Suggested Best Practices for STAC Boards and Committees

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This is a compilation of practices and techniques that should be used by the AMS Scientific and Technological Activities Commission (STAC) Boards and Committees (B/C) to carry out their required duties and accomplish their objectives more effectively. These practices are based upon and guided by the responsibilities of AMS STAC B/C as defined in the **AMS Organizational Procedures document**. This is a living document and all are encouraged to send suggestions for improving it by e-mail to the Past STAC Commissioner, **Kristie Franz**.

STAC B/C Responsibilities: Each Committee and Board will plan conferences, symposiums, or other meetings to help advance science and technology and build community; maintain an active membership and web site (both of which will be updated at least annually); seek to recognize outstanding members via Society award and Fellow nominations; work with their Commissioners to inform Council of concerns and suggestions for improvement; and provide a brief summary to the Commissioners after each conference, symposium, or other meeting. Each Committee and Board within its assigned field is responsible for participating as needed in the Society's Statement process, for an ongoing review of the Society's general activities, and for making such recommendations as appear desirable to ensure the activity of the Society reflects the importance of and interest in the field of the Committee and Board.

1. **Build Your Science Community:** One of the main foci of B/Cs is to help build a

stronger and more collaborative science community – both in its sub-discipline and across the broader weather, water and climate community. To accomplish this goal, B/Cs should consider the following suggested operating practices:

a. Regular virtual or teleconferences and, as opportunities present themselves, in-person meetings:
   - Find dates and times that work for the majority of your B/C. Use a meeting scheduling tool such as **Doodle** for determining when most members are available.
   - Send an agenda prior to, then meeting minutes subsequent to the discussion.
   - Appoint a note-taker to help record the discussion for preparing the meeting minutes. Post the meeting minutes on the B/C web page.
   - Ensure sufficient conference calls for planning specialty conferences. These would normally be organized and conducted by the program chair, not the B/C chair.
   - Maintain a living google doc that all members of the B/C can access and edit before, during and after the meetings.

b. Important decisions, such as those regarding membership nominations and conferences/ symposiums dates and places, should involve the entire B/C.

c. Strive to partner with other B/Cs for your conferences, special symposia, or town hall meetings.

d. Nominate outstanding individuals for Society awards.

e. Ensure improvements or any concerns are reported to STAC Commissioners.

2. **STAC Website:** Have your committee members **bookmark this site** and consult it first when questions arise.

   a. Many questions regarding how STAC boards and committees work can be found on the web site as well as links to important Society pages. These helpful items include guidance on awards, B/C membership, conducting meetings, AMS statements, STAC news and reports, chair and member information, and other helpful guidance.

   b. Be sure to review the **STAC Newsletter**. It contains key AMS events, summaries of recent conferences, reminders of upcoming activities, helpful reminders, and key events for Board/Committee Chairs to accomplish. Suggestion: you might find it helpful to refer to the Newsletter from a year ago as a reminder tool for things that need to be accomplished or perhaps in a planning stage.

   c. Your committee should maintain its web pages on the STAC web site. It is a great resource for your committee - so use it well! Currently, all website edits must be submitted to **Peter Killelea** with AMS. Should direct editing access to STAC websites become available again in the future, guidance about how to edit your B/C website is available here: **Edit and Add Content.** Your pages can be edited and expanded to include your committee activities, goals, plans and other information for your community. The membership page is maintained by AMS,

contact your Commissioner if changes are needed.

3. **Periodic Required Chair and Committee Activities:**

a. Soliciting annual Award nominations and Fellow nominations is part of the **Term of Reference (TOR)** for all B/Cs. The nomination of an individual can take some time to complete, letters of support are required, so plan ahead in order to meet the May 1st deadline.

b. Consider developing a B/C Five Year Plan. Share your plan with the STAC Commissioners and post it on your committee webpage.

c. Recruit new members and student members: The **new member application** form and CVs can be submitted to the STAC Commissioner anytime during the year. See Sections 5 and 6.

d. Typically the STAC Annual Meeting occurs the Sunday before the Annual Meeting. Your B/C should be represented by the Chair, or if unavailable, by an informed member of your B/C.

e. The editor of the **AMS Glossary of Meteorology** will periodically assign new terms/definitions to an appropriate B/C for review and a recommendation. These can also be proposed revised definitions. Typically, the editor will ask for a review to be completed within a month.

4. **Conferences and Symposia:**

These are often the most important and visible outcomes of our work. It is important that these activities get the time and attention they deserve. A number of items worth considering:

a. Program Chairs: Assign at least two enthusiastic people to co-chair the meeting and to lead the program committee. It is important for the B/C chairs and members to share these responsibilities and to use these opportunities as a way of developing future B/C leaders. Your program chairs need to be familiar with (and use) the web page that STAC developed for them: **Program Chair Website**.

b. Ensure that your appointed conference and symposium program leads interact with AMS lead meeting planners early to determine location and any special requests or needs. Conferences outside of the United States require additional time to bring to fruition.

c. Consider offering student travel and best paper awards at your conference and complete the **Funding Request Form.** Work with the AMS meeting staff to ensure the Form is prepared correctly.

d. Follow guidelines for student travel and best paper awards, available on the STAC web site, and be aware that judging must be done fairly, in accordance with AMS guidelines.

e. We must all ensure that our meetings are fully in line with the AMS Code of Professional and Respectful Conduct at AMS meetings: **Safe and Inclusive Meetings**
f. You may want to arrange for Short Courses with your event. Check out the **Short Courses** webpage.
g. AMS encourages us to have joint events (conferences, conference sessions, symposia) when there is a natural connection between two or more B/Cs.
    - These joint events can bring together overlapping disciplines between various boards and commissions,
    - The resultant synergy can produce a more productive and meaningful event,
    - It is up to your committee to reach out to other groups and find a match.
h. Conference Summaries: The summary is an AMS requirement for boards or committees to provide following every conference or symposium. A Conference Report Review form is provided by AMS to make this task less complex and demanding. Simply go to this **link**, fill in the requested information, and submit. Note: If your Board or Committee desires, a summary can also be posted on your board or committee's website in the "News and Announcements" section.
i. **Named Sessions** and **Named Symposia** are methods to recognize and honor individuals.

    - The named session occurs within a specialty conference and requires a **Proposal for Named Session** form submitted to the STAC Commissioner who would then endorse and forward the nomination to the AMS Executive Committee for approval. The form should be submitted roughly a year prior to the planned conference.
    - The Named Symposium is a higher and more distinctive level of recognition. It is normally a one-day event comprised of three or four sessions (it can have a poster session in addition to oral presentations). It requires the full 18-month planning time-frame accorded to a specialty conference. Nominations (**Proposal for Named Symposium**) are due to Jen Ives (jives@ametsoc.org) by May 1 of the year prior to the next Annual Meeting, or roughly 18 months before the proposed event.

j. Obtaining Corporate Sponsorship for Meetings:

Several boards and committees have been successful in obtaining corporate sponsorship for meetings. Funds from the sponsorship dollars can be used in addition to the $2,000 provided by AMS (paragraph **4c**). Some areas this can help include lowering the costs of a banquet, providing for a reception, adding to the food selections during coffee breaks, and providing for more student presentation awards. Connect with your lead meeting planner on information needed to develop sponsorship marketing materials for your conference. Additionally, please share contact information for any organizations that may be interested in sponsoring an event or service at your conference.

5. **New Members and Renewals:**

To **nominate** a new member, provide the STAC Commissioner with the completed **STAC Membership Nomination Form** and a CV for the nominee for approval. Once the Commissioner approves the nomination, the name will be forwarded to AMS and the individual's name will be added to the board or committee roster posted on their respective web site.

Members are generally approved for three-year terms and they may be continued for a second three-year term if so desired by the chair and the member (as noted in Section 6, student terms are in two year increments). Those members nominated in the first six months of the year will have an expiration date of three years (two years for students) from the preceding January. Those nominated in the second six months of the year will have an expiration date of three years (two years for students) from the subsequent January.

Many B/Cs had noted challenges in recruiting or locating new committee members and completing the membership nomination process by the previous October 1st deadline. Hence, we liberalized the process to allow year-round nominations as per paragraph 3c of this document. Note: Even with the ability to add members year-round, STAC Commissioners will continue to ask B/C Chairs for new member nominations (and second term information) during each October. This is necessary because, as noted, terms will still expire in January. Some techniques for identifying prospective members that have proven to be effective include the following:

a. Send an e-mail to those who submitted abstracts to your recent conferences or symposia inviting them to apply for membership on your B/C. Your AMS meeting planner can provide you with a list of all the e-mail addresses from your events. Then, your members can consider the applicants and choose the new members.
b. Strive to ensure your B/C membership is representative of your disciplinary community. (You might find it helpful to refer to the Membership Breakdown of STAC Boards and Committees to find member areas needing attention.) This includes considerations such as:
    - expertise in the various meteorological/oceanographic/hydrologic, etc specialties on your B/C,
    - representation from the academic, private, and government sectors,
    - other as deemed important to the success of your board or committee
c. Offer each departing B/C member the opportunity to recommend a successor,
d. Consider nominating individuals from among those presenting at conferences or symposia with which your B/C shares common interests.
e. Be alert for volunteers passed along by the AMS from their "volunteer" link on the main webpage. You can post volunteer listings using this form.

6. **Student Members:**

AMS requires that all B/Cs have at least one student member and it is recommended B/C include early career members Student members can serve up to 2 two-year terms (and also can be added to your B/C throughout the year). Here are some ideas to help you in recruiting/finding new student B/C members:

a. Ask your departing student members for leads on possible successors from students they have studied with or met at various meetings/conferences.
b. Reach out to the student award winning presenters at your specialty conferences as this may well be a source of a student who wants to become more involved,
c. Obtain recommendations from faculty colleagues,
d. Elicit suggestions from active committee members,
e. Get input about promising student interns (public, academic, or private sector) from your B/C members,
f. Open some dialogue with AMS Local Student Chapters as a possible method for locating prospective student members. Locate the student chapters and the leaders here: AMS Local Chapters.

7. **Board and Committee Leadership:**

We all know that the **Chair** is the key for B/C activities. The B/C chair leads by holding regular meetings, keeping fellow members informed about relevant B/C business and deadlines, assures that all members have a role on the committee (Section 14), and strives to foster a diverse and inclusive B/C (Section 15). STAC Commissioners strongly encourage each Board and Committee to also have a Vice Chair. The Vice Chair can quickly fill in when the Chair is tied up with professional demands, on travel, or unable to attend conference calls or meetings.

In terms of identifying the new Chair, there is not a set method and you have flexibility in how your B/C goes through the process. A Chair might inquire among several members to see who is willing to take over as the new Chair. Other groups ask each member if they are interested in becoming the new Chair and then find a consensus across the B/C membership. Regardless of the approach you take, be thoughtful in developing a succession plan if you are stepping down as Chair within the next ~6 months. Identifying a new Chair at the last minute leaves the successor with little opportunity to learn the many responsibilities, hence this fervent plea to begin the process a year ahead of time. Often a logical successor is the Vice Chair, which is one reason why we encourage every board and committee to have a Vice Chair as a way of training the next Chair.

We strongly recommend that, when the last year of the B/C chairs term commences, an Incoming Chair is appointed (normally from among the members of the committee).The Incoming Chair then has a year to act as an understudy and will be fully prepared when assuming the role of Chair.

- This is separate from the optional role of B/C Vice Chair (although the Incoming Chair and Vice Chair might be the same person). B/Cs may choose to have a Vice Chair when they feel it is appropriate and advantageous for their situation.
- The current Chair may want to assign the responsibility of updating the five year plan to the incoming chair as a way of familiarizing the individual with B/C plans.

8. **New Board/Committee Member Orientation:**
   We often forget that new B/C members likely have little idea what their role might be as a new member:
   a. One approach to address this reality that has been successful is to have an introductory conference call just between the Chair and all the new members before their terms begin.
   b. Inform new members of the STAC website and have them browse it and require each prospective member to read over this Suggested Best Practices for STAC Boards and Committees document.
   c. Most new members will be unfamiliar with what the board does and how they can participate. One way to inform the new members is by reviewing the five-year plan with them and the **member position description**.
   d. Assign new members a responsibility soon after they become B/C members.
   e. Many questions can be addressed prior to new members joining the board enabling them to have an awareness allowing them to contribute meaningfully from the start of their terms.
   f. It is important to stress and clearly convey that the AMS and the Chair appreciate the new member stepping forward for what is a voluntary position. The AMS relies on B/C volunteers to carry out much of the essential aspects of AMS activities (from conferences, symposia, town hall meetings, judging awards, and mentoring future members).

9. **Involvement in the AMS Policy Process:**

The interactions between science and policy are growing and AMS provides a venue to engage in discussion. AMS members have several opportunities to become involved and STAC boards and committees are encouraged to think about whether these might be helpful. Some engagement opportunities are:

a. Participate in Congressional Visit Days. The goal is to provide information, build relationships, and develop an improved understanding of the Congressional landscape.
b. Contribute to and/or propose AMS policy statements. Council approved statements are the voice of AMS. Members of your community can volunteer to serve on drafting teams, comment on statements in progress, and propose new statements. A statement proposal that comes from STAC is sure to get Council attention.

c. Suggest and contribute to **AMS Policy Memos**. AMS Policy Memos are brief introductions (no more than 2 pages) to key topics in weather, water, and climate. The views expressed are those of the author alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the American Meteorological Society, its members, or sponsors. Your board or committee can work in concert with the **Director of the AMS Policy Program** and the STAC Commissioner to create a Policy Memo on a topic of interest to your B/C and to a sector of the AMS membership.
d. Encourage your community to attend the AMS Summer Policy Colloquium to learn about the federal policy progress.
e. Make sure your community is aware of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Science and Technology Policy Fellowship programs, for which our members are eligible.

For further ideas, reach out to Paul Higgins, Director of the AMS Policy Program.

10. Statements

AMS statements are written documents that speak on behalf of AMS as a whole in matters of importance for society relevant to the mission and expertise of AMS and its members. The AMS council has oversight and responsibility for approving statements. STAC boards or committees may often be involved in providing input to statements in need of revision, initiating calls for new or updated statements, or participating in drafting committees. In all cases, please note because statements are the "voice" of the AMS, the initiation of revisions, formations of drafting committees, reviewing of public comments, and final approval is all run through AMS Council. Before starting on a process, please review the **guidance and best practices for AMS statements**. In particular, note that there are multiple types of statements that serve different purposes. In all cases, reach out to your STAC Commissioner point of contact before moving forward on an activity.

11. Awards

STAC involvement in **awards** falls into three categories.

a. STAC boards and committees are involved in judging awards in the table below.
b. In 2017, we instituted STAC-level awards. Each board and committee can submit a nomination to the Commissioner once every year by October 1. Calls for nominations are periodically announced in the newsletters in advance. You can view the Terms of Reference at this link: **Scientific and Technological Activities Commission Awards**
c. Each board and committee can select student best paper awards and travel awards. These are issued with a conference or symposium that a board or committee organizes and conducts. The Terms of Reference for these awards are at this link: **Guidelines for Board/Committee Student Awards**

Matrix of STAC involvement in AMS Awards:

Award	Responsible B/C or Commissioner

The Charles L. Mitchell Award	Weather Analysis and Forecasting (WAF)
The Award for an Exceptional Specific Prediction	WAF
The Francis W. Reichelderfer Award	WAF (2), BOGM (2), Coastal Environment, Hydrology, Applied Climatology
The Helmut E. Landsberg Award	Board on Urban Environment
The Award for Outstanding Achievement in Biometeorology	Board on Atmospheric Biogeosciences
The Banner I. Miller Award (Biannually)	Committee on Tropical Met & Tropical Cyclones
The Robert E. Horton Lecturer in Hydrology	Committee on Hydrology
The Bernard Haurwitz Memorial Lecturer	STAC Commissioner
The Walter Orr Roberts Lecturer in Interdisciplinary Sciences	STAC Commissioner
The AMS Journalism Award	Incoming STAC Commissioner & Commissioner
The Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Advance of Applied Meteorology	Board for Private Sector Meteorologists with input from Applied Climatology
Syukuro Manabe Climate Research Award	Nominations are considered by a committee of seven members, including the chair of the STAC Climate Variability and Change Committee (CVC), who will lead the committee; three other members of the CVC; and three at-large members selected by the STAC Commissioner, to serve up to three-year terms
Joanne Simpson Tropical Meteorology Research Award	Committee on Tropical Meteorology and Tropical Cyclones
Peter V. Hobbs Student Prize	The Cloud Physics Conference or Symposium Program Committee
Spiros G. Geotis Student Prize	The Radar Meteorology Conference Program Committee
Max A. Eaton Student Prize	The Hurricane and Tropical Meteorology Conference Program Committee
Robert Leviton Student Prize	The Committee on Measurements will submit a recommendation to the STAC Commissioner for approval

12. **Obtaining Assistance from the STAC Commissioners:**

At any one time, there are **three STAC Commissioners**: the Past Commissioner, the Current Commissioner, and the Incoming Commissioner. Each serve two years in their

role, and then advance (from Incoming, to Current, to Past). With 36 STAC boards and committees, the Commissioners have divided responsibilities so that each Commissioner is assigned as the primary point of contact for twelve B/Cs. You can contact your designated commissioner for questions ranging from AMS Awards, new B/C members, conference issues, named sessions/symposia, and any other of a multitude of issues for which you feel you need guidance. **This link** provides the line-up of Commissioners with B/Cs. Of course, if you desire, you can always contact the Current Commissioner as the prime expert.

13. AMS Community Forum:

The goal of the **AMS Community online forum** is to improve communication within the AMS. Every STAC Board and Committee has their own "community" with all members included. By making use of the Community, you can replace email for communicating within your B/C, STAC, and the entire AMS. The Community provides a location for active discussion that is centralized and easily searchable. The Community can also be used to share and store files and documents. This platform enhances board and committee continuity capabilities and can be used as an excellent resource to assist in the orientation process for new committee members.

14. Assigned duties for B/C members:

a. All members of a B/C are expected to participate actively in the B/C. Therefore, it is highly encouraged (even expected) that B/Cs have defined roles or positions, and that each member (to the extent possible) is assigned at least one specific role. Designating roles and responsibilities to all members assures timely completion of tasks, fosters future leaders of the B/C, and promotes participation.

b. This matrix is a sample of what can be used to assign and record individual member primary duties:

Name	Affiliation	Term Ends	Notional Committee Role
Chair	NASA	2025	Chair
Vice Chair	USAFA	2027	Awards & Fellows
Member 1	Northrop Grumman	2025	Recorder – note taker
Member 2	Naval Res Lab	2026	Conference program chair
Member 3	NHC	2027	Glossary of Meteorology
Member 4	UCAR	2025	AMS Community Forum Focal Point
Member 5	NWS Mt Holly	2026	Conference program co-chair
Member 6	AER	2027	Town Hall Meetings
Member 7	Univ of Georgia	2025	Short Courses

Member 8	MSU, Denver	2026	AMS Statements
Member 9	Accuweather	2027	Five-year plan focal point
Member 10	ESRL	2025	Conference/Symposium Summaries
Member 11	NCEP	2026	Webinar lead planner
Student member 1	Lyndon State U	2025	Social Media Lead
Student member 2	NC State	2026	Webmaster
Student member 3	Cornell Univ	2026	Program Committee Member
Key Duties (Possible Positions)			
Chair	Vice Chair	Glossary of Meteorology	Webmaster
Conference program chair	Conference program co-chair	AMS Statements	Recorder - note taker
Short Courses	AMS Community Forum Focal Point	Five-year plan focal point	Town Hall Meetings
Awards and Fellows	Webinar Lead	Social Media Lead	Conference/Symposium Summaries

15. Cultivating a successful Committee or Board

Recommendations include:

- Regular review of the AMS **Code of Conduct** statement and knowledge of how to report violations within your committee or board or during conferences.
- Holding, where appropriate, open calls for recruitment of members, using the AMS **volunteer portal,** committee or board social media pages, or with assistance of AMS meeting staff, emailing prior meeting attendees.
- In addition to required student members, add a specific spot for an early-career member.
- Raising funds to enhance conference support funds through sponsorships and donations.
- Providing means for virtual or hybrid participation in committee meetings and activities.
- Gain training in meeting facilitation and communication.

16. Contacting the AMS Staff:

Bookmark the **AMS Key Contacts** webpage.This can really be helpful in many situations when you need to quickly touch base with AMS staff in Boston or Washington.