

Charge to the Observations Standing Committee
Adopted by the Executive Committee of the Board, April 25, 2011

BACKGROUND

CUAHSI's mission, in part, is to develop, support and operate research infrastructure, and articulate and advocate priorities for community level water-related research and observations. As part of the strategic planning process, CUAHSI has adopted an observational strategy that keeps the grand vision of establishing networked hydrologic observatories as a long term goal, while also pursuing observation strategies that yield community products in the near term. The strategic plan was adopted by the CUAHSI Board of Directors in December 2010. The role of the standing committee is to evaluate progress toward the objectives outlined in the adopted strategic plan, and to review strategies and activities for implementation of the plan.

CHARGE

The Observations Standing Committee shall

- a) review existing CUAHSI and CUAHSI-affiliated projects to determine if they are fulfilling CUAHSI's mission to advance observational strategies that yield community products, and the specific objectives and actions as outlined in CUAHSI's strategic plan (Appendices 1 and 2) and suggest ways in which those activities can better meet those needs,
- b) evaluate prospective new activities and how these activities would align with CUAHSI's strategic plan,
- c) prioritize as requested CUAHSI's observations-related activities for the upcoming fiscal year.

The committee shall receive in advance of their meeting, no later than May, 1, 2011, and annually thereafter, an annual briefing document containing the information needed to execute their charge, and a request consisting of a list of the activities to be prioritized. The document may also contain other questions or items on which the Board requests comment.

The committee shall produce a written report in response to the annual briefing document, containing the Committee's reviews, evaluations and comments, to be submitted to the CUAHSI Board of Directors, for their review, by June 30, 2011, and annually thereafter.

COMPOSITION/MEMBERSHIP

The Observations Standing Committee will consist of no fewer than five members in the fields of hydrologic science and environmental observatory networks. Committee membership will be appointed by the Board of Directors or the Executive Committee acting in its place. The committee shall have a chair initially appointed by the Board for one year. In subsequent years, the Chair shall be elected by the committee.

TERM

Members of the Observations Standing Committee will serve for a term not to exceed three years. The committee membership terms will be staggered with a target of no less than two continuing members each year.

MEETINGS

This committee will meet annually in April or May, and as necessary to complete its charge.

RESIGNATION

Any member may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Chair, the Vice Chair, and President or Secretary of the Corporation. Such resignation shall take effect at the time of receipt of the notice, or at any later time specified therein.

VACANCY

Any vacancy in the Observations Standing Committee may be filled for the duration of the remaining term by the Board of Directors or its Executive Committee.

REMOVAL

Any member of the Observations Standing Committee may be removed at any time either with or without cause by vote of the Board of Directors or its Executive Committee.

APPENDIX 1:
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS IDENTIFIED IN CUAHSI'S STRATEGIC
PLAN

(p. 14)

Observational Strategies

Water science has long relied on a spectrum of observations from the laboratory, the field plot, the hillslope, the aquifer, and the experimental catchment to test theory. The need to develop more comprehensive understanding and predictive capabilities of water dynamics in Earth systems requires comparing observations across field sites, and scaling observations to regional and global extent. Such comparisons have been challenging to do systematically because they require coordination at a level above a project managed by an individual scientist or small groups of scientists. Specifically, investment in multiple field sites does not provide a network observational capacity without a mechanism of coordinating observations, informatics and analysis. CUAHSI will meet this challenge by:

1. Developing programs for community field campaigns geared to key inter- disciplinary water science themes. Past examples include the BOREAS and FIFE projects, focusing on northern forest and grassland water, carbon and energy cycling. The resulting data sets have proven very valuable to a much larger science community than the active participants.
2. Improving accessibility to existing observational networks (e.g. CZO, NEON, LTER, ARS), including data and facilities access, improving comparability of datasets from disparate sites, and providing long-term maintenance of datasets
3. Exploring the utility of linking multiple observational networks into a broader environmental observation super-network
4. Evaluating the efficiency and completeness of existing observational networks, and recommending needs for new observation facilities to supplement existing capabilities
5. Enhancing the value and utility of data by assisting in the development of measurement standards.

APPENDIX 2:
CUAHSI MISSION STATEMENT

CUAHSI enables the university water science community to advance understanding of the central role of water to life, Earth, and society. CUAHSI focuses on water from bedrock to atmosphere, from summit to sea and from the geologic past, through the present and into the future. CUAHSI will support this community to advance water science and to improve societal well-being by:

- developing, supporting, and operating research infrastructure
- improving and promoting access to data, information and models
- articulating and advocating priorities for community level water-related research and observations
- facilitating interactions among the diverse water research community
- promoting interdisciplinary education centered in water science
- translating scientific advancements into effective tools for water management and policy.