

20 December 2010

APPROVED 10 January 2011

# GLEON Collaborative Climate Committee: History, current roles, proposed changes

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## Summary

The goal of this document is to explicitly define the responsibilities of the Collaborative Climate Committee (CCC) and its succession plan for GLEON Steering Committee (SC) approval of the CCC as a sitting committee within GLEON. While the GLEON SC is the formal governing body of GLEON, the CCC is uniquely poised to serve as a flexible, quick-responding, and independent committee that can communicate information and concerns from the GLEON membership to the GLEON SC. In addition, the CCC prepares recommendations in response to the feedback it collects and helps implement those changes to ensure that GLEON's functioning as a network is consistent with the Objectives and Shared Values and Principles listed in the GLEON Operating Principles and Procedures (OPP). Although the CCC is a separate entity from the GLEON SC, the CCC provides formal reports summarizing feedback and recommendations after each GLEON meeting to the SC, and hence the two committees work closely together.

**Current Chairs:** Cayelan Carey (Chair), Paul Hanson (co-Chair)

**Current members:** Peter Arzberger, Carol Brewer, Cayelan Carey, Paul Hanson, Emily Kara, Tim Kratz, Trina McMahon, Kevin Rose, Chris Solomon, Kathie Weathers

**Mission Statement:** To ensure that GLEON's principles, priorities and practices are reflective of its membership, goals, and vision; foster a climate that maximizes collaboration and inclusivity; and act as a mechanism by which information, ideas and concerns from the GLEON membership can be voiced and transmitted to the GLEON Steering Committee.

### Specific responsibilities:

1. Solicit and collect feedback from GLEON members and GLEON meeting participants
2. Interpret survey responses, evaluate what changes (if any) are needed, and make recommendations to the GLEON SC
3. Guide, monitor and facilitate the process of implementing those changes to promote a continuous interactive process between assessment and execution.

4. Promote inclusivity and collaboration in working groups (WGs) at GLEON meetings by, for example, choosing facilitators/moderators for WGs and providing facilitator/moderator leadership training.
5. Provide recommendations to GLEON meeting program committees to improve the meeting format and logistics for meeting attendees.
6. Advocate opportunities for students, post docs, junior scientists, and under-represented groups within GLEON.
7. Serve as an 'ombudsman' group for the network.
8. Create orientation events for new members at GLEON meetings by, for example, preparing and delivering an "Intro to GLEON session" and other such activities.
9. Update the network to CCC activities at and between meetings.

**Proposed changes:**

1. Succession and committee membership population plan:
  - a. We expand the committee to 11 members to more accurately reflect the diversity of the GLEON membership, using the criteria outlined in OPP paragraph 6.3 ii-v. Current membership is staggered on 3 year renewable terms, as outlined in OPP paragraph 6.3d i-ii.
  - b. Committee members are nominated by the GLEON membership to fill available seats; nominees are voted on by the CCC, and chosen by super-majority vote, following the procedure outlined in OPP paragraph 6.5.
  - c. One seat on the committee is reserved for the GLEON Student Association (GSA) chair or co-chair, who will decide together which one of them fills the GSA representative seat. Both GSA chair and co-chair may participate in meetings but only one can vote.
  - d. Chair and co-chair are nominated to serve a 3 year term together from within the CCC, and are chosen by a super-majority vote of the CCC (described in OPP paragraph 6.5).
  - e. Chairs are appointed by the CCC GLEON SC so that a certain amount of independence from the GLEON SC is assured.
  - f. If the GLEON SC chooses the CCC chair representative on the GLEON SC to serve as GLEON SC Chair or co-chair, the CCC chair would resign from the CCC chair position. The CCC co-chair would temporarily assume the CCC chair until another CCC chair is chosen (as soon as possible).
2. Interacting with the GLEON Steering Committee:
  - a. CCC Chair sits on the GLEON SC
  - b. The CCC remains somewhat independent of the SC in that the Chair and co-chair are elected from within the CCC and not appointed by the SC
  - c. Committee members do not need to be on the GLEON SC (but may already serve on the SC)
  - d. Outcomes of the CCC are recommendations to the GLEON SC as well as guidance on the execution of the recommendations
3. 'Closing the loop' from recommendation to implementation:

- a. For recommendations approved by the GLEON SC for implementation, CCC has a role. That role would be to help guide, monitor, or assess (or some combination of the three) the implementation to ensure continuity and completion of the end-to-end process and to assess its efficacy.

## History

The Collaborative Climate Committee (CCC) was initiated by the GLEON Student Association (GSA) in response to feedback from students who participated in the GLEON 6 meeting (Florida, February 2008). The original purpose of the CCC was to respond to the needs of students by making GLEON operational and policy recommendations to the GLEON Steering Committee (SC). The CCC's activities and responsibilities were quickly expanded beyond the students to the broader GLEON community as its value in maintaining a collaborative climate was recognized. As a result, the CCC has made more than 40 recommendations (see *Accomplishments to Date*) for changes in GLEON's structure and operations, most of which have been adopted.

## Accomplishments to Date

### Summary of accomplishments to date:

1. More than 40 recommendations for changes to GLEON's structure, activities, and operations
2. Created surveys to solicit feedback from GLEON meeting participants, and continued to evolve the surveys to maintain their utility
3. Collected survey data, interpreted the results, and made recommendations to the GLEON SC
4. Restructured working groups to make GLEON science more inclusive
5. Chose facilitators/moderators for working groups at each meeting
6. Advocated for more student and junior scientist involvement in meetings (chairing sessions, pre-meeting workshops, etc.)
7. Implemented some of the suggested changes (via CCC committee members participating on GLEON meeting program committees, or creating individual task forces (e.g., data-sharing task force))
8. Served as an "Ombudsman" group for the network [but this role could be expanded in the future]

**Founding members:** Founding members of the CCC were Peter Arzberger, Carol Brewer, Cayelan Carey, Paul Hanson, Emily Kara, Tim Kratz, Trina McMahan, Kevin Rose, Chris Solomon, Kathie Weathers, with Cayelan and Paul as chair and co-chair, respectively.

**Time line:** Following timeline summarizes the recommendations made by the CCC, typically in response to survey results or informal discussions with participants. Most of the text has been excerpted from formal reports of the CCC.

- September 2008: First CCC meeting, September 2008, Madison
  - CCC formed as a Task Force in response to GLEON 6 survey feedback from students
  - Original goals of the CCC/Student Task Force:
    - Gauge student involvement and help guide future student involvement
    - Help develop the survey
    - Initial interpretation of survey results, with recommendations made to the SC
    - Choose moderators for working groups and provide some guidance to those moderators
    - Meet with students during the meeting in small breakout group to assess meeting progress
    - Track progress and products of student involvement, including pdfs of posters, manuscripts, etc. and post on the Web
    - Push to organize mixers at national meetings, such as ASLO and ESA
    - In some way add students and/or post docs to the Steering Committee
    - Need to think about what happens when RCN runs out, and how we need to move student activities out of the RCN umbrella
- December 2008: Recommendations as outcomes of GLEON 7 (Norrtälje, Sweden)
  - Recommendation: We should continue efforts to engage young scientists in GLEON and keep them engaged.
  - Recommendation: [to add to the next GLEON meeting survey] Another, more cross-cutting question [in re: classifying how GLEON members self-identify], could be added. Categories could be, e.g., organismal, biogeochemical, hydrological, modeling, spatial, others? One purpose of such a question would be to identify HOW scientists study ecosystems, which may provide additional connections between GLEON, as an organization, and the scientific process.
  - Recommendation: Steering Committee should discuss mechanisms in NZ for broadening diversity, with objectives for fall meeting in the U.S. We also need to capture better ethnicity data by changing the wording slightly on the survey and asking for the information when funding letters are sent.
  - Recommendation: In the longer term, more women need to be members of the GLEON Steering Committee. Continue ways to place more senior women in mentoring roles for both female and male younger scientists and students.
  - Recommendation: At GLEON 8, women should lead more working groups and there should be more women plenary speakers. Consider a woman for the MC role at GLEON 8 or GLEON 9.
  - Recommendation: Increase the level of between-meeting activity, perhaps through funding activities that show the most promise for tangible outcomes.
  - Recommendation: Meetings should have more time for planning, writing, and thinking.
  - Recommendation: Discussion at GLEON meetings about funding initiatives.
  - Recommendation: Be sure to document and report GLEON successes to support possible Track II funding in a few years.

- Recommendation: A GLEON newsletter that can be sent to members AND to funding organizations to keep members engaged between meetings and demonstrate progress.
- Recommendation: Devise feedback to funding organizations on how difficult it is to keep organizations like GLEON operational under current funding policies.
- April 2009: Recommendations as outcomes of GLEON 8 (Hamilton, New Zealand)
  - The CCC recommends that the GLEON Steering Committee continue to be communicative about [the leadership and SC rotation] process to the larger GLEON group. For example, those who were not at the NZ meeting were unaware of the negotiations underway by Peter and Tim to begin seat rotations.
  - Recommendation: GLEON Steering Committee should continue engaging the broader GLEON membership to discuss membership growth, as well as funding growth.
  - Recommendation: Carol will accept suggestions from the committee on mechanisms for making GLEON 9 inclusive. For example, we might randomize seating at one of the dinners. Carol, Cayelan and Paul (as co-Chairs) will review suggestions at recommend to the GLEON 9 Program Committee a set of activities.
  - Issue: It's not clear that we're getting the information we seek on GLEON data use. For example, "contributing data" might happen at a site level and people from that site may or may not take credit for that. Recommendation: Paul will make a set of recommendations to the CCC on wording questions and perhaps adding/changing questions.
  - Issue: It would be helpful to know how GLEON meeting experiences differ among widely differing cultures, and yet that level of geographic resolution is not in the survey. Recommendation: In question 4 of the survey, add another line requesting the respondent type their country of origin if not from the U.S. This will give a sense of the proportion of respondents from various countries and might help in the interpretation of other questions. For more detailed feedback representative of the different countries, we might consider a different mechanism (other than the survey) for more direct feedback.
- November 2009: Recommendations as outcomes of GLEON 9 (Boulder Junction, WI, USA)
  - Background: Things we've done well
    - For the most part, the participants thought that the gender, nationality, scientific discipline, and career stage diversity represented at G9 was adequate. One highlighted type of diversity that 40% of participants recommended improving was including more ethnic groups. In comparison to the G8 New Zealand survey, the survey indicated that the G9 Wisconsin meeting had improved representation and equity of gender, career stage, and scientific discipline diversity.
    - The vast majority of all participants thought that G9 attendees were very receptive to participants, with more positive responses at G9 than at G8.

- Only 1 respondent felt that their expectations of G9 were not met; with the majority of respondents saying that their expectations were met (65%) or surpassed (33%).
- “I learned a lot in a very short time by getting connected to the right people.”
- Participants ranked each G9 meeting component (e.g., plenary, cool things workshop, working groups, etc.) almost identically as the G8 respondents. The major change was that the student poster session was ranked much better at G9 than in G8 (44% of G9 participants called it ‘excellent’ vs. only 12% at G8).
- The majority of the participants (46%) ranked the NPP as ‘very good’ and 97% said that they would like to participate in the program at future meetings.
- Background: Things we can improve
  - At the G8 meeting, the majority of the participants ranked the meeting logistics (e.g., housing, food, etc.) as ‘excellent.’ At G9, the majority participants had lower marks for food: only ‘good’; lodging: ‘very good’; and facilitation of meeting sessions: ‘very good.’
  - In comparison to G8, G9 student participants ranked the interactions at their poster, the pre-conference workshop, networking opportunities, mentoring as only ‘good’ or ‘very good,’ vs. ‘excellent’ at G8. Only 53% of students ranked the G9 meeting’s value as ‘excellent’ vs. 69% at G8.
  - Several participants noted that postdocs fall through the cracks.
- Recommendation: Work with GSA co-chairs to develop postdoc-only programs or include postdocs during student activities. Why not find NPP mentors for postdocs as well?
- Recommendation: Require working groups to prepare a short presentation before the meeting that will be given during plenary on the first day, updating the group to its progress and ongoing projects.
- Recommendation: Remind working group facilitators/moderators during moderator training to break their WGs into smaller groups if they become too large to effectively operate. In fact, it may be good to streamline WG moderator training by putting together a document on helpful strategies for managing their groups and giving this document to them before the meeting begins, and then again re-iterating this information during their training at the meeting.
- Recommendation: Discuss with the program committee whether or not it makes sense for a solid day (no ad-hoc meetings or plenary) to be devoted to WG activities?
- Recommendation: Work with the program committee to encourage more exchanges between WGs, and have the WGs meet in adjacent rooms (not separate buildings) so that meeting attendees can participate in more than one WG.
- Recommendation: Restructure the Cool things session. Restrict cool things to a shorter session (1 day max), and have interested participants submit short

abstracts beforehand. The meeting chair/program committee can sort through the abstracts into new sites/member info (which would be moved to its own separate session), and true 'cool things' presentations. Only the most cutting-edge cool things would be given oral presentations slots, and the rest of the presentations would be moved to its own evening poster session.

- Recommendation: The major item that most survey respondents re-iterated over and over again was balancing growth with grassroots. Why not have a plenary discussion on this topic? Everyone seems to be worried about it. In addition, it should also be a topic of discussion for the GLEON SC.
- Recommendation: Continue the NPP with future GLEON meetings, but more clearly define expectations up-front for the mentors and mentees. Set up partnerships far enough in advance before the meetings so that partners can meet each other via email. Take ESL issues into account when assigning partners.
- September 2010: Recommendations as outcomes of GLEON 10 (Torres, Brazil)
  - Background: Things we've done well
    - For the most part, the survey participants thought that the gender, nationality, scientific discipline, and career stage diversity represented at G10 was "adequately represented" or "well represented." The survey indicated that the G10 Brazil meeting had improved gender equity (Male:Female = 59:41, vs. 64:36 at G9), and similar career stage and scientific discipline diversity in comparison to previous meetings.
    - The vast majority of all participants thought that G10 attendees were very receptive to participants, similar to G9 and G8.
    - Only 2 respondents felt that their expectations of G10 were not met; with the majority of respondents saying that their expectations were met (49%) or surpassed (48%). This is a substantial improvement in comparison to G9, where only 33% of respondents reported that their expectations were surpassed.
    - Everyone (except for one person) responded that they would be interested in attending another GLEON meeting.
    - Participants ranked each G10 meeting component (e.g., plenary, cool things workshop, working groups, etc.) almost identically as the G9 respondents. The two major changes were that the majority of participants at G10 found that the agenda and meeting schedule were only "good" vs. "very good" at G9. However, the new format of the cool things session ranked more highly at G10 than at G9 (42% of G10 participants called it "very good" vs. only 32% at G9).
    - The majority of the participants (53%) ranked the NPP as 'very good' (vs. 46% at G9) and 100% said that they would like to participate in the program at future meetings (vs. 97% at G9).
    - The majority of the participants (64.1%) responded that they were "Assist[ing] with GLEON research and/or manuscript preparation" between meetings (this was the first time we asked that question).

- At the G10 meeting, the majority of the participants ranked the meeting logistics (e.g., housing, food, etc.) as 'excellent,' except for transportation and the 'quality of materials received at the session, which were ranked as only 'good.'
- "It was wonderful having everyone and all the working group meetings, etc., in one space!"
- Recommendation: Update the G11 survey to include this category [treatment of non-native English speakers], and prep facilitators/moderators to make sure that ESL participants are engaged and able to actively participate in working groups.
- Recommendation: Query the postdocs at G11 via a new survey question soliciting suggestions on how best to address early career scientists' needs (also target previous GLEON postdocs attendees via email). Invite postdocs to participate in the poster session and take leadership roles in working groups.
- Recommendation: Use a workshop to target a broad topic of interest for students, focusing on the analysis of high-frequency data (e.g., statistical tools for large datasets, transformations, modeling, etc.). Have the workshop be open to all meeting participants, not just students.
- Recommendation: Revamp the Intro to GLEON session to make it more interactive. Include more speakers, stop to solicit questions more often, and cut down on the use of powerpoint.
- Recommendation: If GLEON visioning exercises are going to be included in future meetings, more clearly define what the goals are, and place at the end of the meeting, rather than at the beginning.
- Recommendation: Data-sharing is clearly a topic that is of concern to many GLEON members (it was repeatedly mentioned in the "GLEON's Greatest Challenges" question as well), so I think we should address it head-on by forming a focus group of GLEON members to explore data-sharing issues and make recommendations to the GLEON SC.
- Recommendation: Publicize the list of GLEON members who are going to be attending a meeting ~1 month before and encourage meeting participants to brainstorm working group ideas early. The goal of this pre-meeting exercise is for meeting participants to arrive to the meeting with well-thought out plans for WGs.
- Recommendation: Have the "WG formation" session moderator make sure that each WG is on solid footing before letting groups form.
- Recommendation: Require working groups to prepare a short presentation before the meeting that will be given during plenary on the first day, updating the group to its progress and ongoing projects.
- Recommendation: If GLEON is going to be serious about building a site in Africa, then it needs to form a focus group of dedicated individuals that can put together a plan to make it happen. At least 5 respondents repeatedly made comments on this subject.

- Recommendation: Is it time to make the IT team a permanent committee, not a makeshift WG? (see comment #1 in this section) This could be a topic of discussion at G11 within the IT working group (if it forms).
- Recommendation: Form a focus group to work on better documenting GLEON protocols and publish their reports on the GLEON website, in white paper form.
- Recommendation: If working groups develop before meetings, then it will be easier for WGs to target individuals with certain skills to participate.
- Recommendation: Continue the NPP with future GLEON meetings, but more clearly define expectations up-front for the mentors and mentees. Expand the program to include new GLEON attendees (perhaps emailing them beforehand to see if they want to participate first before automatically enrolling them). Try to assign partners to only have 1-on-1 mentor-mentee relationships (if possible).