

**National Legislative Program Evaluation Society (NLPES)
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
4/6/2013**

Austin, TX

Meeting Participants:

Executive Committee Members

Dale Carlson, California
Greg Fugate, Colorado
Rachel Hibbard, Hawai'i
Wayne Kidd, Utah
Lisa Kieffer, Georgia
Marcia Lindsay, South Carolina (by phone)
Angus Maciver, Montana
Nathalie Molliet-Ribet, Virginia
Katrin Osterhaus, Kansas
Charles Sallee, New Mexico
Karl Spock, Texas

Brenda Erickson, NCSL liaison

Participants:

Ken Levine, Texas

Agenda

I. Breakfast (8:30 AM – 9:00 AM)

II. Karl called the meeting to order.

Ken Levine, director of the Texas Sunset Advisory Commission, welcomed the executive committee and said that he is looking forward to hosting the fall PDS in Austin this year. Ken said that a round trip airline ticket is a big cost to attend a PDS, and since the flight has to be paid, he asked the executive committee to consider extending the PDS an extra day for future seminars. The extra day of training would bring back a program format that NLPES members got to experience before the bad economy. Ken would like to see a dinner event and more time for networking as has been done in the past.

III. The committee approved the minutes from the 9/30/2012 meeting in Atlanta.

IV. Subcommittee Work. The subcommittees met in work groups from 9:30 AM to 11:00 AM.

V. Subcommittee Reports.

A. Awards. Wayne led the discussion, covering three topics for the Awards Subcommittee report: (1) awards process update, (2) Excellence in Evaluation award criteria change, and (3) the Outstanding Achievement Award Committee.

1. **Awards Process Update.** The subcommittee will continue to advertise the awards on the listserv. An announcement to encourage offices to apply for the awards will be sent on the 25th day before the deadline (May 10th), and again on the 10th day before the deadline. The announcement will include encouraging offices to nominate someone for the Outstanding Achievement Award.

Following the deadline (May 10th), the judges will have two weeks to determine the winners (May 24th). All the applicants would then be contacted with the results. The lead judges will compose a narrative for the Excellence in Evaluation Award winner and the Excellence in Research Methods Award winner(s) for the podcast announcing the winners. The subcommittee will ask OPPAGA if they would be willing to create the podcast. The subcommittee would like to see the podcast completed by the end of June, so the winners can be announced in July. However, the winners will be presented their awards at the fall PDS.

Greg questioned if all the offices had received a letter notifying them if they had won an award last year. Brenda said that she sent the letters to all the offices. Greg was not sure if his office received a letter. Greg asked to us to make sure that all the offices that applied be contacted before the winners are announced in July. If their offices receive awards, members of the Executive Committee should be copied on the notification letter.

Brenda mentioned that she also needed information about the Excellence in Evaluation Award winner, and the Outstanding Achievement winner to recognize those winners at the Summit in Atlanta. Brenda is also going to make sure the Excellence Evaluation Award winner from 2012 is recognized at the Summit this year, since it did not happen last year.

2. **Excellence in Evaluation Award Criteria Change.** Greg asked about adding a criterion to the award requiring the winning office to let NLPES post the narrative from their application. Charles agreed and said that posting the narrative would continue to help further the field and Greg added it would showcase an office's accomplishments. Since the criteria was already established for the 2013 awards, Greg suggested that we ask the winning office if they would be willing to post their narrative this year, then add the new criterion to the 2014 award criteria.

Action Item: The executive committee all agreed that the Excellence in Evaluation Award criteria should be revised to require the winning office to let NLPES post their narrative on the NLPES website.

3. **Outstanding Achievement Award Committee.** Karl said that he would begin forming his committee to select the outstanding achievement award winner. He would include Lisa, and select three other seasoned evaluators in the field to judge the nominations. He reminded the executive committee that there may be no nominations, and even if there are nominations the committee can decide not to select an award recipient.

B. Communications. Dale led the discussion for the Communications Subcommittee on the following seven topics: (1) newsletter, (2) NLPES website, (3) “question of the month”, (4) listserv, (5) key contacts, (6) social media, and (7) the executive committee listserv.

1. **Newsletter.** The newsletter will be published three times a year. Rachel is taking the lead on the newsletter. The subcommittee continues to discuss formatting for the newsletter. Rachel said that they may consider a name for the newsletter, since other staff sections have unique names.
2. **NLPES Website.** Brenda said the NCSL has changed the format for all staff section websites. NCSL wants a more consistent look to everything on the website. NCSL also wants the website to be more user friendly. Brenda provided a handout showing the website.
 - The first page showed a snapshot of the current NLPES homepage.
 - The second page, a working document, showed the current concept of the new homepage, with a word cloud. Each staff section’s word cloud can be individualized.

Brenda said some decisions still need to be made regarding the website, but we need a policy statement and logo to identify us. Dale said some flexibility of the webpage is important and that Charles will help with the content on the webpage.

3. **Question of the Month.** Dale is taking the lead on this area. Dale raised the question whether the “question of the month” should be listserv driven. If so, this would share the results with as many people as possible. A “question of the month” has not been posted in the past eight months, and Dale is going to contact Joel Alter to determine his interest in posting the question of the month.
4. **Listserv.** The subcommittee is happy with the structure of the listserv and doesn’t see a need for any changes at this time, other than looking at the “question of the month”.
5. **Key Contacts.** The subcommittee is not pursuing key contacts because some states they contacted didn’t have an interest. The subcommittee has stopped making cold calls to other states.

6. **Social Media.** The subcommittee is not moving forward with a wiki site or other social media. This area is on hold. The idea was to reach out to less experienced members; however, the subcommittee does not see a burning need to develop new methods at this time.
7. **Listserv for the Executive Committee.** In the previous executive committee meeting, the committee agreed to setting up a listserv for the executive committee. Dale asked about the status of creating that listserv. Brenda said that she would follow up on that task.

C. Professional Development. Angus led the discussion for the Professional Development Subcommittee, covering the topics of (1) developing a webinar and (2) co-sponsoring a concurrent session at the Summit. (The fall PDS was a separate agenda item that was discussed in detail later on the agenda, item VIII.) Karl welcomed Katrin to the executive committee and said that she is working on the professional development subcommittee.

1. The subcommittee did a teleconference about a month ago and talked about webinar content. NCSL has e-learning money available for staff sections to use. It has been about two years since our staff section has done a webinar. The subcommittee feels we need to do a webinar in middle to late June or early July. It would be good to do a webinar to reengage members before the fall PDS.

There was discussion as to the content of the webinar. The discussion focused on whether the content of the webinar should be generalized to get more people to sign up for the webinar or should be more tailored to our specific membership. The executive committee concluded that the webinar should be more tailored to NLPES membership.

Dale asked about the cost of the connections for a webinar. Brenda provided a handout on the costs. Brenda suggested that each office have one connection, and have the staff meet together in one room for the webinar. Lisa asked if the committee can apply for a particular grant amount. Brenda said yes, but you may not get that amount.

There was discussion on the topic of the webinar. The webinar could have some panelists with a common theme. Greg suggested a tagline, “balancing independence, resources, and responsiveness.” Angus pointed out that there are differences in the nature of our individual offices, such as some offices work more directly with their legislators and other offices have more freedom. The webinar needs to consider the nature of our individual offices. It is important for staff to understand their working environment.

Dale said this would be a good topic for a roundtable. Brenda mentioned that the topic could be adapted and used for different purposes. Greg suggested that we

could generate discussion questions following the webinar to discuss in individual offices. The webinar could be one hour, followed by one hour of individual office discussion. Brenda reminded everyone that there needs to be a monitor in the room to take roll of who attended and send it to Brenda to get CPE credit for the training.

2. Brenda provided an agenda of the Summit and topics being covered by the other staff sections. Brenda asked us to think about being a co-sponsor on any of the concurrent sessions, and that we needed to make that decision soon. Brenda also mentioned that if we want to do a breakfast; it will be at our own cost. NCSL will not be providing the breakfast at Summit for staff sections.

D. Peer Review. Brenda gave an overview of the peer reviews scheduled for 2013 and 2014. For 2013, South Carolina and Hawaii will have a peer review. The reviewers for the South Carolina peer review will be David Arner and Valerie Whitener. The reviewers for the Hawaii peer review will be Angus Maciver, Joel Alter, and Lisa Kieffer. In 2014, Washington is scheduled to have a peer review.

VI. Lunch (12:30 PM – 2:00 PM)

Following lunch the executive committee took a tour of the meeting space at the DOUBLETREE Hotel.

VII. Election Update.

Lisa congratulated Dale Carlson, Charles Salle, Rachel Hibbard, and Greg Fugate who ran unopposed for positions on the executive committee.

VIII. 2013 Professional Development Seminar

A. Programming and Budget. Karl handed out a preliminary agenda for the fall PDS in Austin. Five employees of the Sunset Commission have been assigned to review state reports to develop track topics. He walked the committee through the schedule for Monday, September 23, highlighting the following events:

- The PDS will begin with a welcome from the Texas Speaker on the house floor for both NLPES and NLSSA members.
- The PEW session will be the first session of the PDS.
- Lunch will be served in the Legislative Conference Center in the Capitol.
- The afternoon two-track, breakout sessions will be held in hearing rooms in the capitol. No food or beverage is allowed in the hearing rooms.
- The day will conclude with a joint evening event with NLSSA at the Waste Facility. Buses will leave at 5:30 PM and dinner will be at 6:45 PM.

The training sessions for Tuesday, September 24, will be held in the Reagan Building and the REJ Conference Center. One concern is the small room size for the Houston

rooms at the DOUBLETREE Hotel for the breakout sessions. The classrooms in the Reagan Building and REJ Conference Center are larger. Karl walked the committee through the schedule for Tuesday, September 24, highlighting the following events:

- The two morning sessions will be the two-track, breakout sessions.
- The awards luncheon would be held at the DOUBLETREE Hotel in the Bluebonnet rooms.
- A decision has not been made whether to hold the afternoon breakout sessions in the Houston rooms at the hotel, due to the small size of the rooms.
- A reception will be held in the evening at the hotel.

Karl walked the committee through the schedule for Wednesday, September 25, highlighting the following events:

- The first session will be breakout sessions, most likely at the hotel in the Bluebonnet rooms.
- The last session of the PDS will be a plenary session at the hotel in the Bluebonnet rooms.
- Optional tours or events will be available for those staying later or until the next day.
- The NLSSA will be having dinner at Matt's El Rancho, and NLPES is invited to join the dinner.

The biggest concern with the schedule is finding adequate and convenient classroom space. Charles asked if we could use the Reagan Building or the REJ Conference Center on Tuesday rather than both buildings, as it would be easier for someone to change from Track 1 to Track 2. Extra time is needed for walking between buildings. Dale suggested that the tracks could be shortened by 10 minutes to allow for walking. For the Tuesday afternoon breakout sessions, Greg suggested that Track 1 could be in the Reagan Building and Track 2 in the Houston room at the hotel. This would reduce the walking time for people attending Track 2, which follows the awards luncheon in the hotel.

Karl said that trying to get from one building to the next may also be a concern if it rains. Karl said that food is not allowed in the Reagan classrooms, and that we could provide refreshments on public grounds, but nonmembers may stop for refreshments as well. Karl said he would continue to discuss these concerns with the Sunset Commission staff.

Karl said we have capacity to stream from the capitol extension auditorium, as well as the Reagan classrooms. Angus said that streaming gives staff that can't attend the PDS the opportunity to join in. After some discussion, it was decided that we could choose one session for streaming. Karl said maybe we could consider streaming the PEW session, but consent forms would need to be signed. He would also need to look into the technical issues.

Budget. Brenda handed out the preliminary budget for the PDS in Austin. The budget keeps the registration fees the same: \$350 for members and \$275 for the host state. The fees have remained the same for several years. Brenda estimated 100 people and included the PEW funds of \$5,500. Faculty or guests costs have not been included in the preliminary budget. Brenda built in costs for Tricia Simmons, and there is only one comp room for a meeting planner –a hospitality suite. The Fed EX expense was increased to \$400 to cover the cost to ship all materials to Austin. However, other costs were not increased. The lunch buffet for Tuesday is an estimated cost and may be a little high. The estimate is based on the costs in Atlanta for food.

For the hotel space, Brenda said the 70 percent attrition applies to both NLPES and NLSSA. The meeting space is free, but they will charge us for use of hotel screens or other equipment. We can bring in NCSL projectors and use our computers.

Brenda said that we need to finalize the budget through NCSL before we can open registration. Lisa asked what how much lead time is needed? Brenda said as much as possible. Lisa suggested that a target date be set. There was a discussion among members when to finalize the budget. The committee decided to go ahead and approve the budget at this meeting.

Action Item: Karl made the motion that the committee pass the current budget for the Austin, TX PDS. Greg seconded the motion. The executive committee unanimously passed the current budget.

Brenda said that we have \$37,208 in our reserves. Dale said, he thinks that is excessive, and we should use some of that reserve to benefit NLPES members. We need a cushion, but we could use some of that reserve for a speaker or something. Karl asked Brenda to see if she could provide the attendance and reserve balance for the PDSs since 2008.

Action Item: Karl formed a reserve subcommittee to review the current reserve amount and make a recommendation to the executive committee on an appropriate reserve amount. The subcommittee consists of Lisa, Wayne, Dale, and Charles. Karl asked to be kept informed of the subcommittee's thinking.

B. Pew Stipends. Brenda provided the committee a handout on the Pew funds. Brenda said that PEW is giving \$20,000 for the PDS, the same amount as last year. About \$12,000 to \$13,000 can be used for the stipends, and the remainder would be used to cover the costs of the PEW session. The average cost for a participant's hotel room and registration was \$869 in Atlanta. Last year, the executive committee set the stipend amount at \$450. Stipends were offered to 33 offices and 24 offices used stipends, including the host state.

The committee discussed what the stipend amount should be this year. Brenda said the registration fee is the easiest amount to cover by the Pew funds, and that the

committee could set a base amount and adjust it at the next executive committee meeting at the Summit. Brenda will send out letters to all 34 offices to get a better idea of how many offices will use a stipend. The unused stipends can go to the host state.

Action Item: The executive committee made the decision to set the base reimbursement rate at \$350 per office.

C. Selection of 2014 Location. Karl said that the executive committee needs to decide where to have the 2014 PDS. Karl said for planning purposes it is easier if a member of the executive committee's office would be willing to host. Marcia said she would ask her director if South Carolina could host. Katrin said she would check to see if Kansas is a possibility. Charles said New Mexico could possibly do it 2015. Wayne said Utah would be willing to do it again, and could commit to hosting in 2015 or 2016. Karl and Lisa will check with other staff sections at LSCC to see if NLPES can combine with another staff section.

Brenda informed the executive committee of the future Summit locations to help our planning of the PDS locations:

- 2014 – Minneapolis, MN
- 2015 – Seattle, WA
- 2016 – Baltimore, MD
- 2017 – Boston, MA

Karl asked who would be attending the Summit, and the following members said they will be attending: Lisa, Wayne, Nathalie, Charles, Angus, Rachel, and Greg. Karl said that we need to make a decision at our next meeting for the 2014 location.

IX. Other Business

A. Pew Survey. Karl explained that Gary VanLandingham contacted him about NLPES sponsoring a survey with Pew to obtain similar, more in-depth information about members' offices than is in *Ensuring the Public Trust*. Gary would like to get information about how other states operate. Gary would like to partner with us on our survey. Karl handed out a copy of the survey, and highlighted the questions from Pew from the last survey done, although the new survey would be different if it goes forward. Karl mentioned that the additional questions make the survey complicated, but the questions may be helpful to give NLPES additional information about the states.

The executive committee decided that the committee needs to get a formalized proposal from Gary, discuss it, and make a decision at a later time if Pew wishes to pursue the project.

B. NCSL Website Update. Brenda said that the vendor that maintained the website has been changed. The past two webinars were broadcast under the previous vendor. The previous vendor has the ownership of those webinars. Angus asked Brenda to look into the possibility of obtaining those webinars.

C. Date and Location for Next Meeting. The next executive committee meeting will be held during the Summit in Atlanta, August 12-15th. According to the Summit agenda, time has been scheduled for the committee to meet on Wednesday, the 14th from 3:15 PM to 5 PM. Karl felt that additional time is needed to meet during the Summit. Karl will look at the schedule and get back to the committee.

D. Other Items. Karl said that NLPES has Canadian counterparts, similar to NLSSA. Ken Levine asked Karl if we should invite them to attend our PDS. The committee did not oppose inviting them to the PDS, if the host state extended an invitation.

X. Meeting was adjourned.