS and the pentagon this year, with the hope to start partnerships.

**9:30am - Implementing a 2017 Work Plan (J. Pennock, NSGO & D. Baker, Chair)**

Dr. Pennock and Mr. Baker presented the list of action items that required input from the NSGAB in the coming year.

Dr. Gray provided an overview and update on the Diversity and Inclusion efforts

Dr. Murray asked when program Site Visits started.

Dr. Brown replied that if the same cycle continues they would start next year, summer 2018.

Dr. Gray asked, if the Advisory Board Members would be targeting the same sites or do visit new sites.

Mr. Eigen explained that NSGO would try to get a person from the last team to the same site, but not necessarily the NSGAB member.

Dr. Pennock stated that if it were possible, people could go to multiple reviews, in addition to getting external panelists to go to more than one site.

**10:00am - Discussion Time**

Mr. Vortmann asked if the NSGCP and NSGAB should de-emphasize the word “climate”. He opined that Sea Grant should go on the offense, with the message that Sea Grant handles the observable, measurable results of climate change, no matter the source.

Dr. Helmuth noted that a lot of climate adaptation does not have a lot to do with climate change causes or mitigation, they are simply a response to climate change.

Ms. Birkholz added that in Michigan, strong conservation environmentalists have used words like climate change, while not as well educated people hear about climate change from the pulpit. She asked for help in what to say to these groups to be helpful.

Dr. Murray suggested that NSGCP did not get involved in the climate language controversy, as it needlessly inflames people.

**10:45am - Public Comment Period**

No public comments received.

**10:50am - Continued Discussion Time**

Dr. Orbach, Dr. Grau, Mr. Vortmann, Dr. Helmuth, Dr. Gray, and Dr. Mace continued to discuss words utilized when describing climate change and how Sea Grant is responding in terms of the terminology the program uses and projects funded.

**11:00am - NOAA and OAR Updates (C. McLean, NOAA & K. Barrett, NOAA)**

**12pm - Meeting Adjourned**