



USAP Station and Vessels User Committees

Charter and Bylaws

5 December 2005

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Acronyms used:

- USAP. United States Antarctic Program
- NSF/OPP. National Science Foundation/Office of Polar Programs

Charter

The USAP user committees provide advice and recommendations to the USAP prime contractor on the support of science projects using USAP resources and facilities. The committees ensure representation of principal investigators to the management and operation of USAP research stations, vessels, and field camps. The prime contractor's goal is to provide effective and efficient support to science projects. The committees advise the prime contractor on policies that guide their operation on stations, vessels, and at field camps and how they may be improved, and on USAP resources and how they can better meet grantees' needs. The prime contractor and NSF/OPP will respond to the committees' recommendations as outlined in the bylaws.

Bylaws

Scope

The user committees are advisory committees to the USAP prime contractor. The prime contractor is responsible for making recommendations in turn to NSF/OPP. The prime contractor is responsible for tracking recommendations, results of those recommendations, and

implementing solutions approved by NSF/OPP.

This charter and bylaws apply to all USAP stations and the field camps they support as well as the research vessels. In this document, “station” refers to continental stations, field camps, and research vessels.

The committees have an advisory status but cannot task the prime contractor or NSF/OPP with action items to be carried out. Where a provision in these bylaws is specific to a committee, the provision is so marked. The committees are station-specific and named as follows:

- ARVOC. Antarctic Research Vessel Oversight Committee
- MAUC. McMurdo Area User Committee
- PAUC. Palmer Area User Committee
- SPUC. South Pole User Committee

The user committees are representative of the larger grantee community and topics will be of concern to the community. Likewise, deliberations and recommendations will be beneficial to the entire USAP community or segments of the community.

Topics must be determined collaboratively between the committees and the prime contractor. This provision is intended to prevent committees from spending time and effort on:

- Topics that are already being addressed by the Office Advisory Committee (OAC) or within the purview of the OAC.
- Topics that are of a magnitude that must be addressed by NSF/OPP at a higher level, i.e. strategic planning, icebreakers, bandwidth improvement, station master plans.

Structure & organization

Topic identification

The committees work with the prime contractor and NSF/OPP to identify topics of interest to the larger grantee community and within the scope of the committees’ purview. Sources for topics include but are not limited to:

- Suggestions from PIs, co-PIs, team leads, and other USAP community members.
- Committee members.
- The prime contractor’s requests for committee opinion.
- Project outbriefs where issues have been identified that affect the community and not the single project and where PIs have given permission to make the topic public.

At least 60 days before the annual meeting, topics will be identified. Identified topics will be discussed with the prime contractor and appropriate entities of the USAP as the agenda is

developed. During the meeting the topics and recommendations will be discussed. The goal of each meeting is to arrive at specific recommendations.

Membership

Committee members will be representative of each of the USAP programs as appropriate for each station. Member terms will be for three years, with one-third of the membership rotating off the committee each year. Members shall serve only one term, however non-consecutive terms are acceptable. Terms shall begin on the first day of the fiscal year (1 October) and end on the last day of the fiscal year (30 September). Committee members must be USAP grantees but not necessarily a principal investigator and not necessarily having a current award.

Members whose terms are expiring will nominate their successors. Nominations will take place in executive session, and will be presented to the prime contractor for concurrence. In some circumstances, past members will be asked to remain on the committee in an advisory role. Ad hoc members can be identified as needed when expertise is required to address specific topics.

Committee chairs will serve for three years in addition to time already served as a member, and one additional year at his or her discretion as an ex-officio member. The chair will be restricted to current committee members to ensure continuity and familiarity with the committees' role and functions.

Election of the new chairs will be conducted by the outgoing chair at his/her last meeting as chair. Nominations will be solicited from the active membership. The outgoing chair will determine the willingness of nominees to stand for election and will conduct a ballot of the membership.

The characteristics of and criteria for each committee's membership is slightly different:

ARVOC members are representative of the community of ocean research scientists with particular emphasis on those with current or previous NSF/OPP support for research aboard vessels that operate in the Southern Ocean. ARVOC membership is limited to no more than nine (9) regular members, plus the ex-officio chair.

MAUC members are representative of each of the science activities at McMurdo Station and those supported by McMurdo (i.e. field projects). There is no established limit on the number of members.

PAUC members are representative of the community of Antarctic Peninsula research scientists with representation from the major activities, perspectives, and disciplines. There is no established limit on the number of members.

SPUC members are representative of the science activities at South Pole Station including large and small science projects and projects in each sector. SPUC membership is limited to seven (7) regular members, plus the ex officio chair.

Meetings

The committees will convene at least once a year in locations suggested by the committee and approved by the prime contractor. Ad hoc meetings can be scheduled at the discretion of the committee. For the continental research stations, ad hoc meetings are held on-station. Annual and ad hoc meetings are open for attendance by any members of the USAP grantee community. Ad hoc members and guests may be invited to meetings for their specialized expertise. At the end of annual meetings, the committees will set approximate dates for the next year's meeting.

Executive Committee and Executive Sessions: The Executive Committee comprises only the regular members of each committee without prime contractor or NSF representation. At the chairs' discretion, executive committees may meet in executive sessions when necessary.

Working Groups: Each committee, the prime contractor, and appropriate entities of the USAP may collaboratively identify special topics that require more detailed investigation and deliberation to arrive at recommendations. In such cases, working groups composed of grantees with some expertise in and experience with the question will be formed. Working groups can be convened at the annual meetings, at ad hoc meetings on stations, or at any other time.

Action Items: During any meeting, committee members and prime contractor staff may volunteer to provide information or otherwise take some action that will benefit the committee process. Committees cannot task the prime contractor with action items and the prime contractor may not task committee members with action items. Completion of action items will be tracked within the committee management and within the the prime contractor's department or division volunteering for the action item.

Results, Reporting and Response:

Three weeks after each meeting, the prime contractor will send a draft meeting report to committee members. Committee members will have 2 weeks to comment on the report draft. One week later (six weeks after the meeting) the prime contractor will publish the revised draft report to usap.gov. The published draft will include the prime contractor's resolutions or suggestions for NSF/OPP resolutions to the committees' recommendations. Within three weeks of receipt of the report, NSF/OPP will advise the prime contractor and the committee as to when they will provide formal responses to each of the recommendations. NSF/OPP's response may be approval or denial of the recommendation. For more complex topics, NSF/OPP's response may be a due date when the issue will be fully addressed. Final reports will include NSF/OPP responses and will be published to usap.gov, overwriting the draft report. Reports will be updated as needed to publish additional resolutions to committee recommendations. The diagram at the end of this section illustrates the reporting and response timeline.

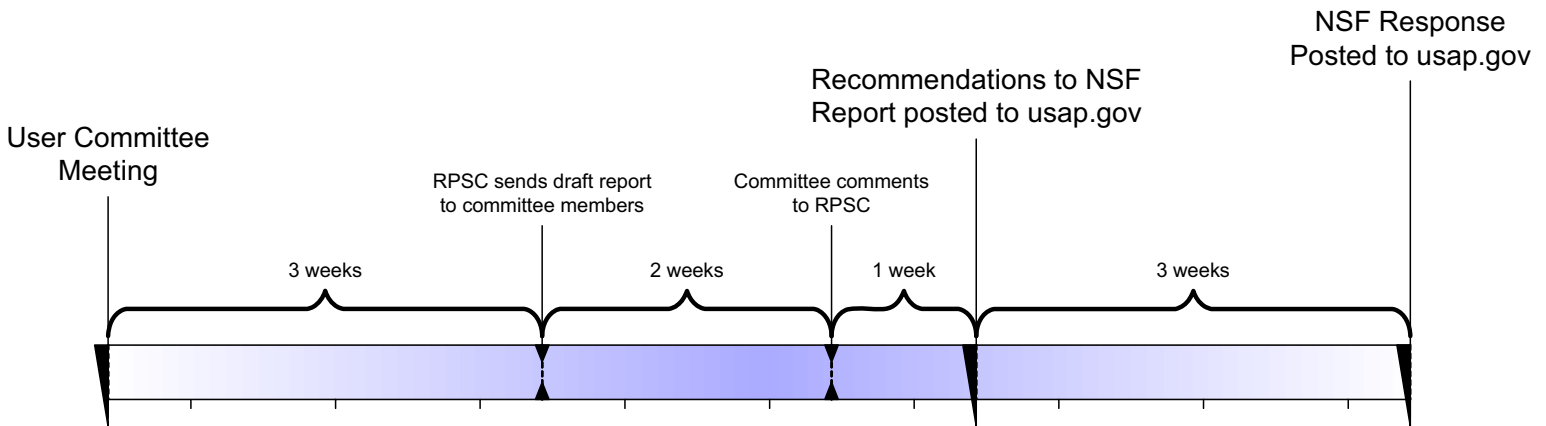
Meeting reports will contain the following information in this order:

1. Topics and recommendations of the committees

2. List of attendees and their contact information

Ancillary information related to meetings may optionally be provided separately on the usap.gov website:

- Action items taken on by prime contractor staff or the committees
- Abbreviated contents of briefings presented by the prime contractor and NSF/OPP
- Full presentations
- Meeting agenda



Response Follow-up and Closeout:

The prime contractor will assign a Planning Support Manager (PSM) to each user committee. With the committee chair, each is responsible for the management and administration of committee activities. The PSM will work with the committee members to produce meeting reports and submit them to NSF/OPP. The responsible PSM will track due dates, follow-up with NSF/OPP for resolutions, and report back to the committees.

The assigned PSM will assist the committee chair in drafting and refining meeting agendas and in identifying topics. The PSM will ensure that meeting reports are published to usap.gov within the timeline as outlined in these bylaws.

Modification of the Charter and Bylaws:

The user committees or the prime contractor may suggest changes to the Charter and Bylaws. Suggested changes will be presented to all other committees and representatives of the prime contractor for discussion, agreement, and ratification.