

Black: original notes from chair

Blue: notes from exec committee meeting

**ENVR JSM 2021 Virtual Executive Committee Meeting Agenda  
Aug. 9, 2021**

1. **In attendance:** Mevin Hooten (chair), Elizabeth Mannshardt (chair-elect), Mandy Hering (past-chair), Maggie Johnson (secretary), Katie Banner (treasurer), Candace Berrett (program chair), Emily Kang (program chair-elect), Will Kleiber (publications chair), Doug Nychka (award committee chair), Victor DeOliveira (award committee), Erin Schliep (student paper award chair), Debashis Mondal (council of sections), Staci Hepler (treasurer-elect), Eric Gilleland (program chair-elect), Whitney Huang (publications chair-elect)
  
2. Officers from this year and next year
  - a. List of Officers for 2021:
    - Chair: Mevin Hooten
    - Chair-Elect: Elizabeth Mannshardt
    - Past-Chair: Mandy Hering
    - Secretary: Maggie Johnson
    - Treasurer: Katie Banner
    - Program Chair: Candace Berrett
    - Program Chair-Elect: Emily Kang
    - Publications Chair: Will Kleiber (2021-2022)
    - Awards committee: Doug Nychka (Chris Appointed), Victor DeOliveira (Mandy Appointed) , Yulia Gel (Mevin Appointed)
    - Student Paper Competition: Erin Schliep (chair), Alex Schmidt, Ephraim Hanks
    - Fellows committee: William Christensen, Jennifer Hoeting, Chris Wikle
    - Council of Sections: Debashis Mondal (2021-2023)
  
  - b. List of Officers for 2022:
    - Chair: Elizabeth Mannshardt
    - Chair-Elect: Bo Li
    - Past-Chair: Mevin Hooten
    - Secretary: Katie Banner
    - Treasurer: Staci Hepler
    - Program Chair: Emily Kang
    - Program Chair-Elect: Eric Gilleland
    - Publications Chair: Will Kleiber (2021-2022)
    - Publications Chair Elect: Whitney Huang (2023-2024)
    - Awards committee: Victor De Oliveira (Chair, Mandy Appointed), Yulia Gel (Mevin Appointed), \_\_\_\_\_ (Elizabeth Appointee)
    - Student Paper Competition: Alex Schmidt (Chair), Ephraim Hanks, Candace Berrett
    - Fellows committee: William Christensen (Chair), Jennifer Hoeting, Chris Wikle

- Council of Sections: Debashis Mondal (2021-2023)
3. Treasurer report (Treasurer—Katie Banner)
    - Virtual JSM and rescheduled ENVR workshop resulted in no 2021 section spending to date
      - No expenses this year other than expected \$500 JSM travel awards for student paper award winners
      - Registration costs for student paper competition winners will post after JSM
    - Expect a net surplus of 2-3K with ending 2021 balance ~ 19K
    - 2022 is expected to be a surplus year for the section due to proceeds from the ENVR workshop in Provo, UT
    - Section balance has been stable since 2017 with upward trend starting in 2019
      - ~2-3K/year, expected surplus in 2021 and 2022
    - Dues/membership on schedule with previous years, typically receive about ~\$1,000 more through the end of the year
    - ENVR workshop:
      - Expected \$8,000 registration/fees (average of previous 2 workshop years)
        - BYU originally committed \$7,500 contribution, follow-up with Matt Heaton about specifics for the use of the BYU contribution (venue, etc.)
  4. Council of Sections report (COS rep—Debashis Mondal)
    - Additional COS meeting on Aug 20
    - Presidential initiatives
      - Committee on data science and AI, reaching out to organizational leadership (Deans, CEOs, etc.), should be opportunities for sections to participate
    - Nominations for open ASA positions – council of sections governing bodies (chair), committee on continuing education (Debashis can send details)
    - Discussion of section engagement in
      - SMiB – social media impact (gauge section interest in developing social media strategies)
      - JEDI – task force, thinking about leadership development, outreach group looking for volunteers, would the section be interested in sponsoring a workshop, etc.
      - CIRS – committee on international relationships, looking for volunteers, want to know if sections have done any outreach with international partners, if so how did that work?
      - Corporate partnerships – committee on corporate partnerships, want to know current level of engagement of the section with corporate partners, want to recognize in terms of friends, allies, partners, and want to know if they should reach out to certain companies
      - Membership growth and retention – interested in knowing if a particular section wants to participate
    - Ways ASA can support your section/IG activities – how can COS help the section?
    - Comments from exec committee

- Mandy: Almost all of the ASA sections decreased in membership over the last year. ENVR membership decreased from 724 members in Jan. 2020 to 667 members in Jan. 2021. Not unusual compared to all the other sections, but probably something to keep an eye on. The number of dollars we have on hand is ~\$20 per member, which is better than many sections that have only a few dollars per member. Perhaps send an email to new members each year to try to encourage/facilitate feeling of involvement/inclusion?
- Doug brought up question of demographic of new members: are new members typically grad students joining ASA for the first time? Mandy: First time joining the section is free so we should be able to tell from the members list who is new. The chair has access to this list so could filter out to see if these are new ASA members, might be a column to see if new members are students – Mevin will check.
- Doug: Perhaps we can send out an email to more senior members in ENVR to remind members to encourage grad students to join ENVR.
- Mevin: Another approach is the ENVR newsletter, we could all make an effort to share with departments to reach students who may not be on AMSTAT mailing lists.
- Elizabeth: ASA allows members to add sections or charters at any time (used to be only upon initial or renewing memberships), we could add this information under the “Participate” tab on the ENVR webpage to be able to point students to it.

#### 5. JSM Program report (Program Chair—Candace Berrett)

- When JSM went virtual a few ENVR sessions dropped out
- Emily, Eric and Candace organized a mentoring round table for grad students (8/10 noon). Students did not have to register with JSM to attend mentoring session so they didn’t have to pay JSM fees.
- Emily: Deadline is Sept 8 for JSM 2022 invited session proposals, sent out call for invited session to ENVR mailing list.

#### 6. Fellows (and solicitation for nominees) (William Christensen)

- William not able to attend, more details at the mixer.

#### 7. Career awards committee (Doug Nychka)

- Doug: Comment in context of Noethur award committee – Noethur award is constrained to only one award each year. Came away feeling that making the award to just one person is not beneficial, and doesn’t really achieve what the award is supposed to be. Argument for only one award has been that if the award is given to multiple people, it makes award seem less special but argument against is that if more than one equally qualified candidates are up for the award it can become divisive. Multiple ECI/DAA awards gives ENVR flexibility to recognize many achievements of members of the ENVR community and helps encourage a diverse set of awardees.
- Doug: This year and going forward, the award should inspire other members of ENVR and shouldn’t necessarily be an award for the person with the most

papers/citations/etc. We want to show all the different ways people can contribute and make people think outside of the box about what they can achieve.

- Elizabeth: In agreement with Doug, it is important to recognize other kinds of contributions. Keeping the awards to only one can be isolating and we don't want to cut people out just because they are up at the same time as other great candidates.
- Expect DAA nominations to pick up, Doug will make pitch during the mixer to encourage people to make nominations.

8. Student paper awards committee (Erin Schliep)

- a. 2021 student paper competition originally slated for 2 winners and 3 honorable mentions at the same support level of up to \$1200 (winners) and \$600 (HM), but due to virtual JSM, only registration was covered for all 5 awardees.
  - 31 submissions, more than past two years
  - Alex Schmidt will be next chair
  - Discussion of expanding student paper award committee for two reasons (Erin):
    - 1) Try to add more diversity into the group to understand contributions on broader scale.
    - 2) In past years, the committee has needed to bring in 1-2 additional reviewers to tackle the large number of papers. Such a large number of papers is an enormous task to review, and bringing in diverse reviewers could bring broader scope while also reducing work burden of reviews. Possibly reach out to reviewers beyond traditional academic setting (national labs, industry, etc.).
  - Elizabeth: Should we have a category of the award that is specifically for applied papers, not just research papers? Students may be making substantial contributions to the field through novel applications and collaborations but may not be writing traditional research papers. Mandy: ESRI spatial competition sometimes has different categories, like a "best in show", etc. Do we need standardized rubrics to be able to perform comprehensive reviews when the papers are so diverse and potentially out of a reviewer's domain?
  - Erin: Lack of rubric can be hard for the additional reviewers being brought in because there isn't a standardized way of evaluating the papers. Maybe instead of the chair bringing people in, the award committee should be expanded to 5, perhaps requiring one from government/industry, and/or include domain experts from biostats, public health, etc.
  - Doug: Perhaps all of the ENVR officers could read 2-3 papers and submit reviews, and the awards committee act more as editors, sending out papers and reviewing reviews? Erin: Currently try to have each paper read by at least 2 committee members, we could reduce this to just 1 and add a review by ENVR exec committee. Finding reviewers is always challenging because review season falls around the holidays.
  - Conclusions of discussion: Erin will have get-together with Alex and Ephraim to gather thoughts and pass on general recommendations on reviewers moving forward to the exec committee. October is call for papers, so Erin will plan to

have the conversation prior to this and report back with recommended plan.  
Exec committee will vote, if necessary, by email.

9. Data Challenge (Chris Wikle)

Chris unable to attend today, will report during ENVR mixer.

Winner:

John D. Drumheller, Dept. of Statistics/Master of Applied Statistics Program, Colorado State University, Ft. Collins, CO, USA. [john.drumheller@colostate.edu](mailto:john.drumheller@colostate.edu)

For "Examining the impact of climate models on the distribution of tree species in Colorado forests"

Honorable Mention:

Andrew B. Whetten, Department of Mathematical Sciences, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, USDA ARS Ainsworth Lab, Urbana, Illinois, [whettenandrew@gmail.com](mailto:whettenandrew@gmail.com)

Hannah Demler, School of Integrative Biology, University of Illinois - Urbana Champaign, USDA ARS Ainsworth Lab, Urbana, Illinois, [hannah.demler@gmail.com](mailto:hannah.demler@gmail.com)

For: "Detection of Multidecadal Changes in Vegetation Dynamics and Association with Intra-annual Climate Variability in the Columbia River Basin"

10. Website Update and Refresh (Will Kleiber)

- Both Will and Elizabeth have rehabbed the website, cleaned up old documents, etc. <https://community.amstat.org/envr/home>. Email Will with any suggestions.
- Elizabeth: We added a student tab to the website and a student corner in the newsletter. Everyone is encouraged to share with their students so they know it is a place they can look to find resources about what's going on, how to join ENVR, membership opportunities, etc.

11. JEDI Activities (Elizabeth Mannshardt)

<http://community.amstat.org/antiracismtaskforce/>

Elizabeth is on the ASA antiracism task force (ARTF) started up this year. The task force works tangentially with JEDI, working to identify needs within ASA and looking for actions/specific steps towards combating racism. The understanding is that at the end of the calendar year an ASA committee will be formed. If anyone is interested, please reach out to Elizabeth.

- ASA is looking to develop language for sections/ASA to use, and to develop outreach initiatives in order to determine how to take active steps to combat racism.
- JSM session tomorrow (8/10) at noon will report on recommendations and finding from the task force. The task force will continue to work through the end of this year.
- Idea of possibly having a liaison between sections/chapters and the taskforce/committee when it is formed, not officially set up with ARTF but we could start to implement that. We should think about as a committee what that would

mean for ENVR, would we have an appointed term? Do we want a section on the website? Outreach activities?

- Katie: Involved in a similar taskforce at MSU and would be happy to volunteer as a liaison between the section and ASA.

## 12. Action Items (Mevin Hooten and Elizabeth Mannshardt):

Running short on meeting time, the committee discussed action item a).

- a. Should we add a JEDI and land statement to the ENVR website? For example, an ENVR JEDI Statement draft might read:

“Justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion are vital to our mission in the ASA Section on Statistics and the Environment. We are dedicated to improving and maintaining a culture of inclusivity and respect through our efforts in the development, application, and communication of statistical methods in environmental science. We oppose discrimination and racism in all of their forms and embrace diversity as a source of strength, ingenuity, and inspiration. We also acknowledge, with respect, that the land on which many of us practice our profession are the traditional and ancestral homelands of indigenous Nations and peoples.”

- Candace: A lot of people feel that statements like this are being posted but action isn't being done, adding “we're working towards this with xyz” to show we are taking actionable steps may be something to consider.
- Katie: Agrees with Candace, it is important to make sure that we are making statements to show how we're working to move forward, iterate through email then decide?
- Mevin: Should we add the statement to the website, and continue to work on/add to the statement throughout the fall and onwards to address how ENVR is working on these things?
- Elizabeth: We could put the statement on the website as living document, encourage members to reach out provide feedback on what they would like to see, and on what should be added or removed if unintentionally what is stated is not quite what we want to say. In regards to including a specific anti-racism statement to the JEDI statement: we should wait for ASA's guidance from ARTF which is specifically focused on taking specific steps that are “anti-racism.” So it is not necessary for ENVR's task to make explicit antiracism statements at this time, but it will certainly be good to put out a JEDI statement which can more broadly address diversity and inclusion, broadening how we do awards, outreach, decision-making to be more inclusive/diverse, etc.
- Doug: The statement should go out to general membership for comments before something is officially adopted, and anything that is approved should have some kind of fixed non-ambiguity about it. If things get revised, they would have to be re-adopted or re-voted on. Another major issue is environmental justice/equity (certain types of environmental issues can impact certain groups more) and we may want something about this in the statement as well.
- Erin: Environmental justice/equity is a great idea for a student paper award competition.

- Elizabeth: Related to EPA environmental justice activity, could work well to have a student paper award or JSM ENVR session on this topic.
  - Environmental justice statement from White House: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/27/executive-order-on-tackling-the-climate-crisis-at-home-and-abroad/>
  - EPA environmental justice tool: <https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen>
  - Conclusion of discussion: Mevin will follow-up over email about the JEDI statement and if desired will have motion/vote over email to get something started online.
- b. Discussion of explicit consideration for implicit bias in ENVR awards and nomination committees. Summary of ongoing conversation among award committee members:
- **Implicit Bias:** ASA document (2018) on “Avoiding Implicit Bias” exists and could be easily reviewed each year by committee members (see attached).
  - **Award Criteria:** “Rewrite the award criteria slightly to highlight nominees who have achieved success while taking professional risks, overcoming some hurdles, or whose accomplishments can inspire and encourage others in our community. A little different than focusing on who has produced the best research.”
  - **Rubric:** “The student paper awards committee could greatly benefit from having a rubric for evaluating the papers. It is so hard evaluating the papers with such diverse topics that span theory, methods, and application. A set rubric agreed upon by the committee might really be beneficial, especially in the case where the papers are outside the expertise of the reviewer. In addition, the rubric might provide for a way to diversify the awardees if it emphasized things like writing clarity, use of figures/graphics, literature review, etc. in addition to the methodological contribution and application. To this point, if the announcement for the paper awarded highlighted these evaluation criteria, it could broaden and strengthen the submissions to include students from some of the other groups.”

[See discussion under student paper awards.](#)

- **Blinding:** “I also wonder if we shouldn't make the process blind, the risk that I see is that we might have multiple students from the same group receiving the awards.”
- **Broaden Advertisement:** “expanding beyond the tendency of traditional nominations to come from larger universities and well-established research groups.”
- **Award Committee Composition:** “The award committees should be diverse (e.g., invite non-ENVR outsiders whose research is linked to env statistics? so the award

committee itself is a role model for diversity), and from my experience, it's the largest contributing factor. This will also potentially help to get new blood to the section.”