

CUAHSI Senior Advisory Committee Report

Meeting date: August 31st, 2009 Washington DC

Members Present: Rafael Bras, William Dietrich, Jeff Dozier, George Hornberger, Margaret Palmer, Soroosh Sorooshian

This was the 2nd meeting of the Senior Advisory Committee since its establishment by Efi Foufoula-Georgiou back in 2008. The meeting took place concurrently with the meeting of the CUAHSI Board of Directors which took place in Washington DC, August 31-Sept. 1st 2009 at the AGU HQ.

The charge to the SAC asked for comments on CUAHSI priorities, particularly with regard to advocating for a National Synthesis Center, for comments on various approaches that CUAHSI might take with regard to observatories, and for comments regarding the Management Review. The SAC did not have sufficient time devoted at the BOD meeting for an executive session where discussions could be entertained and consensus on various issues reached. Thus, although some written material relevant to the charge was supplied in the BOD briefing book, the SAC is not in a position to offer advice on the first two components of the charge.

The SAC did have a chance to discuss briefly the comments from the Management Review. We agree with the recommendation of this review that CUAHSI should revisit its mission statement as part of the procedure to develop a strategic plan for the coming decade. We also recommend that, as part of the strategic planning discussions, CUAHSI articulate a clear and transparent role for its BOD and for its Executive Committee. Based on our partial attendance of the BOD meeting and our observations, it was not clear the degree to which the BOD was engaged in some key discussions.

Furthermore, we strongly encourage the BOD to discuss the best mechanism to engage the hydrologic community and representatives from its member universities. This is critical to ensure that it serves the interest of the community at large. We suggest that this community should be considered to be much larger than those individuals who receive funding from the NSF Hydrological Sciences program. While the annual town hall meeting at the Fall AGU meeting is excellent to brief the participants, it may not be sufficient to solicit input from its member universities. We recommend considering the idea of an annual meeting (or every other year), perhaps modeled like the UCAR annual members meeting. Support for such a meeting should be proposed to NSF.

The bulk of the time for discussion by the SAC at the BOD meeting related to planning for a meeting with Tim Killeen. As a result of these discussions, the SAC agreed that advice to Tim that a new initiative on land surface-biosphere-atmosphere interactions, particularly as related to hydrologic science and focused at regional scale, should be a high priority. The SAC recommends that CUAHSI should solicit input from its members and consider advocating this position to the NSF on behalf of the community.

Clarification of the Role of SAC

CUAHSI should also consider carefully what it expects from the SAC and should express these expectations so the SAC can function effectively from CUAHSI's viewpoint. SAC engagement and input once a year at the BOD meeting may not necessarily serve the spirit of the terms of reference, as envisioned in CUAHSI's bylaws (see Box below – taken from CUAHSI website). For example, some key and perhaps critical decisions such as the move of the CUAHSI office from Washington D.C., could have benefited from SAC input. SAC's involvement should be more than symbolic.

Standing Committees Senior Advisory Council (SAC)

(From CUAHSI Website: <http://www.cuahsi.org/stdcomm-sac.html>)

About the Council

The CUAHSI Advisory Council, as authorized in Article VII, Section 9 of the CUAHSI By-Laws, provides advice to the President and Board of CUAHSI on the overall direction and the strategies that the Consortium should be taking to achieve its mission in research and education. A scientific basis for the management of our water resources has never been more pressing than now in the face of population pressure and climate change. Therefore, the Advisory Council will advise on both the role of CUAHSI in advancing hydrologic science and in reaching out to society, including the general public at large and policy makers in particular.

The Advisory Council consists of between 5 and 9 senior scientists in hydrologic science and related fields. Its members are typically community leaders in their disciplines and are not direct participants in CUAHSI projects. The Advisory Council meets at least annually to review CUAHSI projects and to recommend strategies for making existing projects more effective and on the need for new activities.