

National Legislative Program Evaluation Society (NLPES)
Executive Committee Meeting
Saturday, April 9, 2016
Hilton Garden Inn Downtown – Jackson, Mississippi

Minutes

Members and NCSL Liaison Present:

Nathalie Molliet-Ribet (VA), Chair
Rachel Hibbard (HI), Vice-Chair*
Greg Fugate (CO), Secretary
Patricia Berger (PA)*
Dale Carlson (CA)*
Wayne Kidd (UT)
Marcia Lindsay (SC)
Katrin Osterhaus (KS)
Shunti Taylor (GA)
Linda Triplett (MS)
Brenda Erickson, NCSL Liaison

Members Absent:

Charles Sallee (NM)

*Participated via telephone

- 8:30 a.m. Call to Order and Opening Remarks.** Nathalie called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Nathalie made some brief opening remarks and thanked Marcia for taking the minutes until Greg arrived from the airport (at approximately 9:45 a.m.).
- 8:35 a.m. Approve Minutes from Denver Meeting.** Discussed the minutes from the October 11, 2015 meeting held during the Fall PDS in Denver. Marcia moved to adopt the minutes as submitted. Wayne seconded the motion and the Executive Committee unanimously approved the minutes.
- 8:37 a.m. Subcommittee Work.** The Executive Committee members broke out to meet in their assigned subcommittees.
- 10:30 a.m. Awards Subcommittee Report.** Rachel reported that we are on track for this year's awards cycle. The application deadline is May 13. She will send out a series of reminders to the email list leading up to the deadline. Rachel also reported that she will include a reminder to applicants that all materials must be included with the application; this is all the judges will consider. There have been times in the past when judges spent extra effort obtaining supporting materials for award applications. The subcommittee will work on updates to the awards criteria to make clear that all materials related to the application must be received by the application deadline. Rachel reported that she will reach out to the judges to be sure they have all materials. Wayne asked about the judges. Nathalie reported that the Methods Award applications will be reviewed by judges from Florida,

Virginia, and Nebraska; the Excellence in Evaluation applications will be reviewed by judges from New Mexico, North Carolina, and Texas (Sunset); and the Impact Award applications will be reviewed by judges from Georgia, Hawaii, and Pennsylvania. Nathalie reported that no one has contacted her thus far regarding the Lifetime Achievement Award; she will send out a reminder to the email list. In response to a question from Linda, Brenda clarified that the Lifetime Achievement Award has historically been given to an individual who has retired or is retiring from the profession.

10:45 a.m. Communications Subcommittee Report. Dale reported that the subcommittee has a number of near-term goals. First, Pat is leading the effort to get the website cleaned up. Brenda is providing clarification on what NLPES can and cannot address in terms of changes to the website. Rachel has also been providing input on this effort. Recommendations on changes to the website were previously distributed to the Executive Committee. Second, the subcommittee's goal is to keep the newsletter on time and focused on high quality content. Shunti did a great job with the latest newsletter. The subcommittee is exploring some type of feedback mechanisms to help ensure that the newsletter content remains informative, relevant, interesting. Wayne suggested considering asking about specific sections of the newsletter, in addition to overall feedback. Dale reported that the subcommittee is considering changing the frequency of the newsletter—perhaps two times per year—to help balance resources and demand for new content. Third, Dale reported that the subcommittee will work with the PDS subcommittee on marketing announcements for the upcoming PDS. Greg asked about opportunities for announcement in State Legislatures Magazine, similar to what occurred last year. Brenda reported that inclusion of photo of the NLPES Executive Committee was largely because we held the meeting at NCSL's offices. Brenda discussed a suggestion from a peer review about whether the newsletter could be used to share information about free or low-cost CPE. Katrin said this would provide a tie in to the PDS subcommittee's efforts to update the training matrix. Nathalie asked about feedback on the subcommittee's website recommendations; Dale said he would appreciate feedback/thoughts from the remaining members of the Executive Committee on these recommendations.

11:00 a.m. Professional Development Subcommittee Report. Katrin reported that preparations for the upcoming webinar are in process—a dry run will take place on Monday 4/11 and the live webinar is on Friday 4/15. Florida will be presenting this webinar related to its project that won the Research Methods Award last year. Katrin reported on some of the lessons learned: webinars held on Fridays have lower attendance, and advertising the length of the webinar at less than 50 minutes will also diminish attendance. Katrin reported that the subcommittee is working on another webinar in the fall (after the PDS) related to confidentiality issues and some of the ongoing discussions among the Executive Committee and also from a concurrent session at last year's PDS in Denver. Katrin reported that the subcommittee reviewed the Training Matrix on the website and felt that the content is generally still relevant; there are no recommendations to remove

anything, although we still have some need for materials related to project planning, project management, etc. The subcommittee determined that we need to rebrand this content because NLPES is not providing training. The goal for NLPES is not to be the trainer for other offices; some offices may have this expectation. The Executive Committee discussed several ideas and eventually settled on “Professional Development Resources” as the rebrand for the training matrix. Katrin said the more significant issue is navigating to this resource from the NLPES main page; currently it is difficult to find. Pat said that she and Brenda discussed options for keeping this as a static link from NLPES’s main landing page. The subcommittee will review NCSL content (webinars) to identify anything to bring forward to the Professional Development Resources section of the NLPES page.

11:10 a.m. Peer Review Subcommittee Report. Wayne reported that he and Charles had put together a marketing brochure for the peer reviews. Wayne thanked Nathalie and Brenda for their review of earlier drafts and also thanked the publication staff in Virginia for providing the formatting and graphics. Wayne passed out the marketing brochure for the Executive Committee’s input. The plan is for this brochure to be included with the annual Directors Letter that Nathalie will send to member offices. Linda commented that the discussion about the cost of the review is not really addressed in the brochure. The Executive Committee discussed a number of options for content modifications, including whether to include a range of costs. The challenge is that the cost of the peer review is very dependent upon the scope of the review, which varies significantly across the different offices. Linda suggested changing the section header to “What Factors Affect the Cost of a Peer Review?” Wayne said that he and Nathalie will work on updates. Wayne reported that only one peer review—Hawaii—is currently scheduled for June 2016. There are possible future reviews in South Carolina and Maine, but discussions are only preliminary at this point. Wayne reported that the subcommittee’s second task is to put together a guide for reviewers; Charles is still working on this document.

11:20 a.m. Elections Subcommittee Report. Wayne reported that voting in the Executive Committee is done and that there were 20 state submitting ballots—248 had been received to date. Brenda reported that there are some states that submitted hard copy ballots. She said that counting of the ballots is still occurring and that she needs to wait for all hard copy ballots to arrive at her office (postmarked by the deadline) before the counts can be finalized. For this reason, Brenda did not discuss any election results with the Executive Committee. Once Brenda is back at NCSL, she will complete the counting process and inform Wayne of the results. Wayne reported that he will then call the candidates and an announcement of the results will be posted to the email list and included in the newsletter. The group had general discussion about how great it is to have such interest in serving on the Executive Committee. Nathalie had questions about eligible voters and the group discussed the NLPES Bylaws and perhaps a need for clarification in the next

election cycle. There was also discussion about whether an amendment to the Bylaws is also needed to remove some ambiguity.

11:30 a.m. Ad Hoc Data Access Subcommittee Report. Nathalie, Pat, and Greg participate on this ad hoc subcommittee and held a conference call over the last 3-4 months. Nathalie reported that the subcommittee is working on a Principles Document to lay out why NLPES thinks access to information is important and how limited this access could limit our usefulness to our legislatures. The subcommittee discussed alternatives, such as advocacy, which could involve an NLPES resolution or NCSL's processes. Overall, the subcommittee was not comfortable with the advocacy route because we aren't certain that there is a problem here for NLPES to solve. Pat commented that even with limited access, many offices are able to operate and produce good work that is valuable to decision makers. Nathalie reported that, given this context, the subcommittee is more comfortable with issuing a Principles Document from the Executive Committee that would provide affirming statements and talking points about the value and purpose of the work we do, the consequences of not having access (e.g., limited scope reviews), and that we have the responsibility to ensure the security of data we do obtain. Dale asked about responsibilities for maintaining data security and gave examples from California—auditors have to maintain the same level of data protections as do the agencies. In response to a question from Linda about the target audience, Greg explained that legislators are the primary audience and member offices are the secondary audience. For those offices that are having right-of-access issues, the intent of this Principles Document will be to provide some good talking points. Greg is working on a draft document, with a goal of having something in time for the August 2016 Executive Committee meeting. Nathalie said we might also be able to provide information about member states' enabling statutes and confidentiality requirements. There was general discussion about putting together a database or table of this information as a resource for member offices. Dale suggested perhaps using the "Ensuring the Public Trust" document to gather this information. Brenda said she also has a lot of this information available in her research files. Depending on where we are at with the Principles Document, Katrin suggested a possible tie-in to the webinar the PDS subcommittee is planning for the fall.

12:00 p.m. New Agenda Items. Wayne raised one new item for discussion with the Executive Committee. He and Brenda have been discussing opportunities to have a better source of searchable information on reports issued by member offices. The email list and the Report Radar section in the newsletter are great sources of information, but they may not be effective for comprehensive searching. Katrin said that NASACT used to have a searchable database of reports, but not anymore. Brenda reported that NCSL used to have this, too, but had difficulties because offices use different terminology when posting reports on their websites. Some of the items discussed by the Executive Committee included how do we compile reports on common keywords for a limited number of years (e.g., rolling 5-year time frame), how to populate the database, which could include combing

member offices' websites or perhaps asking member offices to submit the documents. There was support for this idea that Wayne brought forward and the Executive Committee will need some more detailed discussions about how to make it work, including getting past the data collection hurdle. Shunti recalled using a Google search that had been developed and shared on the email list several years ago. Brenda will discuss with NCSL's IT group to obtain more information on the technical side.

12:15 p.m. Lunch Break. The Executive Committee recessed for lunch.

2:00 p.m. Revolving Account Update. The Executive Committee reconvened and Nathalie and Brenda provided an update on the NLPES revolving account balance. The Executive Committee discussed the information, including how the budget for the upcoming PDS in Jackson will affect the balance. After the 2015 PDS the balance is currently \$34,649. The Denver PDS did use some of the balance as authorized by the Executive Committee; however, Brenda and Greg reported that Denver did not use all of the additional funds authorized due to cost savings on sales taxes and other items. Greg reported that we ended up getting a few A/V "extras" at no cost. Brenda said that being tax exempt saved a lot of money that had been built into the budget. The Executive Committee discussed the history of PDS costs from prior years. Wayne discussed the higher numbers on attendance in Denver, and that the food costs at The Curtis Hotel were higher. Nathalie said the per-person, per-day food cost in Denver was about \$66, compared to \$53/54 for Austin and Raleigh. In response to a question from Katrin, Wayne said that the Executive Committee had voted a couple of years ago to maintain a minimum revolving account balance of about \$18,000-\$20,000.

2:16 p.m. Jackson PDS Planning. Linda provided the Executive Committee with a report on planning for the PDS. She passed out another budget prepared by James Barber, and the group compared this document to previous budgets prepared by Brenda. Linda said that the budgets have more food events because there are fewer offsite options. Nathalie proposed we discuss the revenue side first. Regarding the registration fee—currently at \$350—the Executive Committee discussed its rationale for raising the registration fee. First, the registration fee has been at \$350 since 2010. The group discussed the value of the PDS relative to the number of training hours provided. Other entities' conferences (e.g., AICPA, NSAA, NASACT) have significantly higher registration fees. Brenda reported that at least 2-3 other staff sections have approved increasing their PDS registration fees to \$375.

Katrin made a motion that NLPES raise its PDS registration fee to \$375, effective for the 2016 PDS in Jackson, MS. Pat seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The Executive Committee moved on to a discussion of the PDS expenses. Some of the key differences in the budgets relate to food expense and whether to include

morning and afternoon breaks. The budgets also include funds for faculty honoraria and travel for outside speakers. Nathalie asked if the proposed food costs meet the F&B minimum of \$12,000. Linda said that they do. Linda also reported that the hotel will provide a full hot breakfast for hotel guests as part of the room rate, so this frees up funds for the conference budget. The group consensus was that beverage service for morning would be good to have, but food items are not necessary. The Executive Committee discussed the plan for receptions; currently, Linda said they are planning on a Sunday reception (not Monday) with an offsite social event with food on Tuesday. Linda said they are getting more information on transportation costs, if travel to other areas of town are needed. Linda discussed the speaking event and sessions at the Capitol on Monday morning, including scheduling a little time for conference attendees to tour the building. The Executive Committee liked the opportunity for conference programming to take place in the House Chamber. Linda discussed the overall theme of the conference and the preliminary agenda, including the conference flow, timing, and needs for the NLPES Awards Luncheon. The Executive Committee had limited additional discussion about budgets for future PDS events once the additional funding in the NLPES revolving account has been used (likely in 2018).

Wayne made a motion that the Executive Committee adopt the budget prepared by James Barber with up to \$10,000 in additional funding to be taken from the NLPES revolving account. Katrin seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

3:50 p.m. **Discussion of Recent Legislation in MS.** The Executive Committee discussed about recent legislation passed in Mississippi related to LGBT issues and the potential for travel bans being imposed by states in response. The concern is the potential effect that travel bans will have on PDS attendance. It would be a good idea to think about a reduced conference option in case we see attendance numbers being affected. The situation is still very fluid and Linda reported there are possible court challenges to the legislation. The Executive Committee agreed to keep monitoring the situation and how it evolves.

4:15 p.m. **Future PDS Locations.** Wayne reported that he had spoken with Joe Chrisman with the Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau and that they are confirmed to host the PDS in 2017 in Madison. Wayne said that Wisconsin is planning on the 3-day conference format and that they would like to get dates on the calendar soon because of other events taking place in Madison that will affect hotel availability. Wayne also said that Wisconsin will send someone to the Jackson PDS and that the Executive Committee should probably assign a liaison from the PDS subcommittee since Wisconsin does not have a staff person on the Executive Committee. Wayne reported that Utah is planning to host the PDS in 2018 and that Louisiana is interested in hosting again in the future. Nathalie said she is very pleased with the PDS planning efforts and also that there is once again interest by offices to host the event.

4:17 p.m. NCSL Legislative Summit. Brenda provided an update on the general schedule for the Legislative Summit, including that NLPES is already listed to sponsor a joint session with NALFO on Wednesday from 3-4 p.m. She said there will also be a joint reception hosted by PEW following the session (tentatively at 4 p.m.). Brenda said NLPES is also co-sponsoring a session with the Legislative Effectiveness Standing Committee on how to have an effective oversight/investigative process. This session is tentatively scheduled for Monday from 1-4 p.m. Brenda and Nathalie are looking at time slots for holding the Executive Committee meeting, trying to avoid the 7:30 a.m. time slot if possible. The Executive Committee discussed holding a meeting via conference call prior to the Legislative Summit since we may have more business to take care of than we have time available at the Legislative Summit and also because not everyone will be attending the Legislative Summit. Brenda also mentioned that dial-in options for the Legislative Summit are very expensive. Nathalie said she would work with Brenda to get an Executive Committee conference call scheduled for early- to mid-July. The conference call will potentially allow for better discussion of the items for the Jackson PDS. The Executive Committee would also still hold a meeting at the Legislative Summit where our meeting time will be more limited and can be used to follow-up on agenda items.

4:28 p.m. Legislative Staff Coordinating Committee (LSCC) Update. Nathalie and Rachel sit in on the staff section officers committee to discuss common issues, themes, across the sections. Rachel sits on the IT subcommittee and Nathalie sits on the Legislative Institutions subcommittee. Nathalie reported that the staff section officers are discussing working together for hosting PDS events with a goal to leverage the volume of joint meetings. LSCC is the logical coordinating group for communication among the staff sections. Nathalie also reported there was a lot of discussion about setting expectations for how staff sections should work with and use their NCSL liaison, making sure that the burden on the liaison is appropriate. The staff sections were also charged with looking at ideas for conference programming. Nathalie reported that the Legislative Institutions subcommittee is working on activities for recruiting individuals to careers in legislative agencies, videos to market staff successes, etc. Rachel reported on the IT subcommittee where discussion was focused on the NCSL website and staff development webpage. There is discussion of improving content for distance learning and developing a webinar on how to do webinar. The Legislative Summit will have a session on how to do a TED-style talk, which should be beneficial for helping staff sections deliver webinar content effectively.

4:45 p.m. Next Meeting. Nathalie will work with Brenda to set the dates for our next Executive Committee meetings: early- to mid-July (via conference call) and at the Legislative Summit in August.

