

Communications Network Bylaws

ARTICLE 1. PURPOSE AND FUNCTION

Section 1. *Purpose*

The purpose of the National Sea Grant Communications Network (hereafter referred to as the Communications Network) is to facilitate collaboration, professional development and support communications efforts locally, regionally and nationally; and contribute to ocean and Great Lakes outreach, education and research.

Section 2. *Function*

The Communications Steering Committee (CSC) makes decisions and actions necessary to affect the above Purpose. These include the organization of Communications Network meetings, participation in the planning of national meetings, addressing communications issues within the Communications Network and with other Sea Grant groups, advocating for the interests of Communications Network members, monitoring and advising on the review of communications programs and planning projects. Members of the CSC designated below represent the Communications Network on committees in other Sea Grant organizations and serve as liaisons to other Sea Grant groups.

ARTICLE 2. ACTIVITIES

The CSC assists with the organization of meetings, including professional development, as well as special projects, such as program/proposal evaluation guidelines, on behalf of the communications network. Specific activities are outlined below:

Section 1. *National Communications Network Meeting*

The CSC coordinates the planning and operation of an annual national communications network meeting.

Section 2. *Sea Grant Week*

The chair or the chair's designee serves as a member of the Sea Grant Week Planning Committee.

Section 3. *Sea Grant Library*

The CSC serves as a resource for the National Sea Grant Library. In turn, the library coordinator serves as a non-voting (ex officio) member of the CSC.

Section 4. *National Projects*

The CSC recommends and coordinates national communications projects.

Section 5. *SGA Committee Membership*

The chair or the chair's designee serves as a member of the Sea Grant Association (SGA) Networks Advisory Council.

The chair or the chair's designee serves as an *ex officio* member of the Sea Grant Association (SGA) Program Mission Committee.

Section 6. *Liaison*

The chair or the chair's designee serves as a liaison on behalf of the Communications Network, to the National Sea Grant Extension Assembly, the National Sea Grant Education Network, to the National Sea Grant Program Office and other groups.

ARTICLE 3. MEMBERS

Section 1. *Members*

The Communications Network is comprised of the communications professionals in all Sea Grant programs. These professionals include communications coordinators, managers, directors, editors, writers, graphic designers, artists and webmasters.

The CSC is led by the chair of the National Sea Grant Communications Network and includes an executive committee, voting and non-voting (ex officio) members/liaisons invited at the discretion of the chair.

Section 2. *Voting Members*

Voting members of the CSC include the Communications Network chair, chair-elect, the immediate past chair, one representative elected from each of the five geographical regions, and the chair of the National Sea Grant Web Developers Committee. No member of the CSC shall have more than one vote. The chair will vote in case of a tie.

The regions, as defined by NSGO, are:

- Pacific Region: Alaska, California, Southern California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington
- Great Lakes Region: Illinois-Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Wisconsin
- Northeast Region: Connecticut, Maine, MIT, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Woods Hole
- Mid-Atlantic Region: Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, North Carolina, Virginia
- Southeast/Gulf of Mexico/Caribbean Region – Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi-Alabama, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Texas

Note: The chair, chair-elect and immediate past-chair cannot simultaneously serve as a regional communications representative during their terms. Individual voting members of the steering committee may only represent one group. Programs that may have communications staff members representing two regions will be limited to one regional representative serving as a voting member on the Communications Steering Committee.

Section 3. *Non-voting Members*

Non-voting (ex officio) members of the CSC include the NSGO communications leader, and liaisons from the SGA, the Extension Assembly and the education network. The CSC chair or executive committee may invite leaders from network task forces and committees, as well as other representatives to participate in steering committee activities as appropriate.

Section 4. *Executive Committee*

The Executive Committee is comprised of the Chair, Chair-elect and the immediate past-chair.

Section 5. *Task Forces & Committees*

Task force chairs are committee chairs, and these groups can be appointed, reappointed, or dissolved by the chair. The CSC chair has the power to appoint ad-hoc committees or subcommittees as necessary for the effective operation of the communications network. An

exception is the National Sea Grant Web Specialists/Web Developers, which is a permanent committee of the National Sea Grant Communications Network.

ARTICLE 4. TERMS OF OFFICE AND ELECTIONS

Section 1. *Term of Chair*

The terms of office have been set to provide continuity in carrying out the committee's duties. The position of chair requires a three-year commitment: the first year as chair-elect, the second year as chair, and the third year as past chair. The terms are a calendar year, January 1 to December 31.

Section 2. *Election of Chair-Elect*

Elections are held only for chair-elect, since the chair-elect is successor to the chair. Elections are held in the fall, close to termination of a term. Nominations and balloting are to be conducted by the then-past chair via mail, email, fax, or any method that results in a permanent record.

Section 3. *Eligibility for Chair-Elect*

Nominees for chair-elect must be current leaders of a state-level Sea Grant communications program or a designated communications lead. Their nominations must have their program director's approval.

Section 4. *Eligibility for Nominating and Voting*

Nominations are invited from anyone in the communications network and are not limited in number. Final votes for chair-elect, however, are cast one per grant. All nominees will be consulted before being placed on the ballot, since the position requires an individual and a program commitment.

Section 5. *Elections of Regional Representatives*

Regional representatives may serve for two years and may serve no more than two consecutive terms (total of four years). Election of regional representatives may be handled prior to or during the annual meeting, but should not overlap with the election of chair-elect. Any member of a communications staff of a Sea Grant program is eligible to serve as a regional representative.

Note: Regional representatives may serve multiple times during their careers. In fact, many regional representatives have served two or more terms throughout their careers.

ARTICLE 5. OPERATIONS

Section 1. *Duties of Chair/Chair-elect/Past Chair*

a. Chair

The chair presides over all CSC meetings and conference calls. The chair or his/her designee serves as the communications network representative at all SGA meetings and as an *ex officio* member of the SGA Program Mission Committee and as a voting member of the SGA Networks Advisory Committee. The chair or designee also serves as the communications network representative to the Extension Assembly, the Education Network and to other Sea Grant groups where such representation is requested.

b. Chair-elect

The chair-elect assists the chair when necessary. He/she records the minutes of all CSC meetings and conference calls and distributes the minutes via the CSC to the communications network. He/she attends the fall meeting of the SGA with the chair to provide for a smooth transition on January 1.

c. Past Chair

The past chair acts as an advisor to the chair and to the CSC. He/she serves as an *ex officio* member of the National Sea Grant Media Relations Committee.

Section 2. *Meetings*

The CSC will officially meet once a year and, according to need, will meet and have regular conference calls between these times.

Section 3. *Costs*

Costs for travel, mailing, and telephone calls are to be borne by the programs of the chair and individual committee members. Each assumes full responsibility for his/her share upon election.

Section 4. *Reporting*

The chair will write and distribute to the CSC and the SGA via the SGA Briefing Book, a report summarizing communications accomplishments since the previous SGA meeting, and make appropriate recommendations.

ARTICLE 6. FUNDING

Section 1. *Origin of Funds*

Funds for the committee and specific projects will be provided through individual institutions. Funds for a specific project may be solicited from the NSGO and can be granted to and administered by the institution of the chair, pending the director's approval.

ARTICLE 7. CHANGING THE BYLAWS

Section 1. *Changing the Bylaws*

Changes to the bylaws must be made by a vote of no less than two-thirds of the communication leaders of all Sea Grant programs (one vote per grant program). At least two weeks' notice must be given before a vote is counted by the chair.