

June 9, 2016, 13:00-14:00 EDT Webinar

Polar Programs Subcommittee (PLR SC) participants: W. Berry Lyons* (Subcommittee Chair), Stefanie Brachfeld, James Dixon, Tom Neumann, Greg Sullivan,* and Jeff Welker (*designates subcommittee members who are members of the full AC GEO).

National Science Foundation Division of Polar Programs (NSF PLR) participants: Kelly Falkner (Director, PLR), Scot Arnold, Andrew Backe, Scott Borg, Art Brown, Jessie Crain, Renee Crain, Paul Cutler, Chris Fritsen, Colene Haffke, Pat Haggerty, Michael Jackson, Dan King, Maggie Knuth, Vladimir Papitashvili, Polly Penhale, Eric Saltzman, Marc Stieglitz, Neil Swanberg, Thomas Wilch, and William Wiseman.

Discussion Notes

Berry Lyons, chair of the PLR SC, developed the agenda in coordination with Kelly Falkner, Director of NSF PLR. Four documents were provided to all invitees prior to the webinar: 1) Status of PLR Merger Review, 2) draft of “Navigating the New Arctic,” 3) the 2016 Arctic Sciences COV Report, and 4) the 2016 Antarctic Sciences COV Report.

Kelly Falkner opened the webinar by having all participants introduce themselves. The main webinar agenda items were reviewed as follows:

1) Status of the PLR Merger Review.

Kelly Falkner noted that currently the NSF OD and Assistant Directors responsible for reviewing the GEO-PLR merger are finalizing a Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) and GEO-PLR merger review data document. The DCL and data document will be made available—via the NSF public website—as a means to gain input from the research community.

The NSF OD and Assistant Directors responsible for reviewing the CISE-ACI merger have recently completed their DCL and merger review data document. The CISE-ACI DCL is available at: <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2016/nsf16090/nsf16090.jsp>. The CISE-ACI merger review data document is available at: <https://www.nsf.gov/od/aci-review-data.jsp>. It is anticipated that the final GEO-PLR DCL and merger review data document will be posted in a similar format very soon. Once the links are available to PLR, Andrew Backe will distribute them to PLR SC members. Upon receiving the links, the SC members will coordinate efforts to distribute them to the research community. Tentatively, the deadline for research community input is July 29, 2016. The results of the merger review process are expected to be presented to the National Science Board (NSB) during the August 9-10, 2016 meeting.

Polar Programs Subcommittee of GEO Advisory Committee

II) Arctic Big Idea: “Navigating the New Arctic”.

Kelly Falkner reviewed the concept of NSF’s “big ideas.” The PLR SC previously received a link to an article by Jeff Mervis outlining all nine of NSF’s “big ideas.” (The article is available at: <http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2016/05/nsf-director-unveils-big-ideas-eye-next-president-and-congress>).

Three of the big ideas—“Navigating the New Arctic”, “Rules of Life” and “Windows on the Universe: Multi-messenger Astrophysics”—relate to polar research. In particular, Kelly Falkner informed the PLR SC that Dr. Roger Wakimoto, the Assistant Director (AD) for Geosciences, is serving as lead for “Navigating the Arctic” at the upcoming NSF AD retreat on June 28, 2016. Kelly Falkner and Simon Stephenson asked PLR SC members to review a draft of the document for its concept, logic, and intent. Input should be provided to Simon Stephenson for integration into the final version of the document prior to June 24, 2016.

III) Status of Committee of Visitors (COV) Reports.

Kelly Falkner noted that separate COVs for Arctic Sciences and Antarctic Sciences were held at NSF on May 17-19, 2016. The draft reports for these COVs have been distributed to PLR SC members. PLR staff will now prepare responses to the COV reports. Draft responses will be presented at the next PLR SC meeting. The final versions of the responses will be completed prior to the fall AC GEO meeting, scheduled for October 19-20, 2016.

Barry Lyons extended thanks to all those involved in the COV process. Kelly Falkner extended similar thanks, and emphasized the exceptional coordination work performed by Dr. Colene Haffke of NSF.

Action Items

- 1) Once posted, Andrew Backe will distribute to PLR SC members the links to the GEO-PLR DCL and merger review data document. (A. Backe)
- 2) Once received, Barry Lyons and the PLR SC members will coordinate distribution of the GEO-PLR DCL and merger review data document links to the polar research community.
- 3) PLR SC members will review the “Navigating the New Arctic” draft and provide input to Simon Stephenson for integration into the final version of the document prior to June 24, 2016.