

**National Legislative Program Evaluation Society (NLPES)**  
**Executive Committee Meeting**  
**Sunday, October 5, 2014**  
**Raleigh, North Carolina**

**MINUTES**

**Attendees – EC members and NCSL liaison:**

Wayne Kidd (UT), Chair

Nathalie Molliet-Ribet (VA), Vice Chair

Marcia Lindsay (SC), Secretary

Lisa Kieffer (GA), immediate past chair – via telephone

Dale Carlson (CA)

Greg Fugate (CO)

Rachel Hibbard (HI)

Katrin Osterhaus (KS)

Angus Maciver (MT)

Linda Triplett (MS)

Brenda Erickson, NCSL liaison

Carol Shaw, N.C. Program

Evaluation Division (host state)  
representative/contact

**Absent:**

Charles Sallee (NM)

- 1. Call to Order** – Wayne called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.
  
- 2. Welcome and introductions** - Wayne welcomed Linda to the committee. He asked members to introduce themselves, tell a fun fact about yourself, and identify a topic or issue that we, as program evaluators, would like to learn about. He'll report these topics back to the LSCC:
  - Quantitative analysis
  - IT security
  - How legislatures can make better use of our offices
  - How to weed out library of resources
  - How to complete audits faster
  - How to operate effectively in a growing political environment
  - Best way to obtain information from other states
  
- 3. Approve minutes from Minneapolis meeting** - Katrin moved that the meeting minutes from the August 19, 2014 meeting in Minneapolis, MN be approved. Nathalie seconded the motion and the committee unanimously approved the minutes.
  
- 4. Nominations and elections of Vice Chair and Secretary** – Nominations for the Vice Chair were opened and Nathalie was nominated by Rachel, with a second by Dale. No other nominations were made and nominations were closed. Nominations for Secretary were opened

and Rachel nominated Marcia. Dale seconded the nomination. No other nominations were made and the nominations were closed. Congratulations to Nathalie and Marcia!

**5. Naming of primary substantive subcommittees**

- a. Professional Development – Katrin (chair), Greg, and Linda.
- b. Communications – Dale (chair), Rachel, and Charles.
- c. Awards – Nathalie (chair), Marcia, and Wayne.
- d. Peer Review – Lisa (chair) and Angus.

Committee membership will be put on the website.

**6. Subcommittee work - *The committee broke into its subcommittees to discuss their work.***

**7. Lunch – *After subcommittee meetings, the committee recessed for lunch. The meeting reconvened at 2:00 p.m.***

**8. Discussion of any last minute items for Raleigh PDS -** Carol Shaw went through the agenda and discussed the use of vans to transport participants from the hotel to the legislative buildings. Participants will be transported by bus, not vans, on Tuesday. She commented about having Cooper's Barbeque on Monday evening. In each participant's packet are maps of the area and building floor plans of the legislative buildings. She stated that after Tuesday morning's sessions, all sessions will be held at the Sheraton Hotel. Also, John Turcotte will moderate the last plenary session.

**9. Update on PDS Budget –** Brenda went over the budget dated August 29, 2014. She commented that a breakfast had been added, then the AV bill was received; however, she thinks we will come out alright. There are about 120-121 pre-registrants, with 115 paid registrants. Some funding was added for extra transportation. The budget shows a \$1,429.44 deficit, which she hopes will go down. We are authorized to pay up to \$5,000 of the reserve funds, which are currently \$44,517.

Katrin asked about registrants being able to use credit cards. Brenda responded that NCSL is charged when people pay registrations with credit cards.

Back to the budget, she said that the AV charges are "per day". Also, SAS made a \$1,000 contribution for Tuesday's box lunches. There will be a sign acknowledging SAS' contribution. Eric Hunley, SAS, will attend the awards luncheon. Brenda concluded that the final version of the budget will be sent out after the final accounting.

Angus commented that \$350 for registration is a drop in the bucket and is a good deal for participants. We tend to break even with that registration fee so it is good that we have reserve funds. Other conferences cost a lot more. Greg suggested that we put in the newsletter that this is a great value for the money. Katrin said that it is addressed on the evaluation form.

## **10. Subcommittee reports**

### **A. Communications**

Dale commented on three action items including determining the current charges/responsibilities/tasks, recapping recent successes, and what's coming in the near term.

The communications subcommittee would like to promote and improve communication with the NLPES members by:

- Looking for new ways for the executive committee to improve communication.
- Producing the Working Paper three times per year.
- Overseeing the ListServe.
- Improving accuracy and currency on the website.
- Producing the chair's annual Spring letter.

The PDS was acknowledged in Governing Magazine in the right-hand, side column. This helps get out what we do to others. Staffers can see this and go to their members. Governing also offered us "other services", but we opted not to enter into a contract with them. We'll just stay with the strip advertising with a hotlink to our website. We don't need "free" ad space.

We added a new addition to the Working Paper called Stop the Presses. Dale asked a staffer to Google "audit reports released in May – June". Rachel wrote it up. Greg asked how the list will be populated going forward. Rachel asked for people to send in items for it. Dale said that he has 120 auditors in his office so he was sure he could find one of them to do a Google search. Greg said that in Colorado, they have a Google Alert sending messages to an office address. The In the News section in the Working Paper was a great addition and Rachel did an outstanding job on the newsletter.

Katrin asked if a counter could be added to see how many people open or view the Working Paper. Greg said that Survey Monkey could be added as a dedicated link to solicit feedback on the newsletter. Nathalie suggested perhaps having an informal poll of our staffs. Rachel said she was interested in knowing if people are reading it and what they liked about it. She also wondered what people think is missing and if they like particular sections in the newsletter.

The deadline for the next newsletter is mid-November for the December publication. Dale stated that Rachel would like to spread out the schedule for publishing the Working Paper and we need to work with Brenda in that regard. Maybe the Working Paper can also be put on the ListServe with a reference and a link. Wayne commented that his office prints off the newsletter and puts it up in the break room. Brenda said she thinks New Jersey recently added a lot of staff to the ListServe. Currently, there are 400-500 subscribers to the ListServe.

Dale continued with the Communications subcommittee report regarding thoughts for going forward. They will continue to monitor the website for accuracy and thoroughness and the newsletter will go out in December. Wayne should prepare his chair letter for February 2015. It will go out to all member organizations. The subcommittee will look into the scheduling of the newsletter and possibly add Survey Monkey, as suggested. The Question of the Month has been discontinued because there are other things serving similar functions. Greg commented on pulling prior years' content into the current newsletter and suggested that maybe some of the Questions of the Month that are still relevant can be included. Brenda will pull all the Questions of the Month into a Word document.

## **B. Awards**

Nathalie said that dividing the three awards up between the subcommittee members worked well this time and the subcommittee plans to do that for the upcoming awards. Wayne will be in charge of Excellence, Nathalie will handle Research Methods, and Marcia will be over Impact. The members will not be judges, but, instead, will be resources for the judges. We are maintaining a list of judges for each award each year and are trying to keep a variety of judges from different states. We will be asking the recent recipients of the Excellence and Research Methods to be judges for 2015.

Lisa suggested that a request for judges could go out in the letter to key contacts. Nathalie responded that the timing is not good for that idea. We will still have blasts about the awards and the subcommittee will scout out potential judges. Nathalie asked the executive committee members to do the same at the PDS and in their own offices.

The awards subcommittee has established a standard timeline of steps including when to publicize the awards, find judges, email blasts, and make notifications, etc. Marcia developed this last year and it will be formalized and kept up going forward.

In determining if any changes to the criteria was needed, the subcommittee agreed that we had taken a critical look at this for the past two years and feel like the criteria is in good shape. One thing came up this year, however, involving the Research Methods award. There can be up to three reports which can win in this category and it's subjective on how it is decided how many to

award. Is it the top three? Are the top three equally good? It would be helpful to provide some guidance to the judges that the award should go to the very best one. There should be more than one winner only if the others are equally as good as the best one. There were seven submissions this year for this award. Dale asked if it is the same states submitting each year. Nathalie said that there are one or two states which normally apply every year; however, one state cannot win two years in a row. She also noted that it is not the same five states every year. Dale continued that there are some states with methodologists. Linda asked if there is a need for a shared methodologist through NCSL. Dale said that his office contracts with one when they need one. Brenda commented that five or six states' offices have methodologists.

Nathalie clarified that the subcommittee is not suggesting changing the criteria, just giving this guidance to the judges perhaps with language on the score sheet. Language will be suggested and sent to the executive committee for its approval. Lisa added that the second criterion regarding innovation was added for the purpose of trying to draw more states in to apply. Winners don't have to be similar and judges should come from various offices. Not all of it is quantitative. Katrin suggested that if the winner won because of innovation, that should be noted. Dale wondered if Nathalie wearing two hats was too much power in one person. Nathalie is good with her positions and no one thought there was an issue.

### **C. Professional Development**

Katrin's subcommittee discussed four topics.

- 1) The approach that Carol Shaw took for the current PDS with the surveys worked well with the focus on outcomes instead of individual reports. Katrin thinks it's important to find the "sweet spot" between the executive committee and the host state in planning the agenda.
- 2) Regarding the NLPES sessions and the Legislative Summit, the subcommittee would like to find ways to coordinate with other staff sections. NLPES has had odd times for sessions at the summit and we need to coordinate that better. Wayne commented that there are ten staff sections plus four staff groups involved.
- 3) There has been headway on webinars. Several are ready to go, including two Excel webinars. Kathy McGuire in Florida will be contacted. The subcommittee would like one webinar in December and one in January or February. Dale asked if there were any costs associated with these and Katrin responded that NCSL has money available and we just have to apply for it. Greg said that NCSL is begging us to do these and if they are popular, we can ask for more money. NCSL has \$1,000 grants available. Brenda suggested that we may be able to do one jointly with another staff section. Also, we need to get an approximate date to check the calendar. Rachel asked if the webinars are archived and Brenda said they are for a while.

The third webinar is one on ethics. Greg said he has a staff person who could contribute and Katrin has already done a session on this too. It's ambitious, but "we're going for it". Next year, we hope to find more soft topics for roundtable discussion. Dale commented that California has mandatory ethics training and Carol said North Carolina has mandatory, state-specific ethics training. Greg said Colorado has general ethic issues and has an upcoming webinar, which is generic. Lisa said that LSCC did a video about ethics, but it wasn't really a training webinar and only lasted about two minutes. Brenda said that it may be a part of the NCSL Ethics Center. Greg commented that we wouldn't want to pursue something that NCSL is going to do and make them say "no" to us. He asked if Brenda could look into this. Katrin interjected that the subcommittee is thinking in general terms and conflicts of interests for the webinar. Linda asked if training could be linked to yellow book standards.

4) The subcommittee is in charge of keeping the library going. Kathy McGuire has done a wonderful job with this. The Stan Stenersen webinar was under the NLPES training matrix. It was lost for a time then another group did a new one to replace it. Linda asked how long they are archived and Brenda responded that they are kept for a while, but there may be issues if we change webinar companies. We'll have to ask for a webinar copy to belong to NCSL. She said they fight to keep them up.

Greg said that for the PDS in Denver, CO, he is not planning on changing the process for content, but may do a full, three-day conference. Conference Direct put out an RFP to downtown hotels, but nothing suitable came back. There are a couple of options, including asking Conference Direct to look at it again or considering Boulder or Golden as destinations for the PDS. Another suggestion is asking NCSL meeting staff to schedule it. Most prefer the downtown Denver location. Brenda commented that Conference Direct is Denver based and would probably have more clout than NCSL. Greg answered that they had some bids, but not for the dates we could use or they couldn't accommodate the room block. The Magnolia Hotel, where we met last time in Denver, was at capacity and the meeting space was constrained. Brenda said that we need fairly large breakout rooms to seat 75 people and a big room for plenary sessions and lunch space. Linda asked if it would be bad to do a conference over a weekend because she thought some offices might like that. Greg said that maybe they could tweak what we're asking for and go back out again. Also, he has a group he will use to brainstorm about plenary sessions and keynote speakers. He wants to focus on soft skills and leadership. Carol interjected that North Carolina had a list of 25 topics, including cost/benefit analysis, but couldn't find anybody to lead that session. Greg asked Carol to send him her ideas. Wayne said that NLSSA is going to New York next year so we will be alone in Denver. We can better track through a matrix where all the seminars are located. Brenda thinks that a NALFO/NLPES PDS would be a good fit.

## **D. Peer Review**

Lisa deferred to Angus to give a report. We need to gauge the level of interest and Ensuring the Public Trust asks about peer reviews for that publication. There has been a steady group of states involved with NLPES peer reviews, including Washington, Hawaii, Nebraska, and Wyoming. South Carolina and Utah had one and Texas and Maine have expressed interest in having peer reviews. Lisa will work on refining the guidance for the peer reviews. Even non-Yellow Book states can get a lot of value from a peer review.

There is potential for more marketing of this service. It should be noted that the scope of a peer review can be controlled by the office requesting the review. NCSL facilitated a limited document review of New Mexico's office, at its request. Also, NCSL helped Montana on a review Montana initiated. There appears to be some interest in reduced-scope reviews and non-traditional reviews. We'll do outreach to key contacts.

Rachel asked if demand was limited due to the cost to the host states or limited by NCSL staff availability. Brenda responded that only so many offices have wanted peer reviews, so staff availability hasn't been an issue. Dale asked what the size of the pool of potential reviewers is. Brenda answered that someone can be a reviewer without having a NLPES peer review. Greg said he liked broadening the definition of what a peer review can be. It was noted that there was no cost for New Mexico's recent review. Maybe these types of limited reviews can be an introduction to the benefits of a full-scale peer review.

Dale asked what the genesis for the New Mexico review was. Brenda answered that New Mexico contacted Todd at NALFO and he called Brenda. Brenda suggested setting up two peer review teams, one for "fiscal" and one for "program". The review was well received by New Mexico and it was a fun project. Marcia asked how someone gets involved as a peer reviewer. Brenda said they look at comparable offices, with a call to the agency director first. Ensuring the Public Trust mentions that they have people who want to be reviewers. This question can be asked when contacting the key contacts. Linda suggested putting an article in the next newsletter about this and Lisa agreed to handle that.

## **11. Other Business**

Wayne provided some information from LSCC. The LSCC meeting was last week in Reno, NV. The staff section officers group met. They would like the staff sections to share outstanding programming content. The staff section officers have suggested that we share one or two sessions from our PDSs that we feel are outstanding with the staff section officers that another staff section may be able to use in the future.

IT Subcommittee – The librarians have a Facebook page. They asked if other sections are interested in Facebook. The executive committee members were not interested in a Facebook page at this time.

Wayne talked with Kathy McGuire about Ensuring the Public Trust and she will mail hard copies to each executive committee member and all key contacts then it will be put on the website within a month. It can also go in the newsletter.

For the Spring Meeting in April, there was discussion about having the executive committee tour the NCSL offices. This was done one time in 2004-2005 and the tour lasted about one hour. There is nobody at NCSL on Saturdays, so we'd need to move our meeting to Monday. Brenda said she is happy to set it up. We could fly in on Sunday, have a meeting at NCSL offices on Monday, and fly out on Tuesday. We're looking at either April 13 or April 20, 2015. Greg said that, regarding logistics, if we meet at a downtown hotel, we'll need transportation to NCSL. He can also block off his conference room for our use too.

Wayne commented that in Austin at the awards luncheon, we couldn't announce the PDS because North Carolina wasn't finalized yet as the destination. We need to schedule them out over the next few years so that won't happen again. (*Wayne handed out a list of sites for the upcoming summits and PDSs.*)

- 2015 – Greg will announce Denver at the awards luncheon.
- 2016 – Mississippi has agreed to host.
- 2017 – Salt Lake City
- 2018 – Hawaii - NLSSA is also considering Hawaii in 2018. NLSSA said they are up for going to any state. As a point of discussion, someone asked what the airfare was from Honolulu to Raleigh. Rachel said it was \$895.

Wayne also provided the group with a sheet showing the election cycles.

Peggy Piety, NCSL Chair, will join us at the awards luncheon. There will be reserved tables for the executive committee.

## **12. Adjourn**

There being no objection, the meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marcia A. Lindsay  
Secretary