

## MINUTES OF THE PACIFIC SEABIRD GROUP EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING

7 December 2023 Conference Call

2:00pm-3:00pm (Pacific Standard Time – UTC-8)

Approved



**Present:** Dick Veit (Chair), Juliet Lamb (Chair-Elect), Rachel Sprague (Past Chair), Lara Brenner (Secretary), Lindsay Adrean (Vice Chair for Conservation), Sarah Ann Thompson (Northern California Regional Representative), Pamela Michael (Treasurer), Kerry Woo (Canada Regional Representative), Julia Gulka (Non-Pacific U.S. States Regional Representative), Amelia DuVall (Washington/Oregon Regional Representative) [10].

**Absent:** Jaime Ojeda (S. California, Latin America, Hawaii Regional Representative), JB Thiebot (Asia/Oceania Regional Representative), Tegan Carpenter-Kling (Europe/Africa Regional Representative), Karen Lau Alarcon (Student Representative), Alexis Will (Alaska/Russia Regional Representative), [5]

**Others present:** Wieteke Holthuijzen (Communications Committee Co-Coordinator), Kirsten Bixler (Former Treasurer), Roberta Swift (Former Past Chair), Jenn Urmston (Membership Coordinator), Sarah Guitart (EID Committee Co-Coordinator), Laney White (HELPS Committee Co-Coordinator), Lauren Lescure (Membership Committee Coordinator), Anna Vallery (Communications Committee Co-Coordinator), Sabrina Salome (HELPS Committee) [9].

### REVIEW OCTOBER 24, 2023, ACTION ITEMS

1. EID committee, HELPS committee, LoCo committee, Dick, and Rachel will work to identify indigenous speakers for annual meeting and identify routes to fund expansion of indigenous, student, and international participation in PSG. **Keep and modify - Dick will lead a brainstorming discussion at the end of the next ExCo meeting with the goal of producing a document outlining funding mechanisms for increasing diverse participation at PSG meetings by the February business meeting.**
2. Dick will reach out to encourage members to serve on membership committee. **A previous member found 2 volunteers to take her place. Done!**
3. Lindsey will check in with Bill McIver and Kim Nelson to make sure that the requested clarifications were made to the Marbled Murrelet survey protocols. **Done!**
4. Dick and Rachel will investigate conflict of interest policy and investment policy to determine whether and how they need to be updated. **Keep – Dick will reach out to Craig Harrison to review the document and see if it needs to be updated.**

5. The treasurers will begin the process of creating document retention policies and reimbursement policies. **Keep.**
6. Dick will reach out to the Ornithological Council to understand how the \$5000 budgeted in our ExCo budget to support them is used, whether it's still needed, and whether other organizations have returned to supporting OC. Dick will also see if a representative is available to present to ExCo, while Roberta will track down previous ExCo discussions about the grant to OC. **Keep with modification - Dick will reach out to OC to let them know that we plan to cut back to \$2500 unless we receive further justification.**

#### WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, & APPROVE AGENDA

Motion to approve the Agenda, moved and seconded.

Abstentions, 0: Nays, 0: Yays, 10, motion passed unanimously

- APPROVE 24 OCTOBER 2023 MINUTES – REPORT #1

Motion to approve the 24 October 2023 minutes, moved and seconded.

Abstentions, 0: Nays, 0: Yays, 10, motion passed unanimously

- TREASURER'S REPORT – REPORT #2

- Have completed a time intensive project to streamline and integrate the budget into QuickBooks, specifically to the chart of accounts.
- Reviewing fiscal year 2023 income and expenses in preparation for filing taxes.
- Closed four bank accounts, the Conservation Fund, Student Travel Fund, Former Chairs Fund, and HELPS fund
  - i. Restricted funds from those bank accounts are being tracked in QuickBooks, but they're now just one primary checking account.
- Reviewing outstanding invoices in Wild Apricot.
- VOTING ITEM:
  - i. Would like to get the draft budget for Marine Ornithology approved
  - ii. Through the endowment fund, PSG is contributing \$8000 to cover MO's operating expenses
  - iii. Another \$8500 is not included in that budget, but that is also coming from the endowment fund to cover honorariums.
  - iv. They do expect to break even this year just to be clear.

Motion to approve the draft 2024 budget for Marine Ornithology, moved and seconded.

Abstentions, 0: Nays, 0: Yays, 10, motion passed unanimously

#### 3. HELPS COMMITTEE UPDATE – REPORT #3

- Thanks to help from the communications team, we've recruited new members for the HELPS committee.
  - Sonya Pastran has joined as a Co-Chair

- Emily Runnels and Sabrina Salome have joined Wieteke, Fernando and Laney on the committee
- Laney will be stepping down as Co-chair after the annual meeting and will be looking for a replacement
- HELPS would like to create more programming year round.
  - Doing a USA jobs webinar on January 10<sup>th</sup>
  - Also thinking about doing something similar but focused on Canadian federal hiring practices
  - Sabrina had an idea to have a webinar on demystifying early career science positions, like pay to work, volunteer, and stipend positions, and whether they're worth it
  - For the USAJobs webinar, Roberta Swift, Heather Renner and Sarah Schoen with the Alaska Science Center have agreed to speak.
  - *Would be great to have one more person if anyone has suggestions*
- Last year we weren't able to record the webinar because we had too many attendees (100+). *Does anyone have suggestions about existing resources within PSG that would allow for a larger webinar?*
- The mentor mixer: we'll try to plug in some of the federal hiring practices into the mentor mixer, matching students who are interested in working for the federal government with federal employees so they can give some insights and guidance into that process. I
  - COMMENT: Last year we split into groups where students who were interested in working for nonprofits could meet nonprofit people, etc. If you were going to incorporate the mixer into the USAJobs webinar, could it expand beyond the federal system?
  - ANSWER: We're going to match people together for the first half of it and then we're going to break up into groups by topic or agency.
  - COMMENT: Could there be a separate seminar to talk about resumes and cover letters?
  - ANSWER: Hope is that students could talk with mentors about that.

#### COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE UPDATE – REPORT #4

- Pacific Seabirds is back in action.
  - We have worked with a committee to get the publication up and running.
  - We are transitioning Pacific Seabirds from a large PDF form to a more engaging and interactive blog on the website
  - In the spring, we're going to shift to collecting regional reports and you can read all of those then.
  - We are also looking for contributions in the future, so if you have something you want to write up, photos you want to share, books that you want to review, or gear that you want to review, those would all be excellent contributions.
  - In this process, we figured out an efficient way to reduce the workload that goes into producing this application and making sure that it's sustainable going forward.
  - There are a couple of recurring components that we've added to the publication, including member updates like thesis defenses, retirements, promotions, job switches, etc.
  - The submission form is always open on a rolling basis.
  - Any events that are related to our work can be shared, e.g. webinars.

- The annual meeting is coming up, so if you have any communications needs, whether it's social media or listserv, try to keep the Comms committee abreast of that. It's going to start being jam packed as we get closer to the meeting and we try not to overwhelm people with how much we contact them.

#### PROPOSAL FOR AN ANNUAL PACIFIC SEABIRD GROUP MENTORING AWARD – REPORT #5

- In 1993, PSG instituted the Lifetime Achievement and Special Achievement awards to recognize some of the highest contributing folks in seabird conservation and research, and their engagement with the society.
- Since the early 2000s in particular, there has been an increasing focus within the society on improving access and participation for students and early career professionals.
- This is a proposal to add a mentorship award to the suite of the highest level honors that PSG confers.
- This could be a very fitting way to recognize our evolution as a society and to honor those people who have sought to mentor and improve the participation of students and early career professionals.
- The lifetime achievement award and Special Achievement award do have some mentoring components, but it's a pretty small part. This new award could be differentiated by some of the evaluation criteria, including highlighting a consistent record of supporting and encouraging students all the way through their career.
- The decision committee could also be different. Right now the awards committee includes the three chairs, and we've been including the student representatives as a non-voting member that we maybe need to update, update the handbook and just call it a voting member.
- The mentorship award decision committee could be a place for younger PSG professionals sourced from our committees and regional representatives.
- One of the big considerations is that for the lifetime and special achievement awardees, PSG pays for registration and travel to the meeting. If we started a new award, we would need to consider potential increase in costs for future meeting budgets.
- Today, we could talk about it and defer a decision to vote another day.
  - If felt like we don't need to talk more about whether to establish an award or not, we could vote on that today.
  - Then we could do a nomination process leading up to the meeting and announce the meeting at the inaugural award ceremony. At that point we wouldn't be paying for their travel.
  - Or we could announce this new award at the meeting in February and use that visibility just to raise money for travel to award the first one in 2025.
- COMMENT: At the meeting last year there were three Lifetime achievement awards and one Special Achievement award, as well as another award to our Communications Committee here from EXCO. That felt like a lot at the at the banquet - there was a lot of business to go through with all of that. I wonder we can reduce the number of awardees in the other categories to reduce the time and money spent.
  - REPLY: Last year it was a special case, partly because it was the 50th anniversary. If you're looking back, there's normally been one or sometimes two lifetime achievement awards, and sometimes there have been none. We definitely don't want to dilute the awards by having too many of them. We also don't have to do the mentoring one every year.

- COMMENT: I think this is a great idea. For awarding it this year, I wonder if we would have assigned the awards we've already assigned at this point differently? I'd favor announcing the award this year and awarding it next year.
- COMMENT: There's already mentorship as a category in the rubric for the lifetime achievement awards. Is that something we want to weight more heavily when we're deciding on the existing awards or does it need to be its own category? It seems like it needs to be more separated out because you are giving lifetime achievement awards to people who have really strong track records, and mentoring is part of the requirements. We might end up in a double dipping from the same group of people.
  - REPLY: One of the differences was that if the person under consideration for the lifetime achievement award doesn't have a strong publication or science or academic record, they've not been considered. The mentorship award was trying to think about the people who maybe aren't first authors on a lot of papers, but have built up people and programs around them. We've definitely asked for there to be a mentorship component to the other awards, but it may not have been the primary component of the evaluation. The point here was to think about, as a society, highlighting mentorship as a value that we have and recognizing people who have brought that forward.
- COMMENT: Mentorship is a huge part of PSG values, but we should dedicate time and mental space to comparing and evaluating the existing award criteria, especially with some insight from those who have been a part of review committees in the past.
- COMMENT: If there are folks who feel passionately and have opinions about this, reach out and let me know. I will do what I can between now and some of our next meetings.

#### ANNUAL MEETING REGISTRATION QUESTIONS – REPORT #6

- A very prominent PSG member who was chair at least once emailed me and said she's retired now and just wants to attend the past chairs meeting and one other event. She thought that the one day registration fee was kind of steep and could she pay less than that? Is this something that we have to vote on? I'd be inclined to say yes, but in the name of formality, I guess we ought to open it for discussion.
- COMMENT: It's really hard to say no to a one-off. I don't know this person, but we're talking about long term contributions to PSG. I guess it depends on how tightly we view our finances and whether it would set a precedent. We might need to develop one statement that has a couple of key points about why we make whatever decision we make. If she wants to go to the banquet or something that costs substantial money, we could have her pay.
- COMMENT: If somebody wants to go to one of the mixers and they haven't paid for registration, they should pay for it because everybody else is paying for it, including the students. Even going to the former chairs meeting, they're usually provide lunch and most of those former chairs are paying registration. So out of fairness, I don't see why we couldn't just charge her a lower amount. Technically, she could probably show up and nobody would even notice that she was there or hadn't paid, so it was nice for her to tell us. But I think we could ask her to pay her way for the lunch or for the mixer that she's going to and just ask her for \$25 to cover the lunch.
- COMMENT: I'm comfortable writing to her and telling her that. So anyone have any objection to that?
- COMMENT: In the interest of making it easier and being consistent across people who might be asking for this in the future, we could figure out what the actual cost is for us. For instance, if she's going to the lunch, we can figure out the cost per person for food and beverage for that

event and then charge her that much. That way when we get requests in the future, we know how to charge people.

- Are we offering reduced registration rates to people volunteering on the EXCO and other community leaders? We did this with the previous annual meeting, but it was a one off decision. Rachel did a poll about how many people would use it.
- COMMENT: If the ExCo member or committee chair was a student, we waived their registration, and if they weren't a student we dropped their registration down to the student registration for people who didn't have otherwise have employer support.
- COMMENT: We should think about whether that extends to the local committee chairs and other volunteers on the local committee who are also organizing the meeting, and if so, where is the balance of those registrations coming from? Are we just going to say the meeting budget will deal? Or is the ExCo voting to cover that from the general fund?
- COMMENT: We used the chair's discretionary fund because I hadn't used it for anything else at that point and it ended up being less than \$2000.
- COMMENT: I looked at the total cost of food for the meeting. If we have 300 participants, it comes to \$388 just for food and beverage. It would be worth coming up with a range or at least a maximum amount of money that we wouldn't be receiving, that we would expect to receive. A budget sounds like a good idea before we vote on it.
- COMMENT: We voted in the approved PSG 2024 budget to be able to waive or reduce registration for up to five volunteers. Last year we had maybe three or four people. The Chair could send an email to ExCo and the local committee chairs and ask who could use assistance. If it's up to five, then we have already approved that, and if it's more than five we can vote on it.
- COMMENT: Who would be receiving the e-mail with the offer? Would it be like ExCo members, committee chairs, other people?
  - REPLY: We did not come up with a written policy between last year and this year.
  - REPLY: Let's just include ExCo members, committee chairs, and LoCo chairs.
  - REPLY: We also need to figure out the timing with when Juliet is planning on sending out notifications of abstract acceptance, because some folks' support from their

## REVIEW OF NEW ACTION ITEMS

### 1. Four action items from the last meeting are carried over (with some modifications):

- The treasurers will begin the process of creating document retention policies and reimbursement policies.
- Lara will send out the conflict of interest and investment policies for review by ExCo. If no changes, she will change the date on the policy and Comms committee can post it on the website.
- Dick will reach out to Ornithological Council to let them know that we plan to cut back to \$2500 unless we receive further justification to keep the increased annual contribution.
- Reach out to Laney at the HELPS committee if you are a federal employee (or know one) who would like to speak to students and early career scientists about USAjobs. Dick will reach out to CUNY to see if we can use their Zoom account for the webinar.

### 1. New action items from this meeting:

- Reach out to Comms committee with as much lead time as possible about any comms to do with the PSG meeting in February.
- Reach out to Rachel if you have ideas about forming a mentoring award for PSG.

- Kirsten will assess the actual cost of the events that Lora Leschner plans to attend and figure out how to charge her.
- Dick will send an email or poll asking ExCo members, committee co-chairs, and local committee members to ask if anyone needs support to attend the annual meeting

MEETING ADJOURNED

Motion to adjourn: moved and seconded.

Abstentions, 0: Nays, 0: Yays, 10, motion passed unanimously