

2(b). President’s Perspective

*"Coming together is a beginning.
 Keeping together is progress.
 Working together is success. "*

~ Henry Ford

It is now a little over a year since we began to execute our strategic plan under the new governance structure of coordinated Board and Council. As envisioned by the Future Focus Task Force, the Board has focused its efforts on the prudent and thorough guidance of financial, legal and organizational matters while the expanded Council, now more representative of all AGU scientific stakeholder groups, has effectively guided the scientific affairs of the Union. The benefits of this structure are apparent on review the progress we have made towards achieving the goals of our strategic plan, as summarized in the three State of the Union reports from the President, President-elect, and CEO. Our successes have truly been extraordinary when measured in terms our starting point 18 months ago.

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.

- Chris McEntee and I met with Guillermo Auad of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) in Denver. BOEM is a part of the former Minerals Management Service, which was reorganized in the wake of the Deep Water Horizon oil spill. BOEM will hold a town Hall at the Ocean Science Meeting in February and be featured in an EOS article to inform members about the restructuring of BOEM and what this means for ocean energy research and management.
- Chris McEntee, Carol Finn and I have planned leadership meetings at the Fall AGU with representatives from GSA, AOGS, and EGU; and Brazilian, Mexican, and Ethiopian geophysical societies. These meetings will continue our efforts to build bridges that help advance our common interests in advancing and communicating geophysical science with other regional associations.
- AGU sponsored luncheon at a NOAA tsunami conference in Seattle where I spoke about how NOAA and AGU can work together to promote science in service to society, like that involving tsunami research, mitigation and warnings.
- AGU has planned a Leadership Summit in Washington DC with other societies on Dec 15. The purpose will be to discuss to collective outreach and communications strategies regarding the federal budget and the upcoming 2012 elections. It is important that the public and policy

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makers be accurately informed about the benefits of scientific research and that support for science be viewed as a nonpartisan issue for the public good.

- The Meetings Committee adopted protocols and principles for peer review of abstracts submitted to the AGU meetings. Based on those protocols and principles, the Fall Meeting Committee rejected as unscientific one abstract that claimed dinosaurs roamed the planet 20-30K years ago. A petition to the President for reinstatement was denied since appropriate procedures were followed and the Program Committee has final say.

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.

- Gavin Schmidt has been awarded the new Climate Communications prize, which is sponsored by Nature’s Own and comes with a \$25,000 cash award. Gavin works at Goddard Institute for Space Studies and is recognized for his work as a co-founder of the blog realclimate.org, among other accomplishments.
- I addressed the opening session of a conference on “Ozone, Climate Change, and Public Policy” in Washington DC on Nov 7. The conference was a celebration of the Montreal protocol to limit CFCs in the atmosphere, and an opportunity to consider lessons the Protocol has for developing international conventions on climate change. I spoke about AGU new proactive position on public engagement as endorsed by the Outreach Committee, Council and Board.
- The Council’s approved wording of a position statement on open communication of scientific ideas has authorized Chris McEntee and me to speak out in the media as high profile issues related to this topic arise. The first opportunity came in October and involved the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality censoring parts of an official study of Galveston Bay that indicate climate change is having an affect. After communicating with John Anderson, an AGU member at Rice University who led the study, we have held off commenting since Texas scientists are very active publicizing this breach of scientific integrity.
- I was interviewed in Nature about the AGU’s engagement with Congress on policy matters and why our activity is on the rise. The simple answer is that it’s consistent with our new strategic plan and that AGU “made a conscious decision in 2010 to become more actively engaged....” (see www.nature.com/news/2011/111019/full/478299a.html)

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.

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- AGU cosponsored an Oct meeting of the World Climate Research Program in Denver. We underwrote student awards for best presentations, with prizes of one year’s membership or Fall Meeting registration waiver. The meeting attracted nearly 2000 scientists from around the world. Organizers were very appreciative of AGU’s contribution and are interested in continuing the relationship for future meetings.

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.

- I accepted the resignation of Board Member Chris Mooney and began process of seeking a replacement who I expect to have on board by the April 2012 Board meeting.
- The American Institute of Physics is engaged in new strategic planning process and is considering a reorganization of its governing board. I had the opportunity to describe AGU’s strategic plan and Board/Council governance model at the AIP Board meeting in Nov. AIP is impressed by AGU’s success in both governance and strategic planning and has asked me to sit on their strategic planning committee.
- The Task Force on Scientific Ethics held its first meeting at AGU on Nov 10-11. A broad range of topics were considered, including the definition of scientific misconduct, development of a code of conduct for members, procedures for dealing with misconduct, and sanctions for violators. An article in Eos and a Town Hall at the Fall Meeting are planned to communicate progress and solicit input from members.
- At its Sept meeting, the Board approved job descriptions, leadership criteria and a rotation strategy to ensure continuity of leadership for Board members. The Governance Committee will next turn to the Council for position descriptions and leadership criteria.
- Informed by input from the August Council meeting, the Board approved extension of existing elected terms for another 6 months to allow more time to prepare for upcoming elections, to put the election cycle in sync with the AGU budget cycle, to facilitate leadership development and handoff at the Fall Meeting, and to accommodate summer schedules.
- The Board approved a Conflict of Interest process for use by the Board, Council, committees, and task forces.
- The Board executive committee finalized Chris McEntee’s goals for the coming year and agreed to put her performance evaluation on calendar year basis consistent with staff evaluations and AGU budgeting process.

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Emerging Issues

The following issues all potentially affect AGU revenues from meetings, publications, and other sources:

1. Several federal agency budget appropriations have been signed into law (e.g., NSF, NASA, NOAA). There are some increases over FY 2011 levels but far less than the President requested. Some areas, like climate research in NOAA, are being significantly cut.
2. The “Supercommittee” report on \$1.5 trillion in cuts over the next 10 years is due out shortly. There is little optimism that the committee will reach agreement, triggering automatic across the board cuts in discretionary and defense spending beginning in FY2013.
3. A White House federal administrative efficiency initiative requires reductions over the next two years in administrative costs, which include official travel. Enforced federal employee travel limitations may affect AGU meeting attendance in 2012-13.

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