Suggested Best Practices for STAC Boards and Committees

Updated on 27 May 2020 (new or revised items in red)

Table of Contents

1. **Build Your Science Community**
2. **STAC Website**
3. **Periodic Required Chair and Committee Activities**
4. **Conferences and symposia**
5. **New Members and Renewals**
6. **Student Members**
7. **Leadership Transition**
8. **New Board/Committee Member Orientation**
9. **Involvement in the AMS Policy Process**
10. **Awards**
11. **Obtaining Assistance from the STAC Commissioners**
12. **AMS Community Forum**
13. **Assigned duties for B/C members**
14. **Contacting the AMS Staff**

This is a compilation of practices and techniques that should be used by 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 Boards and Committees 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, [Bruce Telfeyan](mailto:bruce.telfeyan@ams.org).

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/C’s should consider the following suggested operating practices:
   a. Regular teleconferences and, as opportunities present themselves, in-person
meetings:

1) Find dates and times that works for the majority of your B/C. Use the Doodle Poll application for determining when most members are available (go to http://doodle.com/create-choice for this easy-to-use utility).

2) Send an agenda prior to, then meeting minutes subsequent to the discussion.

3) Appoint a note-taker to help record the discussion for preparing the meeting minutes. Post the meeting minutes on the B/C web page.

4) Ensure sufficient conference calls for planning specialty conferences. These would normally be organized and conducted by the program chair, not the B/C chair.

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 visit it frequently 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 **Periodic STAC Newsletter**. It contains key AMS events, summaries of recent conferences, reminders of upcoming activities, and, in the form of helpful reminders, 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. Guidance about how to edit you B/C website is available here: **STAC Web Editors**. Your pages include your membership roster and can be expanded to include your committee activities, goals, plans and other information for your community. It is a great resource for your committee - so use it well!

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, as three letters of support are required, so plan ahead in order to meet the May 1st deadline.
b. Create and update your B/C Five Year Plan; they should be completed/updated annually by July 1st. Share your plan with the STAC Commissioners and post it on your committee webpage.

c. Recruit new members and student members: The new member formal application form and CVs can be submitted to the STAC Commissioner anytime during the year (including student members). Simply provide the STAC Commissioner with the completed nomination form and a CV for the nominee. Once the Commissioner approves the nomination, the individual’s name will be added to the board or committee roster posted on their respective web site. 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 this year will have an expiration date of three years (two years for students) from the subsequent January. 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 in this paragraph, terms will still expire in January.

d. 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 of Claudia Gorski’s staff 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:  

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, THMs) when there is a natural connection between two or more B/Cs.
   1) These joint events can bring together overlapping disciplines between various boards and commissions,
   2) The resultant synergy can produce a more productive and meaningful event,
   3) It is up to your committee to reach out to other groups and find a natural 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 web site in the “News and Announcements” section.

i. Named Sessions and Named Symposia are methods to recognize and honor individuals.
   1) 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.
   2) 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 Claudia Gorski (cgorski@ametsoc.org) by May 1 of the year prior to the next Annual Meeting, or roughly 19 months before the proposed event. Additional background information on named symposia is at this link.

j. Obtaining Corporate Sponsorship for Meetings: 
Several boards and committees have been successful in obtaining corporate sponsorship for meetings. This funds from the sponsorship dollars can be used in addition to the $1,500 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:**
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 paragraph 6, student terms are in two year increments). The [STAC Membership Nomination Form](#) with a CV needs to be sent to the Commissioner for any new member to be approved. 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. Still, 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. The [AMS Meetings Director](#) 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 promote diversity among your B/C membership. (You might find it helpful to refer to the [Membership Breakdown of STAC Boards and Committees](#) to find member areas needing attention.) This diversity includes the following areas:
   1) expertise in the various meteorological/oceanographic/hydrologic, etc specialties on your B/C,
   2) representation from the academic, private, and government sectors,
   3) gender, ethnicity, race, age, and nationality.

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. Look to professional colleagues as potential member nominees (or at the very least they might recommend a qualified individual)

f. Be alert for volunteers passed along by the AMS from their “volunteer” link on the main webpage.

g. **Board and Committee Leadership:** We all know that the Chair is the key for B/C activities. 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 at least 4 to 6 months 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.
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 more authoritative 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.

6. **Student Members:**
AMS requires that all B/Cs have at least one student member. 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 student’s 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. Try these links for locating the student chapters and the leaders:
   - [https://apps.ametsoc.org/chapters.cfm](https://apps.ametsoc.org/chapters.cfm)

g. Strive to promote diversity, as per paragraph 5b, above.

7. **Leadership Transition:**
When the last year of the B/C chairs term commences, it is a good practice to appoint an Incoming Chair (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 for a two or three year term the next January.

- 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 might 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.

- STAC Commissioners strongly encourage each Board and Committee to 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,

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 web site 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 found at: [https://www2.ametsoc.org/stac/index.cfm/chair-member-information/membership/stac-member-position-description2/](https://www2.ametsoc.org/stac/index.cfm/chair-member-information/membership/stac-member-position-description2/).
   d. Assign new members a responsibility soon after they become B/C members. See below for more information.
   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 you (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. Refer to this link for more detailed information ([Opportunities to Engage in the Policy Process](https://www2.ametsoc.org/stac/index.cfm/chair-member-information/membership/stac-member-position-description2/)), but 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. Create **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**
**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 AMS Congressional Science Fellowship and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Science and Technology Policy Fellowship programs.

10. **Awards:**

STAC involvement in awards falls into three categories.

a. STAC boards and committees are involved in judging six AMS-level awards and three AMS-level lecture awards

   1) The Charles L. Mitchell Award
   2) The Award for an Exceptional Specific Prediction
   3) The Francis W. Reichelderfer Award
   4) The Helmut E. Landsberg Award
   5) The Award for Outstanding Achievement in Biometeorology
   6) The Banner I. Miller Award
   7) Robert E. Horton Lecturer in Hydrology
   8) Bernhard Haurwitz Memorial Lecturer
   9) Walter Orr Roberts Lecturer in Interdisciplinary Sciences
   10) The AMS Journalism Award
   11) The Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Advance of Applied Meteorology
   12) Syukuro Manabe Climate Research Award
   13) Joanne Simpson Tropical Meteorology Research Award
   14) Peter V. Hobbs Student Prize
   15) Spiros G. Geotis Student Prize
   16) Max A. Eaton Student Prize
   17) Robert Leviton Student Prize

b. Back in 2017, we instituted STAC-level awards. Each board and committee can submit a nomination to the Commissioner once every year and calls for nominations go out in January of each year. 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:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award</th>
<th>Responsible B/C or Commissioner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Charles L. Mitchell Award</td>
<td>Weather Analysis and Forecasting (WAF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Award Name</td>
<td>Committee or Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Award for an Exceptional Specific Prediction</td>
<td>WAF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Francis W. Reichelderfer Award</td>
<td>WAF (2), BOGM (2), Coastal Environment, Hydrology, Applied Climatology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Helmut E. Landsberg Award</td>
<td>Board on Urban Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Award for Outstanding Achievement in Biometeorology</td>
<td>Board on Atmospheric Biogeosciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Banner I. Miller Award (Biannually)</td>
<td>Committee on Tropical Met &amp; Tropical Cyclones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Robert E. Horton Lecturer in Hydrology</td>
<td>Committee on Hydrology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bernard Haurwitz Memorial Lecturer</td>
<td>STAC Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Walter Orr Roberts Lecturer in Interdisciplinary Sciences</td>
<td>STAC Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The AMS Journalism Award</td>
<td>Incoming STAC Commissioner &amp; Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Advance of Applied Meteorology</td>
<td>Board for Private Sector Meteorologists with input from Applied Climatology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syukuro Manabe Climate Research Award</td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanne Simpson Tropical Meteorology Research Award</td>
<td>Committee on Tropical Meteorology and Tropical Cyclones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter V. Hobbs Student Prize</td>
<td>The Cloud Physics Conference or Symposium Program Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiros G. Geotis Student Prize</td>
<td>The Radar Meteorology Conference Program Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max A. Eaton Student Prize</td>
<td>The Hurricane and Tropical Meteorology Conference Program Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Leviton Student Prize</td>
<td>The Committee on Measurements will submit a recommendation to the STAC Commissioner for approval</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

   Of course, 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. Of course, if you desire, you can always contact the Current Commissioner as the prime expert. This link is the line-up of Commissioners with B/Cs through January 2021:

12. AMS Community Forum:
The goal of the AMS Community online forum (https://community.ametsoc.org/home) 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.

- Please take some time to explore the site. If you need any assistance at all with the platform, please contact Erik Wilke, the AMS Community Coordinator.

13. Assigned duties for B/C members:
a. The B/C chairs often fail to share B/C responsibilities, which leads incomplete or late assignments and does not allow the B/C to develop future leaders. By assigning specific responsibilities to all members, many of these issues can be avoided.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Term Ends</th>
<th>Notional Committee Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>NASA</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice-Chair</td>
<td>USAFA</td>
<td>2022</td>
<td>Awards &amp; Fellows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member 1</td>
<td>Northrup Grumman</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Recorder – note taker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member 2</td>
<td>Naval Res Lab</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Conference program chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member 3</td>
<td>NHC</td>
<td>2022</td>
<td>Glossary of Meteorology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member 4</td>
<td>UCAR</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>AMS Community Forum Focal Point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member 5</td>
<td>NWS Mt Holly</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Conference program co-chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member 6</td>
<td>AER</td>
<td>2022</td>
<td>Town Hall Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member 7</td>
<td>Univ of Georgia</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Short Courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member 8</td>
<td>MSU, Denver</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>AMS Statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member 9</td>
<td>Accuweather</td>
<td>2022</td>
<td>Five-year plan focal point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member 10</td>
<td>ESRL</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Conference/Symposium Summaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member 11</td>
<td>NCEP</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Webinar lead planner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student member 1</td>
<td>Lyndon State U</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Social Media Lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student member 2</td>
<td>NC State</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Webmaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student member 3</td>
<td>Cornell Univ</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Program Committee Member</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key Duties (Possible Positions)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chair</th>
<th>Vice-Chair</th>
<th>Glossary of Meteorology</th>
<th>Webmaster</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conference program chair</td>
<td>Conference program co-chair</td>
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<td>Recorder - note taker</td>
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<td>Short Courses</td>
<td>AMS Community Forum Focal Point</td>
<td>Five year plan focal point</td>
<td>Town Hall Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards and Fellows</td>
<td>Webinar Lead</td>
<td>Social Media Lead</td>
<td>Conference/Symposium Summaries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. **Contacting the AMS Staff:**
   Bookmark the [AMS Key Contacts webpage](http://www.ametsoc.org/exec/contacts.html)
   This can really be helpful in many situations when you need to quickly touch base with AMS experts in Boston or Washington.