

U.S. IOOS Advisory Committee
Virtual Public Meeting
Meeting Minutes
March 18, 2024

U.S. IOOS Advisory Committee Members Present:

Scott Rayder, Lynker (Chair)
Sara Graves, Ph.D., University of Alabama in Huntsville (Co-Chair)
Jason Biggs, Ph.D., Guam Department of Agriculture
Daniel Costa, Ph.D., Institute of Marine Sciences, University of California Santa Cruz
Eoin Howlett, Trinnex
Molly McCammon, Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS)
Julio Morell, Caribbean Coastal Ocean Observing System (CARICOOS)
Ruth Perry, Ph.D., Shell Renewables & Energy Solutions
Daniel Rudnick, Ph.D., Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California San Diego
Oscar Schofield, Ph.D., Rutgers University Center for Ocean Observing Leadership
Richard “Dick” West, ADM (ret.), Independent Consultant
Robert “Bob” Winokur, Independent Consultant
Carrie Schmaus, DOE (ex officio)
Kristin Yarincik, IOOS Association (ex officio)
Susan Yee, EPA (ex-officio)

U.S. IOOS Staff in Attendance:

Carl Gouldman, Director, IOOS Office
Krisa Arzayus (DFO), IOOS Office
Courtney Edwards, IOOS Office
Laura Gewain, IOOS Office

Meeting Welcome and Administrative Updates

Krisa Arzayus, IOOS Advisory Committee Designated Federal Officer and Deputy Director, IOOS Program Office

K. Arzayus welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the Advisory Committee (AC) as well as the supporting team that helped organize the meeting. She went over her role as the designated federal official, including ensuring all provisions of FACA are met regarding the operations of this committee and all appropriate ethics requirements are satisfied. She explained that committee members are briefed on federal conflict of interest laws and that each committee member has filed a standard government financial disclosure report. K. Arzayus thanked General Council in advance for assisting with these reports and the AC for submitting these annually. She went over the agenda, logistics of the meeting, and how minutes are handled.

S. Rayder thanked everyone from the working groups and everyone on the committee for submitting their ethics forms. He thanked those who submitted names for the next iteration of the committee.

K. Arzayus explained the ethics training requirement, introduced M. Trucco, and turned the meeting over to her.

Ethics Briefing

Monica Trucco, Attorney, Ethics Law and Programs Office, Office of the General Counsel

Committee members received an annual ethics briefing from M. Trucco.

M. Trucco asked K. Arzayus to confirm no one will be exceeding 130 days during any period of 365 consecutive days with or without compensation. K. Arzayus confirmed and said no one will get close to 60 days. D. Costa asked about Special Government Employees (SGEs) not being allowed to be employed by a foreign government and if that would include being a panelist for the Norwegian Research Council. M. Trucco said she will follow up after the meeting.

J. Biggs asked for clarification on the bullet point saying SGEs may not be paid for teaching or writing about programs, policies, and operations of Commerce and if that means the federal Department of Commerce. M. Trucco confirmed it is the Department of Commerce at the federal level. M. Trucco said she will follow up with J. Biggs after the meeting regarding specifics.

M. Trucco wrapped up the presentation. K. Arzayus thanked M. Trucco and reminded participants the slides will be posted online.

IOOC Strategic Plan Briefing and Discussion

David Legler and Lisa Clough, Co-Chairs, Interagency Ocean Observation Committee (IOOC)

D. Legler and L. Clough gave an update on the IOOC's strategic plan development. D. Legler started off by inviting feedback on the process and explaining the phases of the strategic plan. He then went over the draft vision and mission, and said they intend to revisit them at the end of the planning process. D. Legler detailed the draft of the first goal and its objectives, highlighting that there are a limited number of objectives that are intended to be measurable. D. Legler then turned it over to L. Clough.

L. Clough introduced herself. She reminded attendees that IOOC is focused on the inter-agency space, and went over the draft of goal two. She mentioned there is some language to clean up on this goal, that stakeholders may not be a preferred term by indigenous groups with the connotation of driving stakes into indigenous lands to determine ownership, so they will be cleaning it up and adhering to language best practices. L. Clough then went over the objectives listed under draft goal two.

L. Clough detailed the draft of goal three and said the IOOC has a brainstorming session on this goal scheduled for next Monday, March 25, to develop the objectives that will go with it. L. Clough read a few questions to kick off a high-level discussion and gave an overview of next steps, emphasizing that goal three will likely be the goal that resonates with how IOOS and AC work with IOOC.

L. Clough then opened up the meeting to discussion. M. McCammon thanked D. Legler and L. Clough and then explained that C. Edwards and herself are co-chairs of a preparatory working group (PWG) looking at enterprise excellence, and as part of that, a survey was sent to all IOOC

members. She said the PWG will be putting together a summary of the results, but that the responses indicated confusion among IOOC members regarding the process of advice between the AC and IOOC so she was glad to see that clarification of that is part of the strategic plan. M. McCammon said another thing that came up in the responses was the challenge of establishing the value of integrating ocean observing and defining the identity of IOOS among all of the various ocean programs and with the general public. She continued that many IOOC members commented on the lack of national consistency among the regions and how that is addressed could be an issue that is an IOOC topic alongside the IOOS program.

R. Winokur commented that the goals in the strategic plan are not exclusive and how the IOOC deals with overlap is something to figure out. He agreed with some points M. McCammon made and expressed that goal three should have more specificity, especially in regards to inter-agency relationships and coordination. L. Clough said that the writing of goal three is not going to get them to where they want to be with that because it is a complicated space, but she agreed that they are seeking to un-muddy the waters on how they make progress. L. Clough went back to M. McCammon's comment and agreed that they can advocate for the great things going on in IOOS across the agencies in more robust ways. L. Clough said she expects it may end up with workshops and dedicated sessions on the topic. L. Clough continued on, saying that some of the objectives may change and she reminded folks that this is a draft, but the clarity between the IOOC, AC, and IOOS is a topic they are interested in working on and clarifying, such that it may find its way to the top of the implementation plan. D. Legler agreed with L. Clough and that the specificity, particularly as it relates to objectives, are going to require specific coordination. He said looking through lenses, such as prioritizing gaps, will help define how they meet goals in the context of all advisory groups and that process will provide opportunity/motivation to figure out how all this communication works.

K. Yarincik said in the gaps analysis, she didn't see explicitly how the IOOC might strategically look at the status of the system in meeting the observing needs of national priorities that are more theme-based, such as areas under Ocean Climate Action Plan (OCAP). L. Clough responded that they are grappling with that and she envisions, as they do their implementation plan, an appendix with all of the relevant administration priorities as a resource. She said that IOOC will be using the priorities as they put together action plans.

S. Rayder said he would like to see a baseline of what enacted budgets have been by agency for ocean observing for the past few years included in the strategic plan. He then asked if there were any concerns about doing that.

D. Babb-Brott, another IOOC Co-chair, responded that they have talked at length in response to earlier comments from the AC in that regard. D. Babb-Brott said they don't necessarily disagree at any one level, but beside the policy issues involved, the practical challenges are that if they limit the inquiry to specific line items that are attributed to ocean observing, then they would be dramatically underselling the federal investment. He continued, saying if they tried to capture the full knock-on effects of investment in things that ultimately redound to ocean enterprise, it becomes an almost impossible exercise in qualification.

S. Rayder agreed with D. Babb-Brott, but added that at some point the community is going to have to figure out how to jump in and do it. S. Rayder ended by saying if D. Babb-Brott could

take a good cut at creating a baseline, it would be nice to have something the community could point to. S. Rayder then asked the AC if they felt the engagement with the strategic plan was sufficient. Some AC members nodded. S. Rayder thanked the presenters.

FY25 President's Budget Discussion

Carl Gouldman, Director, IOOS Program Office

C. Gouldman presented the FY25 President's Budget. He went over the NOS IOOS requested budget and appropriations from FY17 until the present for the NOS line items that are specific to IOOS. C. Gouldman also summarized the other budget changes in NOS and that the NOAA budget overall is down 2.4% from 2025 compared to 2024, with NOS down over 13% overall.

S. Radyer said that in the past, they've sent letters as AC members on NOAA issues. He proposed preparing a letter to Dr. Spinrad about how continuous, stable funding is really important to a program like IOOS. S. Rayder continued on, saying the letter could also be posted on their public website for others to see. He then asked the committee members if anyone had issues with that or guidance on how to frame such a letter.

M. McCammon asked if the number is a reflection of what headquarters thinks of the IOOS program and the regional program. M. McCammon indicated that Carl was shaking his head, but said that budgets do reflect that to a certain degree. She also speculated it could be that IOOS received a lot of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) money and it was assumed that would cover budget cuts, or maybe they thought that Congress will take care of this because IOOS has good support in Congress. S. Rayder interrupted to agree with the last point.

M. McCammon continued on saying that the regions were directed to not use BIL/IRA funding for sustained operational program support. She wondered if NOAA headquarters doesn't think much about IOOS and that's why it got cut, noting that SeaGrant was not cut and Sanctuaries got an increase. M. McCammon ended by saying she was shocked by the cut.

S. Rayder responded that the budget is a statement of one's priorities, and that everyone on this call sees IOOS as a priority. He said that the decisions are out of C. Gouldman's hands, and that his understanding is they had to get to a number and the satellite program did very well at the cost of everything else. S. Rayder went on to say that they are competing against other programs within NOAA and outside. His biggest concern is that FY25 will not be resolved until after November and that depending on what happens, there will be some people who will take those cuts. He thinks that there is an assumption that the funding will be restored, but that will be difficult. S. Rayder said they have the IOOS Association who will certainly help, but now all communities in NOAA are going to go different ways and start cannibalizing each other for offsets.

O. Schofield asked C. Gouldman if he had any insights of the drivers of the cuts. C. Gouldman responded with talking points from the NOAA/NOS budget experts. He then clarified that when M. McCammon asked him about headquarters, his response was because it matters the level being reference- NOS, NOAA, DOC.

J. Biggs said he didn't have any issues with writing a letter, but advised to tread lightly. S. Rayder then called on S. Graves, who asked if anyone, specifically K. Yarincik who had made Hill visits recently, had heard any negative feedback. K. Yarincik said the most negative feedback she heard is that some offices are going to support the President's Budget just because that is what they do, but that she also heard a lot of very supportive messages. The IOOS Association is going to submit a letter to Secretary Raimondo soon.

R. Winokur stated that he has no objections to the letter but that there is a key planning aspect that needs to happen now in regards to the impacts of the budget cut.

D. West recommended S. Rayder calls Dr. Spinrad ahead of writing the letter. S. Rayder agreed. S. Rayder asked K. Arzayus if that needs to formally be run through her, and K. Arzayus said no.

S. Rayder said he heard from different sources that DOC had a role to play but he doesn't understand what the impetus for it was.

R. Perry said she agrees with D. West, but questioned why IOOS was not considered a service provider to meet previously stated NOAA goals. She agreed about sending a letter and said they may need to get more granular for IOOS Association outreach for some of the congressional committees that have been supporters. She said that focusing on individual program winners and losers is the wrong way to go about it because putting Sanctuaries and SeaGrant in the same bucket as IOOS is problematic.

M. McCammon said that there is a NOAA Science Advisory Board (SAB) meeting this week and asked if she should ask Dr. Spinrad about the budget at the meeting when he is giving an update. S. Rayder said yes. M. McCammon said that Dr. Spinrad often mentions other NOAA programs when talking about NOAA working with outreach and communities, but he never mentions IOOS. S. Rayder said he would wait to call Dr. Spinrad until after the SAB meeting, but D. West suggested calling Dr. Spinrad today and trying to get in contact with him before it's done in public to give him a heads up. S. Rayder agreed.

K. Arzayus suggested that in the last 5 minutes on this topic, the AC discuss specific key messages to include as draft content for the letter while they have a public forum so they don't need to reconvene as a group. S. Rayder agreed. C. Goulman addressed M. McCammon's comment, saying that at the Ocean Sciences Meeting and AMS this year, Dr. Spinrad made specific call outs to IOOS and that he has been doing so more recently.

S. Rayder asked if anyone had other comments and confirmed he would call Dr. Spinrad today. D. Rudnick said that at face value, the budget cuts seem to say that people want to get rid of IOOS. S. Rayder said he wants to ask Dr. Spinrad where the decision was made, since the NOAA Administrator is often the middle manager with DOC and OMB. S. Rayder noted the importance of ocean observing to the safe and efficient moving of transportation in and out of harbors, which is a requirement and responsibility of DOC in terms of the data IOOS provides.

R. Winokur emphasized they need a list of the impact of this cut, that there would no longer be a sustainable program and they need an elevator pitch to convey that sooner rather than later. S. Rayder said that the request has to come from the Hill, which is K. Yarincik's department, and

then asked if anyone is willing to help start the draft of the letter. He asked K. Yarincik if she is able to help. K. Yarincik responded saying that she has talking points on impacts that she can share.

O. Schofield offered to help draft the letter. S. Rayder then asked M. McCammon if she would also be willing to help draft the letter and M. McCammon responded that she will share Dr. Spinrad's response at the SAB meeting to everyone.

E. Howlett asked for clarification if the letter is for Dr. Spinrad or DOC. K. Arzayus said that as the committee providing advice to NOAA, the AC can only really send it to Dr. Spinrad but that they can CC Secretary Raimondo. K. Arzayus also said that since K. Yarincik is ex-officio, K. Arzayus recommends that she have a reduced level of involvement in writing the letter, but sharing the information is fine.

S. Rayder confirmed that O. Schofield, M. McCammon, and himself would meet the following week to get the letter together and send it to the rest of the AC. He asked the group if a 24 hour turnaround to look at it was ok and no one disagreed. E. Howlett asked what the letter was going to do if Dr. Spinrad has already made this decision, and S. Rayder responded that the letter will also be posted on the website so people can be referred to it. K. Yarincik said that she can share how the IOOS Association is framing their letter to DOC by focusing on positive messages about how IOOS fits into the stated priorities of NOAA's President's Budget press release and focusing on FY26 because they don't want to be re-baselined to \$10M.

S. Graves asked if all of FY25 will be on a continuing resolution (CR) since FY25 is not going to be approved until after the election. S. Rayder said no, there will be mark up on the bills but Republicans will be able to put a little money on top and say they're helping what the administration cut. S. Rayder said there is going to be a CR from October until after the presidential election and the new Congress will thank the administration for those cuts. S. Rayder emphasized that this is not the year for this to be done.

Public Comment Period

K. Arzayus read the public comments received in advance from Gabrielle Canonico in the IOOS Program Office. No additional public comments were made at the meeting.

NOPP and Marine Life PWG Recommendations (Decisional)

PWG Chairs and All Members

R. Winokur went over the National Oceanographic Partnership Program (NOPP) recommendations. He highlighted that he had been communicating with K. Arzayus over email about text in recommendation three about Other Transaction Authorities (OTAs) that originally came out of the background section of the document. R. Winokur felt that it did not belong in that section and should return to the background section of the document. J. Biggs said that the text is not appropriate to include at all. K. Arzayus chimed in that she originally thought the statement was an elaboration of the third recommendation so she was trying to keep it all together, but since it is not a specific recommendation it can be put back into the background section. J. Biggs said he wants to strike it completely because it could be misconstrued. S. Rayder asked if anyone had any issues with removing it or any other comments, and no one did

so they voted. There was unanimous approval of the recommendations given that the text discussed be removed. S. Rayder thanked the working group and switched to the marine life recommendations.

D. Costa gave a brief overview of the recommendations and said that he does not see any issues with incorporating G. Canonico's comments. O. Schofield agreed and said the comments are mainly corrections. E. Howlett asked if the first recommendation is already happening to some extent. D. Costa said that there are some data sets that are not held in a common place so that was specifically requested to be spelled out. O. Schofield added that the catalogs contain data that is not to a common standard and D. Costa added there is concern that a lot of measurements being taken by the Regional Associations (RAs) are not taken to the same level of precision or are not being processed in the same way. E Howlett asked if the intent of the first recommendation is for IOOS to host a biological Data Assembly Center (DAC) similar to the other DACs. O. Schofield said it could be a DAC, it could be clarification within the RAs themselves, that they are not trying to be prescriptive in the recommendations but that the goal is datasets can be compared and combined across regions. J. Biggs pointed out that bathymetry data has the same issue. D. Costa emphasized that they were trying to be concise in the recommendation and highlight the most important feature of shared data. S. Rayder asked if anyone had any objections, and there were none. S. Rayder thanked the working group. K. Arzayus wrapped it up saying they'll make the edits to the NOPP recommendations, send it out for one more lookover, and finish it up asynchronously.

Enterprise Excellence PWG - Advisory Committee Self-Assessment

PWG Chairs

M. McCammon presented on the process of completing an AC self-assessment. S. Graves asked if the compilation of results would only include the AC survey results or if it would include all of the input that has been received. M. McCammon answered that the working group is looking at the AC survey, the IOOC survey, and the survey from individual RA directors. S. Graves said the working group needs to find the commonalities across these inputs. M. McCammon agreed and said the intent is to find threads across the whole IOOS enterprise that have actionable items. She then said that the AC needs to come to agreement on the next steps and whether this is an appropriate process for self-assessment or not. If so, the working group will do the first draft of survey questions and send it out to the group for input.

S. Rayder said he would love for the results to be delivered to Dr. Spinrad at the meeting in June. S. Graves asked if, by June, they would have all of the contributions from various groups compiled. M. McCammon responded that the working group will have compiled the results and had discussions on the IOOC, the program survey, and the RA director surveys and that those recommendations will be ready for final approval in June, but the results from the AC self-assessment will not be ready. K. Arzayus clarified that the final approval for those recommendations can occur at the meeting in June, but since they will not be approved ahead of the June meeting, Dr. Spinrad cannot get them as official read-aheads. M. McCammon said that the working group will have the survey results by June and then she asked the group if they want to use the survey to develop recommendations without having a facilitated discussion, so those recommendations can be done by June. S. Rayder said he'd rather move fast and not do the facilitated discussion. J. Biggs suggested a working lunch. M. McCammon said other

committee members would like to discuss how the committee works and how it has worked in the past. S. Rayder asked if this is something the group would want the subsequent committee to pick up after members roll off in September. M. McCammon said probably and she thinks they can have the recommendations on all of the components by the June meeting so the agenda would need to include that. She then asked the AC if they would want a period of time at the June meeting for a facilitated discussion or to have a regular discussion with a vote at the end.

E. Howlett asked what the goals or outcomes of a facilitated discussion could be. M. McCammon answered that in most committee self-assessments, having outside facilitation forces more participation from the whole committee and creates richer discussion and then asked if the group feels that would be valuable. S. Graves said that there are some things the working group has received that her and other working group members have not seen yet and then asked M. McCammon what they have been finding out from those things. S. Graves continued saying that for enterprise excellence, the group has to look at the enterprise so the discussion in June would be on totality, not just results from the AC. M. McCammon answered that the IOOC survey has a lot, but that it might be difficult to compile into something meaningful and that she hasn't had time to look at the RA results yet either. She said they can wait until they see the results to decide how to structure the June discussion. S. Rayder added that this is important, beyond those who are rotating off of the board, and can provide data to C. Gouldman and others to use as the group evolves. He proposed having a discussion at the June meeting and then continuing to look at the focus areas because it can help improve the program. K. Arzayus said this leads into the next topic and suggested leaving it there, with the working group meeting to refine the plan going forward and then they can carve out time in the agenda. M. McCammon agreed.

June Public Meeting Updates

Krisa Arzayus, IOOS Advisory Committee Designated Federal Officer and Deputy Director, IOOS Program Office, and Courtney Edwards, IOOS Program Office

K. Arzayus went over the June meeting planning document. She asked for committee members to email her and C. Edwards (IOOS Program Office) to confirm their attendance and if they will be attending in person or virtually. S. Rayder highlighted that this is the last big meeting for members leaving the committee. He then asked K. Arzayus if the last minutes were approved, and K. Arzayus said they just need to be certified. S. Rayder suggested adding the NOAA Center for Coastal Ocean Science and Technology as a potential field trip to the planning document. S. Rayder asked D. West about the process for getting an Admiral's tour of Pearl Harbor, which is a much more detailed tour given by the Navy, and D. West said to get ahold of the Pac Fleet Protocol Office and say that he's calling on behalf of NOAA. R. Winokaur added that the Navy has an oceanographer on Pac Fleet staff and NOAA has a liaison officer assigned to Pac Fleet as well. C. Edwards (IOOS Program Office) mentioned that everyone should have a calendar invite from her for the June meeting and if someone doesn't, to let her know. S. Rayder asked when the group could start making flight plans and K. Arzayus responded that once everyone has confirmed their attendance, A. Ofosu-Garrison will start working on travel arrangements. S. Rayder and K. Arzayus thanked everyone and adjourned the meeting.