

## 2(c). President-Elect’s Perspective

“Everyone here has the sense that  
**RIGHT NOW**  
 is one of those moments when we are influencing the future.”  
 ~ Steve Jobs

During the last 3 years AGU has undergone tremendous change with the implementation of a new strategic plan, and governance and staff structure based on listening to the voices of our members through dialog, surveys and elections.

The Future Focus Task Force envisioned AGU as a knowledge based organization, in which who makes the decision is not as important as the quality of the information on which the decision is based. Within this view of AGU, the Council is the body that reflects the diversity of voices and perspectives within the AGU that guides the scientific direction and policy of the Union. It is a ‘place’ where voices are heard in dialogue and where, through a process of deliberation, decisions within and across the Union are guided and influenced.

This is the framework under which we, as the Council, have been working since the December 2010 Council meeting. Council working groups (M:AP), the CLT, the Board, committees and staff have been working together to advance AGU’s strategic plan. Listed below are just a few of the notable achievements of our Council.

### Related to Scientific Leadership and Collaboration

*The American Geophysical Union is a leader, collaborator, and sought after partner for scientific innovation, rigor and interdisciplinary focus on global issues.*

- **Publications:** The Council participated in the now completed strategic review of publications in individual interviews and at the August Council meeting. Specifically, Council members provided input to 5 topics: 1) Definition of a quality journal, 2) Eos, 3) Impact factor/prestige/member value, 4) Characteristics of high quality editors; how to attract and retain them and 5) new content areas and new product ideas. **Result:** the publications committee is bringing proposed criteria and job descriptions for AGU editors, a proposed process for recruiting and selecting journal editors, and data policy recommendations to Council for decision at the December Council meeting.
- **Meetings:** The Council participated in strategic discussions of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary science focused on meetings and member affiliation at the August Council meeting. **Result:** the meetings committee will present responses at the December Council meeting.

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- **New Project:** The Council, in August, identified an idea for a “grand challenge” for further input at the December Council meeting. The multi-year challenge would address a societal issue in a transdisciplinary way. The Council envisioned AGU undertaking a grand challenge that could excite and galvanize the membership to work with each other, other scientific societies and other key stakeholders to address it. The effort is envisioned as a multi-year project consisting of coordinated conferences, publications, communications, public engagement and outreach focused on an issue of societal relevance that crosses disciplines and boundaries. **Result:** In September, the Board endorsed moving forward with further definition of such an effort and the next steps on the Grand Challenge will be discussed at the December, 2011 meeting.
- **Honors and Recognition Results:**
  - Approved a new Conflict of Interest Policy for Union Awards, Medals and Prizes. This new policy reduces the number of volunteers excluded from the Union Awards, Medals and Prize process.
  - Approved moving approval of recipients of Section, Focus Group, Program awards and lectures to the Honors and Recognition Committee from the CLT. The H&R committee approved new awards in September.
  - Approved keeping Section, Focus Group, Program awards and lectures approval of recipients with the Sections, Focus Groups and Programs.
  - Approved criteria developed by the Honors and Recognition committee for Union medals and awards and Section, Focus Group, Prizes, Program awards and lectures.
  - The Council endorsed the development of an Ambassador program and will further define the program at its December meeting and pass recommendations to the H&R committee.
  - At December 2011 meeting, the Council will consider placing the Fellows Committee under the guidance of the Honors and Recognition Committee.
- **Organizational Relations:** the Council provided input to a Union wide policy on developing organizational relationships that the Board approved in September. **Results:** The Biogeosciences section and the Near Surface Geophysics Focus Group requested a mechanism for formal collaborations with the Soil Science Society of America and the Society of Exploration Geophysics, respectively. Because of Council and Board approval of the Organizational Relationships policy, both groups were both able to move forward quickly to plan joint programs. Development of, and agreement on, a proposal for an AGU-GSA Joint Penrose-Chapman conference on coastal management with co-chairs identified in collaboration with the meetings committee

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**Related to Science and Society**

*The American Geophysical Union engages members, shapes policy, and informs society about the excitement of Earth and space science and its role in developing solutions for the sustainability of the planet.*

- **Outreach Results:**
  - Council discussed AGU involvement in public engagement efforts and, with the Board and the Outreach Committee, agreed that an active/proactive approach is best.
  - Approved content of an interim position statement on academic freedom.
  - Council members provided names of people willing to speak to the press and policy makers.
  - In December, 2011, Council will consider the content of 9 positions statements up for renewal.
  - President elect of Seismology, Karen Fischer, served as AGU media spokesperson for the east coast earthquake.
  - President-elect, Carol Finn, was an invited participant in science communication training.

**Related to Talent Pool**

*The American Geophysical Union is a diverse and inclusive organization that uses its position to build the global talent pool in Earth and space science.*

- Agreed to explore a new awards program (currently called the Ambassador program) to possibly include: interdisciplinary, public and science policy, societal impact and science communications, advocacy, applied science, leadership, and others such as students, mid-career scientists, group sciences.
- Discussed adding permanent positions to the Council for student/early career representatives. The motion to approve this on the December Council agenda.

**Related to Organizational Excellence**

*As a scientific society, the American Geophysical Union operates within a new business model that is sustainable, transparent, and inclusive in ways that are responsive to members and stakeholders.*

- **Governance**
  - Provided input into 2012 election of leaders, including realigning terms that is now being implemented.

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- Council explored council composition options; after discussion consensus was to keep council as is and to enlarge CLT – recommendation for decision at the December Council meeting
- Presented new types of member groups (affinity, utility, etc.); these will be implemented after a working group determines criteria for forming, evaluating and sunseting groups
- Created a Council work plan that is updated with input from Council members.
- **Communication**
  - Council expressed interest in how to use technology to engage council members more regularly. Information for the August and December Council meetings has been posted on the new Council online collaboration site.
  - Council participated in webinars with financial and technology updates and membership survey results.
  - Issues unresolved at the August Council meeting as well as some suggested for the December agenda were forwarded to their appropriate groups for action and response (see attached). This is one mechanism for tightening the links between different parts of AGU.

**Emerging Issues**

Some potential issues for future discussion:

- How to continue to effectively use technology to engage the Council year-round.
- How to effectively start, sunset, charge and use the information from the working groups in Council, Board and committee decisions and projects.
- How to engage Sections and Focus Groups in better defining roles and responsibilities for their leadership and volunteer positions.
- How to increase diversity of award nominations and involvement of diverse groups and voices in all parts of AGU.
- How to continue to evolve transdisciplinary science and how to improve the ability for emerging science to be reflected in new journals, meetings content and programs/products.

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## August Council Meeting – Ideas and issues forwarded to another group

To Board:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Input from group discussions re: strategic review of publications (agenda item #6) incorporated into final report for board <b>SEPT2011</b></li> <li>• Input re: organizational relationships policy <b>SEPT2011</b></li> <li>• Discuss how big we want the organization to be (agenda item #5) <b>SEPT2011 &amp; ONGOING</b></li> <li>• Discuss grand challenge concept and themes as part of operational/financial plan (agenda item #5) <b>SEPT2011 &amp; ONGOING</b></li> <li>• Consider creating a neutral organization to provide mechanism to gather cognate science organizations (agenda item #5) <b>NOT BEING CONSIDERED AT THIS TIME</b></li> </ul>	
To Honors and Recognition Committee:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act on outstanding section/focus group awards (agenda item #10) <b>DONE</b></li> <li>• Explore “ambassador” program (agenda item #10) <b>DEC2011</b></li> <li>• Share criteria for union awards/medals/prizes with section/focus group nominating committees (from parking lot) <b>DEC2011</b></li> <li>• Discuss MacElwane criteria – is it age or career stage? (from parking lot) <b>DEC2011</b></li> <li>• Discuss how closely union committee should follow section/focus group recommendations (from parking lot) <b>this has to do with Fellows; pending the DEC2011 action of the council H&amp;R could add this strategic question to its agenda</b></li> <li>• Review fellow and section/focus group award conflict of interest policies to align with new H&amp;R policy (agenda item #10) <b>DEC2011</b></li> </ul>	
To Meetings Committee:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss program committee challenge re: number of abstracts (from parking lot) <b>DEC2011</b></li> <li>• Explore swirl concept (agenda item #5) <b>OCT2011; FORWARDED TO PROGRAM COMMITTEE</b></li> <li>• Consider moving to transdisciplinary union sessions (agenda item #5) <b>OCT2011 &amp; ONGOING</b></li> </ul>	
To Publications Committee:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss comments in GRL (from parking lot) <b>BEING DISCUSSED</b></li> <li>• Discuss open data (from parking lot) <b>DEC2011</b></li> </ul>	
To Outreach Committee:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add creating our own freedom of expression position statement to list (agenda item #7) <b>OCT2011 &amp; ONGOING</b></li> </ul>	

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<b>To Governance Committee:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a timeline for nominations and elections (from parking lot, agenda item #13) <b>DONE</b></li> <li>Work on communication re: realigning leadership terms (agenda item #13) <b>DONE</b></li> </ul>		
<b>To Development Board:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help with section/focus group fundraising (from parking lot)</li> </ul>		Sent to Development staff
<b>Affiliation/organization of science:</b>		
Ideas to consider from discussion on agenda item #11: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask sections/focus groups to produce a statement re: how they align and advance the strategic plan <b>DEC2011, included in section/focus group reports</b></li> <li>Need more data from sections/focus groups</li> <li>Ask sections/focus groups if they could/should combine to form a simpler structure</li> <li>Need focus groups to be more cross-cutting, or simplify by naming all sections/focus groups the same thing</li> <li>Widespread agreement to add new groups</li> <li>Create student groups</li> <li>5 pillars do not accurately capture "space" part of AGU mission/vision</li> <li>Need to develop criteria for creating, evaluating and sunseting groups; need consistent definitions and procedures</li> </ul>		Form a working group to discuss criteria for creating, evaluating, sunseting groups
<b>Council composition:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Think about increasing size of CLT to 8 (agenda item #12) <b>DEC2011</b></li> </ul>		

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